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**WILTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT 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 Morgan McCormick of Wilton High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Connecticut Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. McCormick is the first Gatorade Connecticut Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Wilton 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 McCormick as Connecticut'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, McCormick 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-3 junior raced to the State Open championship this past season with a time of 18:43. McCormick also won the Class L state title in 18:50 and placed 21st at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships. She finished first at the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference championships and the Wilton Invitational.

A chemistry tutor in her school, McCormick has volunteered locally on behalf of the Tails of Courage animal shelter. "Morgan is still relatively new to the sport of running," said Wilton coach Jeff Gee. "Her rise to prominence has been somewhat meteoric—I expected her to be an All-State runner, but it wasn't until after the first few races that I realized she could contend with the best in the state."

McCormick has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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.

McCormick joins Gatorade Connecticut Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Hannah DeBalsi (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, Staples High School), Brianna Lenehan (2012-13, Norwich Free Academy), Reid Watson (2011-12, Glastonbury High School), Jackie Nicholas (2010-11, Nonnewaug High School), Lauren Sara (2009-10, Frank Scott Bunnell High School), Moira Kenny (2008-09, Immaculate High School), and Heather Stephens (2007-08, Ridgefield High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, McCormick 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.

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