

**NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 **Marlee Starliper of Northern High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Starliper is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Northern 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 Starliper as Pennsylvania'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, Starliper 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-6 senior raced to the Class AA state championship this past season with a meet and course-record time of 17:11, leading the Polar Bears to second place as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Starliper won the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championship in 17:03.6 and finished second nationally at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 16:46.8. She also took fifth at the Nike Cross Nationals Finals to clinch All-American honors at both national title venues. Starliper broke the tape at the District 3 championships, the Carlisle Invitational, the Lebanon Valley Invitational and the PIAA Foundation Invitational.

A devoted member of her church community, Starliper has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and youth running programs. "Marlee has helped to move our program to the next level," said Northern coach Allen Houser. "She's the perfect example of what it takes to be a successful runner. She's continued to be a great role model and a great teammate."

Starliper has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at North Carolina State University 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 Starliper joins Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Aislinn Devlin (2016-17 & 2015-16, Downingtown High School West), and Brianna Schwartz (2014-15, Shaler Area High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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