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**WAYZATA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MINNESOTA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 16, 2014) — In its 29<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 Connor Olson of Wayzata High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Olson is the second Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Wayzata 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 Olson as Minnesota'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, Olson 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, 145-pound junior earned seventh place at the 2013 Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships this past season, crossing the line 15:37. He also finished 34th at the 2013 Nike Cross Nationals Final in 15:36. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Olson took second at the Class AA state meet this past season, crossing the line with a time of 15:17.4.

Olson has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade Award's broad criteria. He has volunteered locally on behalf of the Plymouth Parks and Recreation department, as a youth track and field coach and in association with multiple fundraising initiatives to benefit cancer research.

"We have competed many times against Connor Olson and he is clearly one of the best in the state," said Jamie Kirkpatrick, head coach at Edina High. "He's a really good kid who works extremely hard. He's the type of runner who really puts the team above himself, which is something you don't always see when you're competing at his level."

Olson 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.

Olson joins Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Matt Welch (2012-13, Proctor High School), Josh Thorson (2011-12, Wayzata High School), Adam Zutz (2010-11, St. Francis High School), Aaron Bartnik (2009-10, Eden Prairie), Lukas Gemar (2008-09, Moorhead), and Jordan Carlson (2007-08, Rosemount) 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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