

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729- 3685)

**LEWIS AND CLARK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 Katie Thronson of Lewis and Clark High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Washington Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Thronson is the first Gatorade Washington Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Lewis and Clark 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 Thronson as Washington'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, Thronson 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-4 senior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:35, leading the Tigers to the state title as a team. Thronson also broke the tape at the prestigious Nike BorderClash and the Richland Invitational. She took second at the Foot Locker West Regional championships and crossed the line in 19th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships.

Thronson has volunteered locally on behalf of Deaconess Hospital and youth running programs. "Katie is one of the most driven athletes I've coached in 23 years," said Lewis and Clark coach Kevin Swaim. "She also inspires a passion for running, competing and excelling among her peers."

Thronson has maintained a 3.69 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 Tennessee 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.

Thronson joins Gatorade Washington Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Jordan Oakes (2016-17 & 2015-16, Holy Names Academy), Lindsey Bradley (2014-15, Richland High School), Alexa Efraimson (2013-14, Camas High School), Amy-Eloise Neale (2012-13, 2010-11 & 2009-10, Glacier Peak High School), Katie Knight (2011-12, North Central High School), Alyssa Andrews (2008-09, Gig Harbor High School), and Andrea Nelson (2007-08, Shadle Park High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

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