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**SANTA CRUZ HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA 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 Cate Ratliff of Santa Cruz High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade California Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Ratliff is the first Gatorade California Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Santa Cruz 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 Ratliff as California'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, Ratliff 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-5 senior raced to the Division 4 individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:03.7, leading the Cardinals to second place as a team. Ratliff also finished 11th nationally at the Nike Cross Nationals Final in 17:23.9 and won the Div. 4 race at the Stanford Invitational.

Ratliff has maintained a 4.05 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of a beach safety program and has served as an assistant at the University of California's Lick Observatory.

"Cate sets reasonable, but not easy, goals and then does the work to achieve them," said Santa Cruz coach Greg Brock. "She's displayed incredible discipline and showed remarkable improvement over her four-year career."

Ratliff has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on an athletic scholarship at California Polytechnic State University beginning 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.

Ratliff joins Gatorade California Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Fiona O'Keeffe (2014-15, Davis High School), Sarah Baxter (2013-14, 2012-13, 2011-12 & 2010-11, Simi Valley High School), Molly Grabill (2009-10, Rancho Bernardo High School), and Jordan Hasay (2008-09 & 2007-08, Mission College Prep.) 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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