

Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)

**MARQUETTE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 Noah Kauppila of Marquette High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Kauppila is the first Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Marquette 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 Kauppila as Missouri'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, Kauppila 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 6-foot-2 senior distance runner raced to the Class 4 individual state championship with a meet-record time of 15:22.34 this past season, leading the Mustangs to sixth place as a team. Also the Runner of the Year as named by Missouri MileSplit, Kauppila captured eighth place at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships in 15:20, and then finished 39th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 17:30. He placed 14th at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships in 16:35.10.

Kauppila has maintained a 4.53 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth running instructor, he has volunteered locally at a food bank.

"Noah is an athlete that I personally like to watch at a meet," said Darrell Lewis, head coach of rival Eureka High. "He sets an example not only for his teammates, but also for all his other competitors. Not only does Noah possess great running ability, but he is also one that will immediately cheer for his teammates as soon as his race is over."

Kauppila 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.

Kauppila joins Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Simon Belete (2012-13, Blue Springs High School), Zach Herriott (2011-12 & 2010-11, Rockhurst High School), Maksim Korolev (2009-10, Harrisonville), Kevin Colon (2008-09, Lee's Summit West), and Eric Fernandez (2007-08, Parkway West) 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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