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**PIONEER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 12, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Nick Foster of Pioneer High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Foster is the first Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Pioneer 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 Foster as Michigan'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, Foster 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-10, 135-pound junior raced to the Division 1 individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:16.1, leading the Pioneers to the state title as a team. Foster earned victories at the Early Bird Invitational, the Jackson Invitational, the Southeastern Conference championships and the Gabriel Richard Invitational. He took second at the Portage Invitational and 12th at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships.

A peer tutor in his school, Foster has volunteered locally on behalf of the Rotary International Interact Club. "Nick Foster is a truly outstanding runner," said Pioneer coach Don Sleeman. "He's very coachable and has a strong desire to succeed. I believe he'll hold every school record from 800 meters on up by the time he graduates."

Foster has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his 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 & 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.

Foster joins Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Noah Jacobs (2016-17, Corunna High School), Isaac Harding (2015-16, Rockford High School), Grant Fisher (2014-15 & 2013-14, Grand Blanc High School), Nick Raymond (2012-13, Erie-Mason High School), Evan Chiplock (2011-12, Heritage High School), Caleb Rhynard (2010-11, Shepherd High School), Michael Atchoo (2009-10, Troy), Stephen Walker (2008-09, H.H. Dow), and Maverick Darling (2007-08, Ovid-Elsie) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Foster 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 the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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 <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.