

FALMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MAINE 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 **Sofie Matson of Falmouth High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Matson is the first Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Falmouth 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 Matson as Maine'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, Matson 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 two-time returning Gatorade Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-9 junior won the Class A state meet for a third straight time this past season with a time of 17:52.02, breaking the tape 1:26.59 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Yachtsmen to a second-place finish as a team. Matson, who also won the New England Interscholastic Cross Country Championships, finished eighth at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships and was 24th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships. She was unbeaten against in-state opponents for a third straight year.

An accomplished clarinetist, Matson has performed with the Portland Youth Wind Ensemble and the Portland Youth Symphony Orchestra. She is a member of the Falmouth High debate team and serves on her school newspaper staff. "Sofie had another outstanding season," said Jason Tanguay, head coach of Gorham High. "She was able to pull away from the other frontrunners right at the starting gun and continued to increase her lead as the race progressed."

Matson has maintained an A 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.

Three-time winner Matson joins Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Abigail Hamilton (2016-17, Yarmouth High School), Tia Tardy (2015-16, Orono High School) and Katherine Leggat-Barr (2014-15, Greely High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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