

## **ROGERS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARKANSAS GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 27, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Ali Nachtigal of Rogers High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Nachtigal is the second Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Rogers 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 field, distinguishes Nachtigal as Arkansas'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, Nachtigal 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-5 junior won the Class 6A state meet for a second straight time this past season, clocking an 18:28.4 to finish 22.3 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and lead the Mountaineers to a third-place finish as a team. Nachtigal, who took first at the Class 7A state meet as a freshman, also won the Arkansas vs. Oklahoma All-Star Meet and finished sixth at the Missouri Southern Stampede this past fall.

A member of her local chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Nachtigal participated in a service-mission trip to St. Louis with her church, and she has volunteered locally at youth cross country meets. "Ali never ceases to amaze me," said Carlton Efurud, head coach of Rogers High. "I love her work ethic and positive attitude. She thrives when the pressure is on to perform."

Nachtigal has maintained a weighted 3.79 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 and field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Two-time winner Nachtigal joins Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Josie Carson (2017-18 and 2016-17, Lake Hamilton High School), and Elise Reina (2015-16 & 2014-15, Har-Ber High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Nachtigal 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).