

ACADEMY OF THE SACRED HEART STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE LOUISIANA 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 Mary Nusloch of Academy of the Sacred Heart as its 2018-19 Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Nusloch is the first Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Academy of the Sacred Heart.

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 Nusloch as Louisiana'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, Nusloch 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 captured the LHSAA State Class 3A title this past season, running in historically cold and poor course conditions to break the tape in 22:04.20—one minute and 47.3 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor—and leading the Cardinals to the state class title. Nusloch won seven of her eight races last fall, including her last seven in a row, and was the state's only girl to clock three sub-18 three-mile times in 2018.

The Winner of the Junior Class Courtesy and Respect Award in 2017, Nusloch has completed a service-mission trip to Nicaragua in association with Amigos for Christ, helping to bring clean water to low-income communities. She also participated in a service-mission trip to Chicago as part of Food Deserts in the Land of Plenty, volunteering at the Greater Chicago Food Depository and a food pantry to study the negative health effects of life in a "food desert." "Mary's personal growth as both an athlete and human being has been a journey in which she has dedicated her time not only to improving herself, but to always making time for those not as talented as she was initially," said Sacred Heart head coach Greg Caro. "Her commitment to her training and her interest in helping her teammates become better definitely rubbed off to help many athletes strive to be like her."

Nusloch has maintained a 3.93 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at Rhodes College (Tenn.) 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.

Nusloch joins Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Lauren Hendry (2017-18, St. Joseph's Academy), Kirsten Landry (2016-17, Ascension Episcopal School), and Gabrielle Jennings (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, First Baptist 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," Nusloch 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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