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**KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS-KAPALAMA STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE HAWAII 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 Kaeo Kruse of Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama as its 2014-15 Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Kruse is the third Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama.

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 Kruse as Hawaii'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, Kruse 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 junior raced to an individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:38.1, leading the Warriors to a state title as a team. Also the 2014 Interscholastic League of Honolulu Runner of the Year, Kruse was the fastest Hawaii competitor at the Foot Locker South Regional championships, clocking a 16:25.7 to cross the line in 33rd.

Kruse has maintained a 3.88 GPA in the classroom. A two-time winner in his age group at the Nautica United States Lifesaving Association's National Junior Lifeguard Championships, he has volunteered locally on behalf of multiple community clean-up initiatives.

"Kaeo Kruse is an extremely dedicated worker and a stoic competitor," said Kamehameha head coach Steve Jenness. "He is an excellent student and it never appears that any task is too big. He is truly fearless."

Kruse will begin his senior year of high school this fall.

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.

Kruse joins Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Davis Kaahanui (2013-14 & 2012-13, Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama High School), Troy Esaki (2011-12, Iolani School), Jordan Thibodeau (2010-11, Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama High School), Pierce Murphy (2009-10, Island School), and Bryce Jenkins (2008-09 & 2007-08, Leilehua) 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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