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**KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS-KAPALAMA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE HAWAII 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 Kaeo Kruse of Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Kruse is the third Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama 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 Kruse as Hawaii'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, Kruse 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, 140-pound senior raced to an individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:22.2.2, leading the Warriors to a second-place finish as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Kruse was also the fastest Hawaii competitor at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships, clocking a 15:45.7 to cross the line in eighth place.

Kruse has maintained a 3.89 GPA in the classroom. A two-time winner of his age group at the Nautica United States Lifesaving Association's National Junior Lifeguard Championships, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics as well as multiple community clean-up initiatives.

"Kaeo Kruse is a disciplined and tenacious runner who pushes the performance of the entire field with his consistency," said Iolani High head coach Jack Kuo. "Just when you think you've seen his best, he always seems to shatter the ceiling and put on a show whenever he gets the chance to run against elite competition."

Kruse will attend Harvard University this fall, where he will compete in cross country and track and field.

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 Kruse joins Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Davis Kaahanui (2013-14 & 2012-13, Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama High School), Troy Esaki (2011-12, Iolani School), Jordan Thibodeau (2010-11, Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama High School), Pierce Murphy (2009-10, Island School), and Bryce Jenkins (2008-09 & 2007-08, Leilehua 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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