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**BISMARCK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA 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 Sam Clausnitzer of Bismarck High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Clausnitzer is the fourth Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Bismarck 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 Clausnitzer as North Dakota'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, Clausnitzer 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-9, 129-pound junior raced to the Class A individual state championship with a time of 15:32.90 this past season, leading the Demons to a 10th consecutive team title. A two-time Class A All-State honoree, Clausnitzer finished 31st at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships in 15:54.80. He concluded the 2014 cross country campaign unbeaten against North Dakota prep competitors.

Clausnitzer has maintained a B average in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth running instructor, he has volunteered on behalf of his church's youth group, the Salvation Army and his school's annual Pack the Pantry food drive.

"On a statewide and regional level, Sam's accomplishments on the cross country course speak for themselves," said Ken Gardner, head coach of rival Jamestown High. "He was a dominant athlete across the state of North Dakota this season. Other runners in the area, including those on my own team, see his performances and know what it takes to perform at that level. As a coach, I can then point to Sam's races as an example of the benefits of hard work and dedication."

Clausnitzer 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.

Clausnitzer joins Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Matt Gotta (2013-14, Bismarck High School), Jake Leingang (2012-13, 2011-12 & 2010-11, Bismarck High School), Brett Kelly (2009-10, Century), and Joash Osoro (2008-09 & 2007-08, Bismarck), 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).

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