

**PORTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 Elizabeth Sullivan of Portsmouth High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Sullivan is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Portsmouth 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 Sullivan as Rhode Island'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, Sullivan 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-5 senior won the state meet this past season with a time of 18:40.79, breaking the tape 14.67 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Patriots to a first-place finish as a team. Sullivan was the top Rhode Island finisher at both Nike Cross Nationals Northeast Regional championships, where she finished 10th in 19:07.7, and the New England Championships, where she finished ninth.

Sullivan has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service projects through the Portsmouth High Community Service Club. "I don't think I have ever seen Elizabeth race without giving it her best," said Annmarie Gower, head coach of Barrington High. "She runs with such passion and purpose. Her quiet confidence is such a breath of fresh air."

Sullivan has maintained a weighted 4.52 GPA in the classroom. She remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Sullivan joins Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Ellie Lawler (2017-18, 2016-17 & 2015-16, South Kingstown High School), and Emma McMillan (2014-15 & 2013-14, Barrington 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," Sullivan 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.