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**PALMER RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 15, 2015) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Eric Hamer of Palmer Ridge High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hamer is the second Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Palmer Ridge 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 Hamer as Colorado'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, Hamer 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-10, 140-pound senior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:17.7, leading the Bears to the state title as a team. Hamer took third at the Nike Cross Nationals Southwest Regional championships and finished fourth nationally at the NXN Final, earning All-American status in a time of 15:23. He also broke the tape at the Region 2 championships, the Pikes Peak Conference championships, the Dave Sanders Invitational and the Woodland Park Run Above the Clouds.

Hamer has maintained a 3.80 GPA in the classroom. A troop leader with the Boy Scouts of America and a devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of youth running programs.

"Eric has more resilience than any other athlete I have ever coached," said Palmer Ridge coach Kelly Christensen. "He always shows up on time and gives us 100 percent every day, no matter how hard his life gets. There is nothing he wouldn't do to accomplish his goals."

Hamer 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.

Hamer joins Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Zach Alhamra (2013-14, Pine Creek High School), Ashi Geberkidane (2012-13, Denver East High School), Ty Williams (2011-12, Telluride High School), Spencer Wenck (2010-11, Palmer Ridge High School), Scott Fauble (2009-10, Wheat Ridge), Evan Appel (2008-09, Dakota Ridge), and Kevin Williams (2007-08, D'Evelyn) 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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