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Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)

**LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 Will Lauer of Lincoln High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Lauer is the first Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Lincoln 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 Lauer as South 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, Lauer 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, 130-pound senior raced to the Class AA individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:13.2, leading the Patriots to a state title as a team. Also a 2014 South Dakota Cross Country and Track & Field Coaches Association All-State selection, Lauer earned second place at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships, crossing the line in 15:07.5. He went on to compete at the NXN Final, where he finished 27th in 15:52.

Lauer has maintained a 3.93 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and his school's jazz band, he has volunteered locally on behalf of his church youth group.

"Will Lauer has a unique skill set of intelligence, motivation and a passion for running that has fueled his success," said Lincoln High head coach Eric Pooley. "He is becoming one of the best distance runners in South Dakota history."

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

Lauer joins Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Addison DeHaven (2013-14 & 2012-13, Brookings High School), Tony Smoragiewicz (2011-12 & 2010-11, Rapid City Central High School), Josh Heitkamp (2009-10, Washington), Alex Muntefering (2008-09, Parkston), and Bill Kogel (2007-08, Roosevelt) 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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