

**Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)**

**RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE FLORIDA 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 Bailey Hertenstein of Riverview High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Florida Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hertenstein is the first Gatorade Florida Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Riverview 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 Hertenstein as Florida'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, Hertenstein 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-5 junior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:40.36. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Hertenstein also captured the Region 2 championships, the District 7 championships and the flrunners.com Invitational. She finished seventh at the Foot Locker South Regional championships and was 20th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships.

A student ambassador in her school, Hertenstein has volunteered locally on behalf of the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. "Even after having an undefeated 2016 season (in Florida) and winning a total of three state titles, Bailey is still one of the most humble athletes I have come across," said Riverview coach Mary Lichtenberger. "Her hard work and dedication, on and off the field, are inspiring."

Hertenstein has maintained a 3.95 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.

Two-time winner Hertenstein joins Gatorade Florida Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Rafaella Gibbons (2014-15, Winter Park High School), Emily Edwards (2013-14, Fort Myers High School), Bridget Blake (2012-13, Dr. Phillips High School), Olivia Ortiz (2011-12, Lakewood Ranch High School), Kathryn Fluehr (2010-11 & 2009-10, The Community School of Naples), and Ashley Brasovan (2008-09 & 2007-08, Wellington High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hertenstein 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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