

MARIETTA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Ellie Hall of Marietta High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hall is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Marietta 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 Hall as Georgia'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, Hall 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 state's only girl to qualify for a national championship meet, the 5-foot-2 senior took third at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships this past season, crossing the line in a personal-best time of 17:48.40—one of three times she clocked a sub-17:53 over 5K last fall. Hall was also the top Georgia girls runner at the prestigious Great American Cross Country Festival, finishing 8th in 17:52.70. She also took second at the GHSA Class 7A state championship with the second-fastest all-class time of the day, leading her team to a state class title and capped her campaign with a top-100 finish at the national NXN Final (89th in 18:36.40).

A member of her school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes Leadership Team and co-leader of its Fuel Bible Study group, Hall was selected for a scholarship-supported summer leadership camp through her church community, in addition to serving on the nominating committee of her church. Also a member of Beta Club and the Marietta High Athletic Council, she has volunteered on behalf of Children's Ministries and has completed two service-mission trips to Honduras. "Ellie Hall is by far the best female athlete I have had the privilege of coaching, though she is not the most naturally talented athlete I have ever coached," said Marietta head coach Jack Coleman. "She was a 21-minute 5K runner as a freshman and now is a sub-18 at that distance. Ellie trained herself into the runner she is through consistent work in-season and offseason. She paid particular attention to doing the little things to make progress, and she never had a year in which she did not show significant improvement. She's a role model for the team on and off the racecourse.

Hall has maintained a weighted 4.46 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 Georgia 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.

Hall joins Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Elizabeth Funderburk (2017-18, Colquitt County High School), Nicole Fegans (2016-17, Landmark Christian School), Lindsay Billings (2015-16, Northview High School), Emma Grace Hurley (2014-15, Fellowship Christian School), and Kathryn Foreman (2013-14, Landmark Christian 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," Hall 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.

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