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**PINE CREEK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 16, 2014) — In its 29th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Zach Alhamra of Pine Creek High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Alhamra is the first Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Pine Creek 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 Alhamra as Colorado'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, Alhamra 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, 120-pound junior raced to 20th place nationally this past season with a time of 15:25 at the Nike Cross Nationals Final. Alhamra earned victories at the Liberty Bell Invitational, the Metro League Championships and the Region 5 Championships. He also finished second at the Class 5A state meet with a time of 16:29, and was seventh at the NXN Southwest Regional championships.

Alhamra has maintained a 4.64 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade Award's broad criteria. A member of the National Honor Society and the Mu Alpha Theta math club, he has volunteered locally on behalf of multiple community service initiatives associated with his church youth group and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"Zachary is the hardest worker I've ever coached," said Pine Creek coach Mark Weeks. "My biggest challenge has been to harness his energy and enthusiasm."

Alhamra 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.

Alhamra joins Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Ashi Geberkidane (2012-13, Denver East High School), Ty Williams (2011-12, Telluride High School), Spencer Wenck (2010-11, Palmer Ridge High School), Scott Faunle (2009-10, Wheat Ridge), Evan Appel (2008-09, Dakota Ridge), and Kevin Williams (2007-08, D'Evelyn) 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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