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**OAK GROVE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 17, 2013) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Will Murphey of Oak Grove High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Murphey is the second Gatorade Mississippi Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Oak Grove 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 Murphey as Mississippi'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, Murphey joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-00, 2000-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-8 junior raced to a second consecutive Class 6A individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:29, leading the Warriors to fifth place as a team. A returning Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame POPStars Award winner, Murphey concluded the season unbeaten against in-state competition.

Also a track standout and an accomplished musician, Murphey has maintained an A average in the classroom. He has volunteered on behalf of his church's youth group and as part of construction efforts on the Lamar County running and walking track. He has served as a page on Mississippi State Senator John Polk's staff.

"Will is a very smart runner," said Oak Grove head coach Robin Ryder. "He knows his competition well and knows what he needs to do to make sure he's in contention to win. Will is able to finish races with a vicious kick that very few can catch."

Murphey 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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Murphey joins Gatorade Mississippi Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Jordan Travis (2011-12, Poplarville High School), Chad Moore (2010-11, Oak Grove High School), and Max Holman (2009-10, 2008-09 & 2007-08, Tupelo) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

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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