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**AMERICAN FORK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE UTAH BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 30, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Casey Clinger of American Fork High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Clinger is the third Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from American Fork 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 racecourse, distinguishes Clinger as Utah's best high school boys cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Clinger joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Prep., San Luis Obispo, Calif.), Donn Cabral (2007-08, Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury, Conn.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-11, 145-pound senior raced to a second consecutive national title this past season with a time of 15:28.4 at the Nike Cross Nationals Final. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Clinger also won the Class 5A individual state championship in a course- and meet-record time of 14:42.9, leading the Caveman to the state title as a team. He broke the tape at the NXN Southwest Regional championships in 14:53 as well as the Westlake Grass Relays, the Nebo Invitational, the Viking Invitational, the Pre-Foot Locker Invitational and the Region 4 championships. He closed his prep career with 15 straight victories at three miles and 5K dating back to 2015.

An Eagle Scout with the Boy Scouts of America and a talented musician, Clinger has volunteered locally on behalf of the Utah State Developmental Center, which assists people with intellectual disabilities. "Casey has been a model of dedication, leadership, perseverance and consistency," said American Fork coach Timo Mostert. "He's taken the legacy left by previous captains and augmented it considerably for the next generation of American Fork runners."

Clinger has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to run cross country on scholarship at BYU 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 & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Two-time winner Clinger joins Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Conner Mantz (2014-15 & 2013-14, Sky View High School), Ben Saarel (2012-13, Park City High School), Clayton Young (2011-12 & 2010-11, American Fork High School), Austin West (2009-10, American Fork High School), Jonathan Nelson (2008-09, Timpview High School), and Luke Puskedra (2007-08, Judge Memorial Catholic High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Clinger will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit www.gatorade.com/poy.

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