

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**EXETER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE 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 Jacqueline Gaughan of Exeter High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Gaughan is the first Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Exeter 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 Gaughan as New Hampshire'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, Gaughan 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-1 junior won the New Hampshire Meet of Champions this past season, breaking the tape in 17:14.60 to finish 28.6 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor, and leading the Blue Hawks to a ninth-place finish as a team. Gaughan followed that up by winning the New England Cross Country Championships with a time of 17:34.11—the clocking that ranks No. 2 in course history—and taking silver at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships in 17:55.20. She qualified for the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, where she earned All-American honors with an 11th-place finish (17:50.61).

A member of the outdoor activities club at her high school, Gaughan has volunteered locally as a member of St. Michael's Parish Service Organization, distributing food to the needy, working in the parish soup kitchen and participating a variety of related community service initiatives. "Not only was Gaughan one of the most impressive runners on the East Coast, but one of the most consistent," said Erik Boal, editor of DyeStat.com. "Her performances at both the state final and Meet of Champions were outstanding, but her most significant result was her victory at the New England Championships, becoming the first New Hampshire runner in a decade to win the event. She also demonstrated a great deal of maturity in her first national final to become a Foot Locker All-American."

Gaughan has maintained a 5.49 weighted GPA in the classroom on a 4.0 scale. 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.

Gaughan joins Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Maegan Doody (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, Oyster River High School), Elizabeth Conway (2012-13, Central High School), Courtney Hawkins (2011-12, Milford High School), Chloe Maleski (2010-11, Keene High School), Heidi Caldwell (2009-10 & 2008-09, Hanover High School), and Georgia Griffin (2007-08, Hanover High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Gaughan 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.

###