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LANDMARK CHRISTIAN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Nicole Fegans of Landmark Christian School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Fegans is the second Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Landmark Christian 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 Fegans as Georgia'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, Fegans 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 senior won the Georgia Meet of Champions title this past season, breaking the tape in 17:43.86. Fegans also finished first at the GHSA Class 1A Private meet (18:36.20), leading the War Eagles to the state title as a team. She went on to take fourth at the Foot Locker South Regional championships with a personal-best 5K time of 17:26.80, which was the fastest time by a Georgia prep girl at that distance in 2016. Fegans went on to earn All-American honors at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, crossing the line 7th with a time of 17:48.67.

An active and engaged member of her church community, Fegans has also volunteered as part of multiple mission trips to Haiti in the summertime to support orphans in poverty-stricken areas. "Perhaps the most underrated female runner in the South, Nicole made huge strides this year not only within Georgia, but even more so on a national level," said Erik Boal, editor of DyeStat.com. "She closed with six exceptional performances, including her first state title, and capped the year with an All-American effort at Foot Locker that exceeded even her own expectations."

Fegans has maintained a 3.95 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run cross country on scholarship at Georgia Tech 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.

Fegans joins Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Lindsay Billings (2015-16, Northview High School), Emma Grace Hurley (2014-15, Fellowship Christian School), Kathryn Foreman (2013-14, Landmark Christian School), Allie Buchalski (2012-13, Johns Creek High School), Grace Tinkey (2011-12 & 2010-11, First Presbyterian Day School), Nicky Akande (2009-10, Collins Hill High School), Amanda Winslow (2008-09, Collins Hill High School), and Emily Reese (2007-08, Chamblee High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Fegans 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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