

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)

POCATELLO HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE IDAHO 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 **Elijah Armstrong of Pocatello High School** as its **2013-14 Gatorade Idaho Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Armstrong is the first Gatorade Idaho Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Pocatello 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 Armstrong as Idaho'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, Armstrong 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, 125-pound junior raced to his second straight Class 4A individual state title this past season with a time of 15:41.08, leading the Indians to a state championship as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Armstrong placed third at the Foot Locker West Regional championships in 15:53 to qualify for the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships. He took sixth at the national championships, earning All-American honors with a time of 15:22. He also earned second place at the 2013 Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships, crossing the line in 15:24.1.

Armstrong has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A devoted parishioner in his church community, he has volunteered locally as an aide to the elderly and as a youth track and field and wrestling coach.

"Elijah Armstrong is an outstanding athlete who is constantly pushing himself to do better," said Pocatello High head coach Shannon Whitmer. "He wants to be great and in order for him to do that, he knows that he must get out and compete at the highest level possible."

Armstrong 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.

Two-time winner Armstrong joins Gatorade Idaho Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Dallin Farnsworth (2011-12 & 2010-11, Highland High School), Cody Helbling (2009-10, Lake City), Barak Watson (2008-09, Columbia), and Eric Fitzpatrick (2007-08, Boise) 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.

###