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**PADUA ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE DELAWARE 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 Lydia Olivere of Padua Academy as its 2016-17 Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Olivere is the first Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Padua Academy.

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 Olivere as Delaware'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, Olivere 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 Division 1 individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:23.1, leading the Pandas to the state title as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Olivere also won the Paul Short Run, the Carlisle Invitational and the Joe O'Neill Invitational. She finished second at the Manhattan Invitational, third at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships in 17:34.2 and 24th nationally at the NXN Final.

Also a talented singer, Olivere has volunteered locally on behalf of youth track meets and the Mary Campbell Center for people with disabilities. "Lydia's experience and training have given her confidence that she belongs when contending for the championship in every race," said Padua coach Marnie Giunta. "She's meticulous in studying her competition and she always has a strategy in place prior to the start of every race."

Olivere has maintained a 3.94 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.

Three-time winner Olivere joins Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Louisa Belk (2013-14, Saint Andrew's School), Reagan Anderson (2012-13, The Tatnall School), Haley Pierce (2011-12, 2010-11 & 2009-10, The Tatnall School), and Juliet Bottorff (2008-09 & 2007-08, The Tatnall School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Olivere 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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