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**MID-PRAIRIE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IOWA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 29, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Marie Hostetler of Mid-Prairie High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Iowa Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hostetler is the second Gatorade Iowa Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Mid-Prairie 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 Hostetler as Iowa'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, Hostetler 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-8 sophomore won the Class 2A state meet this past season with a meet-record time of 17:51.2, breaking the tape 14.8 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Golden Hawks to the state team title. Hostetler also finished 22nd at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional. She won seven of 10 races during the 2017 campaign.

Hostetler works every day on her family's dairy farm. She has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and as a youth track coach. "Marie was hands down the best female runner in the state this fall," said Dan Sauser, head coach of Monticello High. "Marie has incredible leg turnover and endurance that I've seen in very few runners."

Hostetler has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

Hostetler joins Gatorade Iowa Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Anna Hostetler (2016-17, Mid-Prairie High School), McKenzie Yanek (2015-16, Pleasant Valley High School), Jordyn Kleve (2014-15, Johnston High School), Rebekah Topham (2013-14 & 2011-12, Griswold High School), Anna Holdiman (2012-13, Waverly-Shell Rock High School), Shelby Houlihan (2010-11, East High School), Katie Flood (2009-10, Dowling Catholic), Ashlie Decker (2008-09, Dowling Catholic High School), and Katie Flood (2007-08, Dowling Catholic High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hostetler 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 the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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 <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.