

## **CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE VERMONT 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 Alice Larson of Champlain Valley Union High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Larson is the third Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Champlain Valley Union 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 Larson as Vermont'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, Larson 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 sophomore raced to the Division 1 state championship this past season with a time of 19:29.3, leading the Redhawks to the state title as a team. Larson also won the Queensbury Invitational, the Essex Invitational and the Ed Springstead Shaker Invitational. She took fifth at the New England Cross Country Championships, eighth at the Nike Cross Nationals Northeast Regional championships and ninth at the prestigious Manhattan Invitational.

Larson has volunteered locally on behalf of a youth summer camp. "Last season was a huge learning experience for Alice, and she really took a huge step forward this year," said Champlain Valley coach Scott Bliss. "She was clearly the best girl in the state all year, and continued to improve and grow as the season went on."

Larson has maintained a 3.31 GPA 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.

Larson joins Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Rena Schwartz (2017-18, 2016-17 & 2014-15, Green Mountain Valley School), Sophia Gorman (2015-16, Champlain Valley Union High School), and Autumn Eastman (2013-14, Champlain Valley Union 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," Larson 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).