

**PADUA ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 28, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Elizabeth Bader of Padua Academy as its 2018-19 Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Bader is the second Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Padua Academy.

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 Bader as Delaware'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 February, Bader 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-6 senior raced to the Division 1 individual state championship this past season with a time of 19:21.7, leading the Pandas to the state title as a team. Bader also broke the tape at the Joe O'Neill Invitational, the New Castle County championships and the White Clay Creek Classic. She took seventh at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships.

A member of her school's Students in Action club, Bader has volunteered locally on behalf of Sunday Breakfast Mission. "This was only her second year of cross country and she led the team to its first-ever perfect score at a state meet," said Padua coach Marnie Giunta. "She made an immediate impact when she gave up field hockey to run year-round. She learned from her teammates as a junior and became the leader this year as a senior."

Bader has maintained a 4.03 GPA in the classroom. She will attend the University of Pennsylvania this fall, where she will compete in cross country and track and field.

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.

Bader joins Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Lydia Olivere (2017-18, 2016-17, 2015-16 & 2014-15, Padua Academy), and Louisa Belk (2013-14, Saint Andrew's 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," Bader 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, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.