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## **JUNEAU-DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ALASKA 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 Sadie Tuckwood of Juneau-Douglas High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Alaska Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Tuckwood is the second Gatorade Alaska Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Juneau-Douglas 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 Tuckwood as Alaska'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, Tuckwood 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 freshman raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:16. Tuckwood also won the Ketchikan Invitational, the Petersburg Invitational, the Capital City Invitational and the Region V championships.

Tuckwood has volunteered as an altar server at her church and has coached elementary school athletes at the Native Youth Olympics. "She raised the competitive bar for our entire region with her leadership, her times and her fresh energy," said Juneau-Douglas coach Merry Ellefson. "She's committed and tenacious, and she's simply dedicated to doing her best."

Tuckwood has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore 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 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.

Tuckwood joins Gatorade Alaska Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Briahna Gerlach (2015-16, Glennallen High School), Allie Ostrander (2014-15, 2013-14, 2012-13 & 2011-12, Kenai Central High School), Jenette Northey (2010-11, Service High School), Kailey Wilson (2009-10, Kenny Lake School), and Leah Francis (2008-09 & 2007-08, Juneau-Douglas High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Tuckwood 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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