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**NORTH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 Kai Wilmot of North Central High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Wilmot is the second Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from North Central 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 Wilmot as Washington'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, Wilmot 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, 130-pound senior raced to a national title this past season with a course-record time of 15:00 at the Nike Cross Nationals Final. Wilmot finished fourth at the NXN Northwest Regional championships in 15:35, and took fourth at the Class 3A state meet with a time of 15:17.89, helping the Indians to the state title as a team. He also earned a victory at Idaho's Bob Firman Invitational.

Wilmot has maintained a 3.98 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally thinning the forest at Riverside State Park, raising funds to educate a child from Nepal and assisting at Women and Children's Free Restaurant and Community Kitchen.

"People were surprised when he won the national title, but it wasn't really a surprise to us," said North Central coach Jon Knight. "Kai is very light on his feet, and he's an aerobic machine. He's a very mentally tough kid and he's not afraid to make a move when other runners might hesitate. He followed his plan and ran a perfect race."

Wilmot is 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.

Wilmot joins Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Andrew Gardner (2012-13, Mead High School), Nathan Weitz (2011-12, Shadle Park High School), Kenji Bierig (2010-11, Lewis & Clark High School), Shane Moskowitz (2009-10, Central Kitsap), Andrew Kimpel (2008-09, North Central), and Miles Unterreiner (2007-08, Gig Harbor) 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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