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MARIST SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Frank Pittman of Marist School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Georgia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Pittman is the first Gatorade Georgia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Marist 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 Pittman as Georgia'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, Pittman 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-11, 150-pound senior distance runner raced to the Class AAAA individual state championship with a time of 17:08.92 this past season, leading the War Eagles to a state title. Also the Team Georgia Runner of the Year as named by the Atlanta Track Club, Pittman took third at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships in 15:11.60, and then placed 151st at the NXN Final in 16:43.60. His performance at the NXN Southeast Regional was the state's fastest time among prep competitors in 2015.

Pittman has maintained a 3.81 GPA in the classroom. A National Merit Scholarship Commended Student and Marist student ambassador, he has served as a member of his school's student council, honor council and discipline committee. Also a member of the National Honor Society and Latin Honor Society, he has donated his time as a youth running instructor and volunteered with Project Open Hand, Peer2Peer Tutors, the Atlanta Mission's Thrift Store and FOCUS for mentally and physically challenged children.

"He is, in my opinion, hands down the most talented runner in Georgia this year," said Ryan McClay, head coach at rival St. Pius X Catholic High. "I think he proved that by winning the Coach Wood Invitational in October, which was the only time all of the top teams and runners were on the same course at the same time."

Pittman has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on an athletic scholarship at Georgia Tech 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.

Pittman joins Gatorade Georgia Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Reilly Friedman (2014-15, The Galloway School), Austin Sprague (2013-14, St. Pius X Catholic High School), Josh Brickell (2012-13 & 2011-12, Peachtree Ridge High School), Cody Barger (2010-11, North Hall High School), Kirubel Erassa (2009-10, Grayson High School), Taylor Lord (2008-09, Chapel Hill High School), and Zack Flickinger (2007-08, Lassiter 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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