

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**RIVERSIDE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 23, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Cate Ambrose of Riverside High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade South Carolina Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Ambrose is the first Gatorade South Carolina Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Riverside 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 Ambrose as South Carolina'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/February, Ambrose joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Prep., San Luis Obispo, Calif.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-4 senior raced to the Class 5A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:35, leading the Warriors to the state title as a team. Ambrose also won the Upper State Qualifier and the Greenville County championships, while placing 21st at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships.

The president of her graduating class, Ambrose has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and the Triune Mercy Center. "Cate is the kind of athlete that every coach wants to coach," said Riverside coach Eric Cummings. "She wants to win every time on the course, and she pushes her body and mind to achieve that goal. She's a fierce competitor, but a very caring teammate."

Ambrose has maintained a 3.55 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the College of Charleston 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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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.

Ambrose joins Gatorade South Carolina Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Logan Morris (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2012-13, Spartanburg Christian Academy), Ashbrook Gwinn (2013-14, Aiken High School), Meredith Kilburn (2011-12, Fort Mill High School), Sinead Haughey (2010-11 & 2009-10, Daniel High School), Tameka Jackson (2008-09, Seneca High School), and Mary Kate DuBard (2007-08, Northwestern High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Ambrose will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

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.

###