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**NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 Marlee Starliper of Northern High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Starliper is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Northern 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 Starliper as Pennsylvania'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, Starliper 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-5 sophomore raced to the Class AA individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:50. Starliper won the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championship in 17:47.5 and took 13th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, earning All-American honors. She also broke the tape at the Carlisle Invitational and the District 3 championship.

A devoted member of her church community, Starliper has volunteered locally on behalf of New Hope Ministries and youth running programs. "Marlee is very easy to coach because she knows where she's headed and knows what it takes to get there," said Northern coach Allen Houser. "In 23 years I've coached some great athletes, but she is by far the most talented."

Starliper has maintained an A average 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.

Starliper joins Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Aislinn Devlin (2016-17 & 2015-16, Downingtown High School West), Brianna Schwartz (2014-15, Shaler Area High School), Tessa Barrett (2013-14, Abington Heights High School), Courtney Smith (2012-13, Unionville High School), Angel Piccirillo (2011-12 & 2010-11, Homer-Center High School), Sara Sargent (2009-10, Pennsbury High School), Sophia Ziemian (2008-09, Lewisburg Area High School), and Neely Spence (2007-08, Shippensburg High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Starliper 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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