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**SHELLEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE IDAHO 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 Austin Stewart of Shelley High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Idaho Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Stewart is the first Gatorade Idaho Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Shelley 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 Stewart as Idaho'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, Stewart 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, 150-pound senior raced to the Class 3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:05.9, leading the Russets to a second-place finish as a team. A three-time First All-State selection, Stewart took 26th at the Foot Locker West Regional championships, crossing the line in 16:18.6. He was also the fastest Idaho competitor at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships with a time of 16:16.1.

Stewart has maintained a 3.50 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 his church youth group.

"Austin Stewart is an extremely self-motivated and dedicated runner," said Shelley High head coach Ryan Campbell. "He helped build our program into an annual state title contender and he has inspired youth athletes in the community not only to run, but also to aspire to greatness."

Stewart has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on an athletic scholarship at Weber State University 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.

Stewart joins Gatorade Idaho Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Elijah Armstrong (2014-15, 2013-14 & 2012-13, Pocatello High School), Dallin Farnsworth (2011-12 & 2010-11, Highland High School), Cody Helbling (2009-10, Lake City High School), Barak Watson (2008-09, Columbia High School), and Eric Fitzpatrick (2007-08, Boise 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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