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**HAR-BER HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE ARKANSAS BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 22, 2016) — In its 31<sup>st</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced T.J. Sugg of Har-Ber High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Arkansas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Sugg is the first Gatorade Arkansas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Har-Ber 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 Sugg as Arkansas'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, Sugg 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, 145-pound senior raced to the Class 7A individual state title this past season with a time of 15:48.8, leading the Wildcats to a third-place finish as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Sugg won the Missouri Southern Stampede in 15:22.2 and was the fastest Arkansas runner at the Chile Pepper Cross Country Festival, crossing the line in 15:26.2 to take eighth.

Sugg has maintained a 3.4.1 GPA in the classroom. An Eagle Scout with Boy Scouts of America and a member of the National Honor Society, he has volunteered locally on behalf of Family Legacy Missions as well as the Hooked on Fishing-Not on Drugs youth education program run by the Future Fisherman Foundation.

"T.J. Sugg doesn't seem to have any weaknesses in races," said Har-Ber head coach Joe Crommett. "Whatever they throw at him, he is able to respond to. He's strong throughout the race and his finishing kick is pretty amazing. I honestly don't know how fast he can run, but he has a lot of untapped talent. He is one of those special athletes who doesn't come along very often."

Sugg 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.

Two-time winner Sugg joins Gatorade Arkansas Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Jacob Shiohira (2013-14 & 2012-13, Bentonville High School), Will Aenchenbacher (2011-12, Bentonville High School), Christian Heymsfield (2010-11, Elkins High School), Christopher Marchman (2009-10, Sheridan High School), Cameron Efurd (2008-09, Rogers High School), and Aaron Hamilton (2007-08, Rogers 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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