

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729- 3685)

**SUNSET HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OREGON 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 Kelly Makin of Sunset High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Oregon Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Makin is the second Gatorade Oregon Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Sunset 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 Makin as Oregon'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, Makin 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-9 senior raced to 11th place at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships this past season with a time of 18:04.5. Makin also took second at the Class 6A state championship meet in 17:52, leading the Apollos to second place as a team. She broke the tape at both the Metro League championships and the Oxford Classic, while taking sixth at the prestigious Nike BorderClash and 27th at the Foot Locker West Regional championships.

A peer tutor in her school, Makin has volunteered locally on behalf of food-donation drives and charity road races. "What makes Kelly such a great runner is that she believes she should be great," said Sunset coach Dan Neeway. "She sets out every day to pursue her goals and insists that her teammates live up to the same level of expectation."

Makin has maintained a 3.86 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of Washington 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.

Makin joins Gatorade Oregon Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Ember Stratton (2016-17, Sunset High School), Ella Donaghu (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, Grant High School), Sara Tsai (2012-13 & 2011-12, South Eugene High School), Annamarie Maag (2010-11 & 2009-10, Jesuit High School) and Taylor Wallace (2008-09 & 2007-08, Henley High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

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