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**EXETER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE 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 Jacqueline Gaughan of Exeter High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Gaughan is the first Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Exeter 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 Gaughan as New Hampshire'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, Gaughan 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, the 5-foot-1 senior earned All-American honors for a second consecutive year by finishing fifth at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships this past season with a time of 17:44.60. Gaughan also broke the tape at the New Hampshire Meet of Champions in 16:51.20 to finish 14.4 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor, shattering her own meet and course record by more than 20 seconds in the process. Her 2017 campaign also featured bronze at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships (17:54.70) as well as the fastest all-divisions clocking of the day—17:41.70—at the NHIAA State Divisional Championships en route to the Division 1 title.

A member of the Outing Club at her school, Gaughan has volunteered extensively for St. Michael's Parish Service Organization to benefit the needy. "After setting an incredibly high standard last year—not only in her state but on a national level—Jackie elevated her performances in several of the season's biggest meets to achieve even greater success," said Erik Boal, editor of DyeStat.com. "Her fifth-place finish at Foot Locker Nationals was the best result by a female runner from New Hampshire since Spaulding's Danyelle Wood placed fourth in 1992. That makes Jackie one of only three girls in New Hampshire history to earn Foot Locker First Team All-American honors, along with 1984 national champion Cathy (Schiro) O'Brien of Dover.

Gaughan has maintained a weighted 5.45 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run cross country on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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 Gaughan joins Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Maegan Doody (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, Oyster River High School), Elizabeth Conway (2012-13, Central High School), Courtney Hawkins (2011-12, Milford High School), Chloe Maleski (2010-11, Keene High School), Heidi Caldwell (2009-10 & 2008-09, Hanover High School), and Georgia Griffin (2007-08, Hanover High School) as athletes who have won the cross-country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Gaughan 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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