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**FLATHEAD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MONTANA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 17, 2013) — In its 28<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Zach Perrin of Flathead High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Montana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Perrin is the first Gatorade Montana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Flathead 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 Perrin as Montana'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, Perrin 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 6-foot senior raced to the Class AA individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:08.7, leading the Braves to fourth place as a team. The state's reigning Gatorade Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year, Perrin captured eighth place at the Foot Locker West Regional championships in 15:47 and finished 10th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 15:32.

Perrin has maintained a B average in the classroom and has served as part of his school's student government. A member of Flathead's concert choir, he has volunteered on behalf of his church, as a youth athletic instructor and by running 50 miles in a single day to raise money for a young girl suffering from cancer.

"He is very coachable, works hard and knows what his limits are," said Flathead head coach Paul Jorgensen. "Zach has been Flathead's top cross country runner for the last three years, and he's the top cross country runner in the state of Montana."

Perrin remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Perrin joins Gatorade Montana Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Jakob Woodland (2011-12, Bozeman High School), Jacob Turner (2010-11, Sentinel High School), Mike Asay (2009-10, Manhattan), Drew Coco (2008-09, Whitefish), and Patrick Casey (2007-08, Laurel) 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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