

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 Amanda Mayoral of Cleveland High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Mayoral is the second Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Cleveland 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 Mayoral as New Mexico'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, Mayoral 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 state's returning Gatorade Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-6 junior won her second straight Class 6A state meet title this past season with a time of 18:20.55, breaking the tape 24.4 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Storm to a third-place finish as a team. Unbeaten against in-state runners for a second consecutive year despite having her appendix removed just before the start of the 2016 season, Mayoral finished 33rd at the Nike Cross Nationals Southwest Regional championships and 78th at the Foot Locker West Regional championships.

An accomplished violinist, Mayoral has volunteered locally as part of fundraising campaigns to benefit breast cancer research and on behalf of multiple community-service initiatives through her church youth group. "Amanda is a class athlete who is respected by all competitors and coaches," said Chokri Dhoudi, head coach of Eldorado High. "She is the best runner in New Mexico right now."

Mayoral has maintained a 3.0 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 Mayoral joins Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Natasha Bernal (2014-15, La Cueva High School), Kelli Reagan (2013-14, St. Pius X High School), Malia Gonzales (2012-13, Sue Cleveland High School), Jenna Thurman (2011-12, Del Norte High School), Julia Foster (2010-11 & 2009-10, Albuquerque Academy), Clara Milne (2008-09, Albuquerque Academy), and Rachel Velarde (2007-08, Eldorado High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Mayoral 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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