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GATORADE® NATIONAL BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR: Grant Fisher

Professional Distance Runner Dathan Ritzenhein Surprises Standout with Elite Honor

Grand Blanc, MI (Jan 22, 2014) - In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, recently announced Grant Fisher of Grand Blanc High School (Grand Blanc, Mich.) as its 2014-15 Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Fisher was surprised with the news by three-time USA 12K Cross Country champion Dathan Ritzenhein, who earned Gatorade Michigan Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year honors in 1999-00 and 2000-01.

"Grant really deserves to be this year's Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year because he embodies everything the award stands for," said Ritzenhein "Not only has Grant excelled on the course, but he's also a stellar student and is a positive influence in the community. I'm excited to follow his career and watch all the things he will accomplish in the future."

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Fisher as the nation's best high school boys cross country runner. A national advisory panel comprised of sport-specific experts and sports journalists helped select Fisher from nearly 250,000 high school football players nationwide. Fisher is now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade Male High School Athlete of the Year award, to be presented at a special afternoon ceremony prior to The ESPY Awards in July.

The 5-foot-10, 135-pound senior raced to the national title this past season with a time of 15:00 at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships. Fisher won the Division 1 state title in 14:52.5 and captured the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championship in 15:00. He was also first at the Portage Invitational, the Jackson Invitational, the KLAA Lakes Conference Championships and the Region 2 Championships.

Fisher has maintained a 4.11 GPA in the classroom. A peer tutor in his school, he has volunteered locally on behalf of a winter coat drive and youth sports programs.

"Grant Fisher not only became a two-time champion at Foot Locker in December, he dominated the race," said Doug Binder, DyeStat.com's Editor-in-Chief. "The day before, he picked the spot where he intended to pull away from his challengers and sprint to the finish. He executed this plan with precision, and when he accelerated with that lethal kick of his, it left no doubt."

Fisher has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on an athletic scholarship at Stanford University beginning this fall.

“Grant embodies everything we look for in a Gatorade Player of the Year recipient,” said Gatorade Vice President, Brand Marketing Morgan Flatley. “In addition to being one of the best high school cross country runners in the country, Grant has excelled in the classroom and been a positive influence in his community. He is a role model for younger student-athletes to look up to and we are excited to see all the things he will accomplish in the future.”

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 [USA TODAY High School Sports](#) and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, 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.

Former notable Gatorade National Players of the Year include:

- Super Bowl Most Valuable Player Peyton Manning
- WNBA all-time leading scorer and rebounder Lisa Leslie
- NFL all-time leading rusher Emmitt Smith
- Kansas City Royals Cy Young award-winner Zach Grienke

For more information on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of former winners, and future announcement dates, visit the Gatorade Player of the Year Web site at <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com>, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

ALL-TIME GATORADE NATIONAL BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNERS OF THE YEAR

YEAR	NAME	HIGH SCHOOL	STATUS
2014-15	Grant Fisher	Grand Blanc/Grand Blanc, MI	High School Senior
2013-14	Grant Fisher	Grand Blanc/Grand Blanc, MI	High School Senior
2012-13	Edward Cheserek	St. Benedict's/Newark, NJ	University of Oregon
2011-12	Futsum Zeinasellassie	North Central/Indianapolis, IN	Northern Arizona University
2010-11	Lukas Verzbicas	Carl Sandburg/Orland Park, IL	Professional Triathlete
2009-10	Lukas Verzbicas	Carl Sandburg/Orland Park, IL	Professional Triathlete
2008-09	Reed Connor	The Woodlands/The Woodlands, TX	University of Wisconsin
2007-08	Chris Derrick	Neuqua Valley/Naperville, IL	Stanford University Grad.

About Gatorade

The Gatorade Company, a division of PepsiCo (NYSE: PEP), provides sports performance innovations designed to meet the needs of athletes at all competitive levels and across a broad range of sports. Gatorade Thirst Quencher® is backed by more than 40 years of research and is scientifically formulated and athletically proven to quench thirst, replace fluids and electrolytes, and provide carbohydrate energy to enhance athletic performance. The company's product portfolio is built around the G Series™, a 1-2-3 approach to athlete nutrition and hydration before (Gatorade Prime 01™), during (Gatorade® Perform 02 and G2® Perform 02), and after (Gatorade Recover 03™) training or competition. For more information, please visit www.gatorade.com.

About PepsiCo

PepsiCo offers the world's largest portfolio of billion-dollar food and beverage brands, including 18 different product lines that each generate more than \$1 billion in annual retail sales. Our main businesses - Frito-Lay, Quaker, Pepsi-Cola, Tropicana and Gatorade - also make hundreds of other nourishing, tasty foods and drinks that bring joy to our consumers in over 200 countries. With more than \$43 billion in 2008 revenues, PepsiCo employs 198,000 people who are united by our unique commitment to sustainable growth, called Performance with Purpose. By dedicating ourselves to offering a broad array of choices for healthy, convenient and fun nourishment, reducing our environmental impact, and fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace culture, PepsiCo balances strong financial returns with giving back to our communities worldwide. For more information, please visit www.pepsico.com.

About USA TODAY Sports Media Group

The USA TODAY Sports Media Group encompasses all sports initiatives across USA TODAY Sports and Gannett's more than 100 well-known local media brands. It also includes the sports photography wire service USA TODAY Sports Images, USA TODAY High School Sports and the hundreds of sites within USA TODAY Sports Digital Properties such as thebiglead.com and mixed martial arts site MMAjunkie.com, among others. USA TODAY is owned by Gannett Co., Inc. (NYSE: GCI).

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