

**PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE
YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 27, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Margot Appleton of Portsmouth Abbey School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Appleton is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Portsmouth Abbey 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 field, distinguishes Appleton as Rhode Island'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 February, Appleton joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg High School, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester High School, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley High School, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-3 junior won the New England Prep School Track Association Division III Championships for a second straight time this past season, clocking a 16:36 to break the tape 2:48 ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Ravens to a 10th-place finish as a team. Appleton finished 22nd at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships after qualifying with a sixth-place finish at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships.

Appleton has volunteered locally on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Margot is the strongest runner I've ever seen in the Eastern Independent League," said Moriah Musto, head coach of the Winsor School. "She is consistent and strong. She takes the race out hard and presses."

Appleton has maintained an A average 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 and field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Appleton joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Elizabeth Sullivan (2018-19, Portsmouth High School), Ellie Lawler (2017-18, 2016-17 & 2015-16, South Kingstown High School), and Emma McMillan (2014-15, Barrington High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Appleton has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.