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**THOMAS EDISON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Louis Colson of Thomas Edison High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Colson is the first Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Thomas Edison 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 Colson as Virginia'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, Colson 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-6 senior distance runner raced to the Group 5A individual state championship with a time of 15:06 this past season, leading the Eagles to eighth place as a team. Also the Runner of the Year as named by MileStat.com, Colson captured fourth place at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 14:50, and then took 32nd at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 15:59. He finished unbeaten against Virginia competition this past fall.

Colson has maintained a 4.44 weighted GPA in the classroom. An accomplished trumpet player, he has donated his time as a peer tutor, a youth running instructor and a Fairfax County Youth Leadership Program intern.

"Louis is truly a coach's dream," said Thomas Edison head coach Bernadette Flynn. "He epitomizes the moniker 'student of the sport,' putting countless hours into developing into the best possible student-athlete he can be. He has researched the mental as well as the physical aspects of the sport and continues to grow each season and always looking for new goals to reach. He is a tremendous athlete, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with such a wonderful person."

Colson will attend Harvard University this fall, where he will continue his running career.

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.

Colson joins Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Sean McGorty (2012-13, Chantilly High School), Ahmed Bile (2011-12 & 2010-11, Annandale High School), Kevin Dowd (2009-10, Fairfax), Thomas Porter (2008-09, Mountain View), and Jason Witt (2007-08, Midlothian) 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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