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**STRAKE JESUIT COLLEGE PREPARATORY STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE TEXAS 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 Frank Lara of Strake Jesuit College Preparatory as its 2013-14 Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Lara is the first Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Strake Jesuit College Preparatory.

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 Lara as Texas'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, Lara 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-7, 120-pound senior raced to the Class 5A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:26.25. Lara finished second at the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional championships in 15:31.67, and took ninth at the Foot Locker South Regional championships. He earned victories at the District Championships, the San Jacinto Battleground Invitational and the Jesuit Invitational.

Lara has maintained a 3.89 GPA in the classroom. Also a talented musician, he is a member of the school's Athletes in Action service club and has organized visits to the cancer center at Texas Children's Hospital.

"Frank is one of the most disciplined athletes I have coached in 35 years," said Strake Jesuit coach Mike Kerley. "He's been a wonderful mentor to the younger athletes on our team."

Lara 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.

Lara joins Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Robert Domanic (2012-13, Hebron High School), Craig Nowak (2011-12, Cypress Woods High School), Craig Lutz (2010-11 & 2009-10, Marcus High School), Reed Connor (2008-09, The Woodlands), and Colby Lowe (2007-08, Southlake Carroll) 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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