

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

**YARMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MAINE 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 Abigail Hamilton of Yarmouth High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hamilton is the second Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Yarmouth 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 Hamilton as Maine'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, Hamilton 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 Class B state meet this past season with a time of 18:05.31, breaking the tape 9.17 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Clippers to a second-place finish as a team. The MaineTrackXC.com Female Runner of the Year, Hamilton finished ninth at the New England Cross Country Championships and placed 20th at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships.

Hamilton has volunteered locally at Preble Street, a homeless advocacy center, and as part of multiple community-service initiatives through her church. "Abigail is the best of the best," said Bill Reilly, head coach of Fryeburg Academy. "No one in Maine came close to her this year. She's the best I have seen in a while."

Hamilton has maintained an A average in the classroom. She remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Hamilton joins Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Tia Tardy (2015-16, Orono High School), Katherine Leggat-Barr (2014-15, Greely High School), Kirstin Sandreuter (2013-14, Greely High School), Bethanie Brown (2012-13, Waterville High School), Abbey Leonardi (2011-12, 2010-11 & 2008-09, Kennebunk High School), and Anna Makaretz (2007-08, Yarmouth High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hamilton 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).

###