

GLENBARD WEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 Katelynne Hart of Glenbard West High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hart is the first Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Glenbard West 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 Hart as Illinois' 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, Hart 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-4 junior raced to the Class 3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:59.82. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Hart took second at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships for the second consecutive year, clocking a 17:01. She also broke the tape at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships in 17:14.9, placed third at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships and took 16th at the national NXN Final, earning All-American honors.

Hart has volunteered locally on behalf of the Mawi Learning leadership group. "Obviously Katelynne possesses considerable talent, but it's her work ethic and team-first attitude that defines who she is," said Glenbard West High School coach Paul Hass. "She also has an intangible desire to win—regardless of how fatigued she may be, she's always capable of finding another gear to summon her tremendous leg speed and defeat her competition."

Hart has maintained a 4.77 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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.

Two-time winner Hart joins Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Anna Sophia Keller (2016-17 & 2013-14, St. Anthony High School), Judy Pendergast (2015-16, Naperville North High School), and Maryjeanne Gilbert (2014-15, Peoria Notre Dame 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," Hart 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.