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**SHELDON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE OREGON 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 Jackson Darland of Sheldon High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Oregon Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Darland is the second Gatorade Oregon Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Sheldon 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 Darland as Oregon'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, Darland 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-10 senior raced to the Class 6A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:40, leading the Irish to fourth place as a team. Darland also captured victories at the Marist Invitational, the Country Fair Classic and the Southwest District Championships.

Darland has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. Also a talented musician and editor of his school newspaper, he has volunteered locally on behalf of a homeless shelter, a community garden and an elementary school literacy-outreach program.

"What makes Jackson special is his fearless pursuit to be great at everything he does," said Sheldon coach Brayce Forsha. "Whether it's running, school, music, work or volunteering, he gives everything he has to doing the best he possibly can. That mentality has had an amazing effect on the rest of the team."

Darland 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.

Darland joins Gatorade Oregon Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Travis Neuman (2011-12, Summit High School), Matthew Melancon (2010-11, Sheldon High School), Drew Jordan (2009-10, North Medford), Elliott Jantzer (2008-09, Phoenix), and Bryce Burgess (2007-08, Franklin) 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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