

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729- 3685)

**MOUNTAIN VIEW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IDAHO 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 Lexy Halladay of Mountain View High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Halladay is the second Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Mountain View 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 Halladay as Idaho'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, Halladay 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 and its Gatorade Track & Field Athlete of the Year last spring, the 5-foot-7 sophomore won the Class 5A state meet for a second straight year this past season with a time of 17:50.44, breaking the tape 15.14 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Mavericks to a second-place finish as a team. Halladay took second at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships and then placed 40th at the NXN Final. She won six of eight races and did not lose to an in-state opponent during the 2017 campaign.

An accomplished violinist, Halladay has volunteered locally as a youth track coach and she has donated her time on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. "Lexy was a dominant force in the Northwest this fall," said Rusty McCrea, head coach of Meridian High. "She is not only the best cross country runner in the state, but arguably the best in our region."

Halladay has maintained a 3.86 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.

Two-time winner Halladay joins Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Rachel Morrin (2015-16, Madison High School), Emily Hamlin (2014-15, Boise High School), Sam McKinnon (2013-14, Mountain View High School), Sierra Manzer (2012-13, Melba High School), Emily Nist (2011-12, Bishop Kelly High School), Kinsey Gomez (2010-11 & 2009-10, Coeur d'Alene High School), Liz Brandon (2008-09, Eagle High School), and Nicole Nielsen (2007-08, Borah High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

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

###