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**ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA 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 Phillip Rocha of Arcadia High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade California Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Rocha is the third Gatorade California Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Arcadia 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 Rocha as California'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, Rocha 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, 145-pound senior raced to the Division 1 individual state championship this past season with a time of 14:42.9. Rocha placed second at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 15:07.9, and was also second at the Foot Locker West Regional championships. He broke the tape at the Stanford Invitational, the Clovis Invitational and the Mt. SAC Invitational.

Rocha has maintained a B average in the classroom. A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, he has volunteered locally on behalf of youth running programs.

"Phillip set the bar exceedingly high for himself as a freshman, and in the three years since he's raised that bar time and time again," said Arcadia coach Michael Feraco-Eberle. "He ran personal bests in every race, save two where he was ordered by his coaches to conserve his energy, and two where he was asked to sacrifice his time in order to better pace an inexperienced varsity group."

Rocha 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.

Rocha joins Gatorade California Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Austin Tamagno (2014-15, Brea Olinda High School), Blake Haney (2013-14, Stockdale High School), Bryan Fernandez (2012-13, Dos Pueblos High School), Darren Fahy (2011-12, La Costa Canyon High School), Ammar Moussa (2010-11 & 2009-10, Arcadia High School), Chris Schwartz (2008-09, Foothill High School), and German Fernandez (2007-08, Riverbank 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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