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**GALENA CITY SCHOOLS STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 22, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Kaleb Korta of Galena City Schools as its 2015-16 Gatorade Alaska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Korta is the first Gatorade Alaska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Galena City Schools.

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 Korta as Alaska'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, Korta 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-7, 140-pound senior raced to his second consecutive Class 1-2-3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:59.9. Korta also won the Region VI championship, the Palmer Invitational and the ACS Class Challenge.

Korta has maintained a 3.91 GPA in the classroom. Also a talented musician, he assists the elderly in his community and has volunteered locally on behalf of the Civil Air Patrol and the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

"Kaleb is just so focused and motivated," said Galena co-coach Molissa Bifelt. "He made a tremendous commitment, even before his freshman year, to be the best runner he could be. No matter the conditions, he always finds time to train."

Korta has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on an athletic scholarship at the University of Alaska-Anchorage 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.

Korta joins Gatorade Alaska Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Levi Thomet (2014-15, 2013-14 & 2012-13, Kodiak High School), Miles Knotek (2011-12, Seward High School), Silas Talbot (2010-11, Service High School), Jacob Kirk (2009-10, Grace Christian School), and Trevor Dunbar (2008-09 & 2007-08, Kodiak High School) 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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