

**ROGERS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ARKANSAS GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 28, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Ali Nachtigal of Rogers High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Nachtigal is the second Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Rogers 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 Nachtigal as Arkansas' 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 February, Nachtigal joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg High School, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester High School, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley High School, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-5 sophomore repeated as state champion this past season with a time of 19:26.4 at the Class 6A state meet, breaking the tape 15.9 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Mountaineers to a second-place finish as a team. Nachtigal, who won the Class 7A state meet as a freshman, also finished eighth at the Missouri Southern Stampede and 14th at the prestigious Chile Pepper Cross Country Festival.

A member of her local chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Nachtigal has participated in a service-mission trip to St. Louis with her church, and has volunteered locally at youth running races. "Ali ran such a strong and smart race at the state meet," said Michelle Fyfe, head coach of Fayetteville High. "I like her fight in tough races."

Nachtigal has maintained a weighted 3.74 GPA 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.

Nachtigal joins Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Josie Carson (2017-18 & 2016-17, Lake Hamilton High School), Elise Reina (2015-16 & 2014-15, Har-Ber High School), and Kyandra Chandler (2013-14, Nettleton High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Nachtigal has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [www.Gatorade.com/POY](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).