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**ALEXANDRIA AREA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MINNESOTA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 14, 2016) — In its 31<sup>st</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Bethany Hasz of Alexandria Area High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hasz is the second Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Alexandria Area 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 Hasz as Minnesota'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, Hasz 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 took fifth at the Nike Cross Nationals Final this past season with a time of 17:17.1. She also finished fourth at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships, crossing the line in 17:17.6. The state's 2013-14 Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Hasz captured an individual title at the Class AA state meet, breaking the tape in 17:32.2.

Hasz has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. An accomplished cellist, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Feed My Starving Children.

"Bethany Hasz works extremely hard, is so kind and knows what it takes to succeed and does it with such determination," said Alexandria High head coach Travis Hochhalter. "She loves to work toward something and is dedicated to the sport of cross country."

Hasz has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on an athletic scholarship at the University of Minnesota 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.

Two-time winner Hasz joins Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Megan Hasz (2014-15, Alexandria Area High School), Maria Hauger (2012-13, 2011-12 & 2010-11, Shakopee High School), Cassy Opitz (2008-09, Eden Prairie High School), and Laura Hughes (2007-08, Mankato West 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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