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**PADUA ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE 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 Lydia Olivere of Padua Academy as its 2015-16 Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Olivere is the first Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Padua Academy.

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 Olivere as Delaware'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, Olivere 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 state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Olivere won a second consecutive Division I individual state championship with a meet-record time of 17:57.66 this past season, leading the Pandas to a third straight state title as a team. Twice presented the William L. Gerow Award by the New Castle County Coaches Cross Country & Track Association as the state's Runner of the Year, the 4-foot-11 sophomore distance talent took eighth place at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships in 17:45.10.

Olivere has maintained a 3.99 in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a student ambassador and as a member of her school's student council, she has volunteered on behalf of Padua's service-oriented Blue & Gold Club and at The Mary Campbell Center for people with disabilities.

"She doesn't fear a challenge, and you can see her confidence grow as she continues to learn different race strategies in a variety of scenarios she's encountered this season," said Padua head coach Marnie Giunta. "Lydia is going to be fascinating to watch over these next few years. She's as composed as a competitor can be and a class act in how she handles herself on a daily basis at practices, in class and at the races."

Olivere will begin her junior 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.

Two-time winner Olivere joins Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Louisa Belk (2013-14, Saint Andrew's School), Reagan Anderson (2012-13, The Tatnall School), Haley Pierce (2011-12, 2010-11 & 2009-10, The Tatnall School), and Juliet Bottorff (2008-09 & 2007-08, The Tatnall 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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