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**CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW MEXICO GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 29, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Amanda Mayoral of Cleveland High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Mayoral is the second Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Cleveland 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 Mayoral as New Mexico'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, Mayoral 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 three-time returning Gatorade Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-6 senior won her third straight Class 6A state meet title this past season, breaking the tape with a time of 18:23.65 to finish 41.25 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor. The Storm also captured the team state championship on the strength of her winning run. Unbeaten in-state for a third consecutive cross country season, Mayoral won the Nike Cross Nationals Southwest Regional championships by four seconds and finished 61st at the NXN Final.

An accomplished violinist, Mayoral has volunteered locally on behalf of youth track meets and has also donated her time to multiple community-service initiatives through her church youth group. "Amanda usually starts conservatively, running with the lead group," said Sal Gonzales, head coach of Rio Rancho High. "Then she methodically pulls away around the one-mile mark. She has a short, smooth stride that is deceptively fast."

Mayoral has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run cross country on scholarship at the Oklahoma State University 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.

Three-time winner Mayoral joins Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Natasha Bernal (2014-15, La Cueva High School), Kelli Reagan (2013-14, St. Pius X High School), Malia Gonzales (2012-13, Sue Cleveland High School), Jenna Thurman (2011-12, Del Norte High School), Julia Foster (2010-11 & 2009-10, Albuquerque Academy), Clara Milne (2008-09, Albuquerque Academy), and Rachel Velarde (2007-08, Eldorado High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Mayoral 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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