

LONG BEACH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 Brooklyn Biancamano of Long Beach High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Biancamano is the first Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Long Beach 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 Biancamano as Mississippi'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, Biancamano 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-3 freshman broke the tape at the MHSAA 5A State Championships, clocking the fastest all-class time of the day in 18:10.70 to finish almost two minutes ahead of her next-closest competitor. Biancamano won eight of nine races last fall, including her state title run, which helped her team take bronze in Class 5A. Despite becoming ill while running as part of the lead pack in mile three, she still gutted out a top-150 finish at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships.

Conversant in American Sign Language (ASL), Biancamano is a member of the Long Beach Mayor's Youth Council and her school's Junior Civitan club, and has volunteered as a mentor on behalf of the Heritage Christian Academy (Picayune) Cross Country Camp. She has also donated her time to coastal clean-up efforts. "Brooklyn ran the fastest all-class time at the state championships, the only sub-18 5K among Mississippi girls in 2018 and was unbeaten against in-state competition," said Erik Boal, editor for DyeStat. "That's an impressive resume."

Biancamano has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore 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.

Biancamano joins Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Katelyn Cartwright (2017-18, Hernando High School), and Kate Mattox (2016-17, 2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, Starkville 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," Biancamano 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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