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**SOUTH OLDHAM HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 Cole Dowdy of South Oldham High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Dowdy is the first Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from South Oldham 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 Dowdy as Kentucky'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, Dowdy 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-8, 135-pound senior raced to the Class 3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:20.3, leading the Dragons to a second-place finish as a team. The 2015 Kentucky Track and Cross County Coaches Association Class 3A Runner of the Year, Dowdy took seventh at the Foot Locker South Regional championships, crossing the line in 15:16, then went on to compete at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, where he earned 38th place in 16:25.6.

Dowdy has maintained a 4.32 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, the Beta Club and Boy Scouts of America, he has volunteered locally on behalf of an area food bank.

"During his freshman year, Cole Dowdy set a goal of becoming a state champion and a Foot Locker Cross Country Championship finalist," said South Oldham head coach Stan Clark. "He used his strength and the willingness needed for four years to accomplish that goal. His mental toughness and focus not only made his dream a reality, but also helped the team be the best it could be."

Dowdy has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on an athletic scholarship at the University of Kentucky 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.

Dowdy joins Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Ethan Shuley (2014-15, Highlands High School), Patrick Gregory (2013-14, Butler Traditional High School), Jacob Thomson (2012-13 & 2011-12, Holy Cross High School), Evan Ehrenheim (2010-11, Daviess County High School), Ryan Eaton (2009-10 & 2008-09, Greenwood High School), and Gordy Dooley (2007-08, St. Henry District 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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