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**ST. JOSEPH'S ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE LOUISIANA 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 Lauren Hendry of St. Joseph's Academy as its 2017-18 Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hendry is the first Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from St. Joseph's Academy.

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 Hendry as Louisiana'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, Hendry 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-1 junior broke the tape LHSAA State XC Championships this past season with a time of 18:19.73, leading the Redstickers to the Class 5A state title as a team. Hendry won seven of her nine races and also clocked the fastest 3-mile race in the state last fall (17:54.18) before placing 56th at the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional championships.

Hendry has volunteered locally on behalf of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams Shelter and Girls on the Run, a student-led drive that collects running shoes for underprivileged girls. A member of the Beta Club and Spanish Club in addition to serving as a school ambassador and a student council representative, she has also donated her time to Baton Rouge Green, the St. Aloysius Catholic Church and Ocean Commotion, serving as a science instructor for middle school students. "One of the fastest-rising talents in one of the state's most dominant programs, Lauren not only led the Redstickers to a third state championship in four years, but also captured the individual title after improving from 13th as a freshman to fourth last season," said Erik Boal, editor of DyeStat.com. "After improving by nearly a minute at the state final, she used that momentum to continue to showcase her learning curve at the NXN South Regional, where she elevated herself from 133rd last year to 56th this season, lowering her time by 36 seconds."

Hendry has maintained a weighted 4.07 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.

Hendry joins Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Kirsten Landry (2016-17, Ascension Episcopal School), Gabrielle Jennings (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2012-13, First Baptist Christian School), Anna Katherine Devitt (2011-12, Christian Life Academy), Kaitlin Flattmann (2010-11, Benton High School), and Malia Cali (2009-10, 2008-09 & 2007-08, St. Thomas Aquinas High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hendry 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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