

Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)

**CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 Amanda Mayoral of Cleveland High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Mayoral is the first Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Cleveland 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 Mayoral as New Mexico'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, Mayoral 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-6 sophomore raced to the Class 6A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:12, leading the Storm to a state title as a team. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Mayoral took third at the Nike Cross Nationals Southwest Regional championships, crossing the line in 17:29. She went on to compete at the Nike Cross Nationals Final where she finished 70th with a time of 18:23.6.

Mayoral has maintained a 3.20 GPA in the classroom. An accomplished violinist and an altar server at her church, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the Teen Life enrichment program.

"Amanda Mayoral won all of the big races in New Mexico easily, she carries herself the right way and is friendly to her competitors," said Sal Gonzales, head coach at Rio Rancho High. "Even though she runs for our rival school, she inspires other runners and coaches to cheer her on. There are other great runners in New Mexico, but none were close to her this year."

Mayoral 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.

Mayoral joins Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Natasha Bernal (2014-15, La Cueva High School), Kelli Reagan (2013-14, St. Pius X High School), Malia Gonzales (2012-13, Sue Cleveland High School), Jenna Thurman (2011-12, Del Norte High School), Julia Foster (2010-11 & 2009-10, Albuquerque Academy), Clara Milne (2008-09, Albuquerque Academy), and Rachel Velarde (2007-08, Eldorado 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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