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## **JACKSON HOLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WYOMING GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 23, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Anna Gibson of Jackson Hole High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Gibson is the first Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Jackson Hole 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 Gibson as Wyoming'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, Gibson 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 2013-14 Gatorade State Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-5 senior finished fourth at the Nike Cross Nationals Final with a time of 17:40.9 this past season to earn First Team All-American honors. Gibson set a state record in winning the Class 4A state meet in 17:35.20, breaking the tape 27.73 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Broncos to a third straight first-place finish as a team and first in Class 4A after moving up a classification. She is a four-time First Team All-State selection.

The president of her school's National Honor Society, Gibson has volunteered locally as a youth mentor and as a middle school running coach. "Here is what sets Anna above the rest: she is a very hard worker and great leader for her team," said Ryan Berger, head coach of Evanston High. "She is 100 percent committed to running. She is an ambassador for Wyoming."

Gibson has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to attend Brown University in Rhode Island, where she will run cross country and track, 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.

Two-time winner Gibson joins Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Calbi Ausmann (2015-16, Newcastle High School), Karli Piaia (2014-15, Rock Springs High School), Hailey Ricks (2012-13 & 2011-12, Star Valley High School), Jessica Lemaster (2010-11 & 2007-08, Cheyenne Central High School), Dana Morin (2009-10, Sheridan High School), and Nicole Peterson (2008-09, Rock Springs High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Gibson 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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