

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)**

**CREIGHTON PREPARATORY SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NEBRASKA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 15, 2015) — In its 30<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced John Nownes of Creighton Preparatory School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Nownes is the first Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Creighton Preparatory 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 Nownes as Nebraska'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, Nownes 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, 150-pound senior raced to the Class A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:46.8, leading the Blue Jays to a state title as a team. Also a two-time Nebraska Coaches Association Boys Cross Country Super-State selection, Nownes finished eighth at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships, crossing the line in 15:28.2. He also finished 26th at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships, clocking a 15:52.

Nownes has maintained a 3.97 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society as well as his school's campus ministry advisory board, he has volunteered locally as a peer tutor and has completed a service-mission trip to the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Reservation in South Dakota.

"John Nownes is a team leader and his strong work ethic set a high standard that other runners tried to match," said Creighton Prep head coach Robert Tillman. "He can be credited not only for his individual accomplishments but also the success of the team in winning the state championship."

Nownes remains 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.

Nownes joins Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Wyatt McGuire (2013-14, North Platte High School), Joe Harter (2012-13, Millard West High School), Jacob Olson (2011-12 & 2010-11, Kearney High School), Jarren Heng (2009-10 & 2008-09, Norfolk Catholic), and Jon Ronhovde (2007-08, Fremont) 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

###