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**BISMARCK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA 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 Jake Leingang of Bismarck High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Leingang is the second Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Bismarck 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 Leingang as North Dakota'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, Leingang 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-9 senior raced to a third consecutive Class A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:09.3, leading the Demons to an eighth straight state title as a team. The state's two-time returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Leingang captured first place at both the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships in 14:56 and the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships in 15:16.04. Leingang took third at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 15:07 and finished 59th at the Nike Cross Nationals Final in 18:14.

Also a track standout, Leingang has maintained a 3.61 GPA in the classroom. An active member of his church's youth group, he has volunteered locally at a soup kitchen and retirement home, in addition to donating his time as a youth running instructor.

"His ability to focus and compete with relentless pursuit distinguished him from the competition," said Bismarck head coach Darrell Anderson. "He's the greatest distance runner in the history of Bismarck High, and he has earned a reputation nationally as one of the country's best distance runners."

Leingang has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at the University of Oregon beginning 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.

Leingang joins Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Brett Kelly (2009-10, Century), and Joash Osoro (2008-09 & 2007-08, Bismarck), 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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