

**MAGGIE L. WALKER GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Caroline Heinen of Maggie L. Walker Governor's School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Heinen is the first Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Maggie L. Walker Governor's 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 Heinen as Virginia'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, Heinen 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-8 junior won the Group 2A state meet title this past season with a time of 18:25, breaking the tape 26 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Dragons to a second-place finish as a team. Heinen took sixth at the prestigious Great American Cross Country Festival and she finished 35th at the Foot Locker South Regional championships.

Heinen is the co-founder and co-president of the Charity Miles Club at Maggie Walker, an organization that collects and donates old running shoes to those in need. She has volunteered locally with the Little Sisters of the Poor and at Retreat Doctors' Hospital in Richmond. "Mary Caroline is a special type of athlete," said Neil Mathews, head coach of Lee-Davis High. "She possesses a ton of talent and a great work ethic. She had a phenomenal year. Her times speak for themselves, but it's the confidence in her training that seems to set her apart."

Heinen has maintained a weighted 4.47 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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.

Heinen joins Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Olivia Beckner (2017-18, South Lakes High School), Kate Murphy (2016-17, Lake Braddock High School), Weini Kelati (2015-16, Heritage High School), Libby Davidson (2014-15, E.C. Glass High School), and Caroline Alcorta (2013-14, West Springfield 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," Heinen 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.