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**ALAMO HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE TEXAS 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 Abby Gray of Alamo Heights High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Texas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Gray is the first Gatorade Texas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Alamo Heights 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 Gray as Texas'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, Gray 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-4 senior raced to the Class 5A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:23. Gray finished 18th nationally at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships and 21st at the Nike Cross Nationals Final. She also took second at the NXN South Regional championships and sixth at the Foot Locker South Regional championships.

Gray has maintained an A average in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the San Antonio Humane Society and youth running programs.

"I used to be taken aback by some of Abby's goals, thinking they might be out of reach, but she's reached nearly every one of them," said Alamo Heights coach Brian Ricketts. "She knows what she wants and she won't let anything get in the way of her achieving it."

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

Gray joins Gatorade Texas Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Paige Hofstad (2014-15, New Braunfels High School), Natalie Rathjen (2013-14, Highland Park High School), Karis Jochen (2012-13, A&M Consolidated High School), Karis Jochen (2011-12, A&M Consolidated High School), Rachel Johnson (2010-11, Plano Senior High School), and Chelsey Sveinsson (2009-10, 2008-09 2007-08, Greenhill 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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