

**GLENBARD WEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 **Katelynne Hart of Glenbard West High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Hart is the first Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Glenbard West 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 Hart as Illinois'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, Hart 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 senior raced to her fourth consecutive Class 3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:05.8. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Hart placed fourth at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 17:14.4, earning All-American honors. She took second at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships and fourth at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships.

Hart has volunteered locally on behalf of the Mawi Learning leadership group and her school's Medical and Global Giving club. "What Katelynne has been able to do is really unprecedented," said Glenbard West coach Paul Hass. "Four-time state champion, seven-time All-American, all the records—it's just been incredible."

Hart has maintained a 4.78 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of Michigan 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.

Three-time winner Hart joins Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Anna Sophia Keller (2016-17, St. Anthony High School), Judy Pendergast (2015-16, Naperville North High School) and Maryjeanne Gilbert (2014-15, Peoria Notre Dame High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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