

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729- 3685)

**MONTGOMERY CATHOLIC PREPARATORY SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA 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 Amaris Tyynismaa of Montgomery Catholic Preparatory School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Alabama Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Tyynismaa was the first Gatorade Alabama Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Montgomery Catholic Preparatory School when she won she award her sophomore year (2015-16).

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 Tyynismaa as Alabama'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, Tyynismaa 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-7 junior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:14.37, leading the Knights to second place as a team. Tyynismaa also won the Jesse Owens Classic, the Section 1 championship, the Warhawk Challenge and the Spain Park Invitational.

A religious education instructor at her church, Tyynismaa has volunteered locally on behalf of Meals on Wheels and the Humane Society. "Beyond Amaris' ability on the course or track, she's the most dedicated athlete I've coached in 35 years," said Montgomery Catholic coach Ed Wright. "She leads by example and encourages all her teammates to be the best they can be."

Tyynismaa has maintained a 3.70 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 Tyynismaa stands with Gatorade Alabama Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Lainey Phelps (2016-17, Homewood High School), Kaitlin York (2014-15, American Christian Academy), Karisa Nelson (2013-14, T.R. Miller High School), Carmen Carlos (2012-13, 2011-12 & 2010-11 & 2009-10, McGill-Toolen Catholic High School), and Madeline Morgan (2008-09 & 007-08, Mountain Brook High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Tyynismaa 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/>.

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