

## **FALMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MAINE 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 Sofie Matson of Falmouth High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Matson is the first Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Falmouth 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 Matson as Maine'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, Matson 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 returning Gatorade Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-9 sophomore won the Class A state meet for a second straight year this past season with a time of 18:33.51, breaking the tape 15.73 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Yachtsmen to a second-place finish as a team. Matson finished eighth at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships and she earned All-American status by placing 14th at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships with a time of 18:01.4. She was unbeaten against in-state opponents for a second straight year.

An accomplished clarinetist, Matson has performed with the Portland Youth Wind Ensemble and the Portland Youth Symphony Orchestra. She is also a member of the Falmouth High debate team and volunteers for the school paper. "Sofie has been the measuring stick for Maine girls cross country over the past two seasons," said Mike Burseson, head coach of Bonny Eagle High School. "She seems to run smart races and remains under control from start to finish in every race she runs."

Matson has maintained an A average 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.

Two-time winner Matson joins Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Abigail Hamilton (2016-17, Yarmouth High School), Tia Tardy (2015-16, Orono High School), Katherine Leggat-Barr (2014-15, Greely High School), and Kirstin Sandreuter (2013-14, Greely 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," Matson 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).

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