

Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)

**PROVIDENCE DAY SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 Ben Huffman of Providence Day School as its 2013-14 Gatorade North Carolina Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Huffman is the first Gatorade North Carolina Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Providence Day 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 Huffman as North Carolina'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, Huffman 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-1 senior distance runner captured the North Carolina Independent Schools Athletic Association Class 3A individual state championship with a time of 15:24.39 this past season, leading the Chargers to the state title as a team. Also the Runner of the Year as named by the Charlotte Observer, Huffman captured second place at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 14:44, and then took 22nd at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 15:49.

Huffman has maintained a 3.79 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered on behalf of the Crisis Assistance Ministry, as a mentor for elementary school students in association with the Science Olympiad and as part of his church's efforts to provide food for homeless children.

"Ben is like no other athlete I have ever coached," said Providence Day head coach Ben Hovis. "Not only is he talented, but he simply knows how to run and train. He has always soaked up everything he could, and it shows in his preparation and execution. He has an incredible knack to rise to the occasion and perform."

Huffman 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.

Huffman joins Gatorade North Carolina Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Bakri Abushouk (2012-13, Cary High School), Thomas Graham (2011-12, Cary Academy), Blake Williams (2010-11, Northern High School), Jake Hurysz (2009-10, Eastern Alamance), Taylor Gilland (2008-09, Chapel Hill), and Ryan Hill (2007-08, Hickory) 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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