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**GLENNALLEN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 14, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Briahna Gerlach of Glennallen High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Alaska Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Gerlach is the first Gatorade Alaska Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Glennallen High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the racecourse, distinguishes Gerlach as Alaska's best high school girls cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Gerlach joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-00, 2000-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-8 junior raced to her third consecutive Class 1-2-3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 19:04. Gerlach also won the Region 2 championship, the Tsalteshi Invitational, the Palmer Invitational, the Colony Invitational and the Su Valley Invitational.

Gerlach has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. Also a talented singer and musician, she has volunteered locally on behalf of a senior citizens center.

"Briahna's success and multiple state championships in cross country and track have been an inspiration to the community," said Glennallen co-coach Heidi Jacobsen. "We've seen our running program grow, in part due to the attention that she brings to the sport."

Gerlach will begin her senior year of high school this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Gerlach joins Gatorade Alaska Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Allie Ostrander (2014-15, 2013-14, 2012-13 & 2011-12, Kenai Central High School), Jenette Northey (2010-11, Service High School), Kailey Wilson (2009-10, Kenny Lake School), and Leah Francis (2008-09 & 2007-08, Juneau-Douglas High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit www.gatorade.com/poy.

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