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**NORMAN NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE OKLAHOMA 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 Ben Barrett of Norman North High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Barrett is the second Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Norman North 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 Barrett as Oklahoma'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, Barrett 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, 132-pound junior raced to the Class 6A individual state championship this past season with a meet-record time of 15:30.76, breaking the tape 10 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Timberwolves to a third-place finish as a team. The Oklahoman Boys All-City Runner of the Year, Barrett qualified for both the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships and the Nike Cross Nationals Final, placing 29<sup>th</sup> at Foot Locker and 105<sup>th</sup> at the NXN Final.

Barrett has maintained a 3.95 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Norman North National Honor Society, he has volunteered locally with the faith-based Young Life organization.

"Ben Barrett is incredibly talented," said Scott Monnard, head coach of Norman High. "Watching him emerge the last few years in the same town, he demonstrated a work ethic that equaled his talent, and that's why he's running at such a high level."

Barrett 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.

Barrett joins Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Noah Gade (2012-13, Stillwater High School), Tanner Satterthwaite (2011-12, Norman High School), Andrew Leahey (2010-11, Plainview High School), Toby Bothwell (2009-10, Westmoore), Taylor Monaghan (2008-09, Union), and Steven Baker (2007-08, Union) 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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