

**BLESSED TRINITY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE
NAMED GATORADE GEORGIA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF
THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 27, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Hannah Miniutti of Blessed Trinity Catholic High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Miniutti is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Blessed Trinity Catholic 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 Miniutti as Georgia'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, Miniutti 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 only girl to qualify for a national championship meet, the 5-foot-2 junior took sixth at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships this past season, crossing the line in a personal-best time of 17:46.70. Miniutti also swept the Georgia High School Meet of Champions, clocking an 18:03.01 to lead the Titans to 7th place as a team, and the GHSA Class 4A state championship race in 18:51.49, spurring Blessed Trinity to a runner-up finish. She capped her campaign with a top-75 effort at the national NXN Final (75th in 19:00.80). Also the 2019 GHSA Class 4A outdoor track 3200-meter state champion, Miniutti was the 2019 Atlanta Track Club All-Metro Girls Runner of the Year. She was also named MileSplit.com's National Girls Cross Country Performer of the Week after winning September's Wingfoot Classic (17:54.00), becoming the first girl in school history to break 18 minutes while beating some of the most talented runners in the Southeast.

Miniutti has volunteered on behalf of Titans of Mercy by assisting the elderly in nursing homes as well as with Habitat for Humanity. She has also donated her time to multiple charitable-fundraiser road races, including in support of the Rally Foundation, Mustard Seed and the Fly High Max 5K. "It would be hard to ask anything more of Hannah Miniutti," said Erik Boal, editor for DyeStat.com. "She won the state Meet of Champions, PR'd at the NXN regional and finished in the top half of the field at the NXN Final."

Miniutti has maintained a 92.4 average 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.

Miniutti joins recent Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Ellie Hall (2018-19, Marietta High School), Elizabeth Funderburk (2017-18, Colquitt County High School), Nicole Fegans (2016-17, Landmark Christian School), Lindsay Billings (2015-16, Northview High School) and Emma Grace Hurley (2014-15, Fellowship Christian School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Miniutti 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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