

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**JOHN CURTIS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE LOUISIANA 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 Devyn Keith of John Curtis Christian School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Keith is the first Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from John Curtis Christian 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 Keith as Louisiana'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, Keith 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 state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year raced to the Class 5A individual state championship with a time of 16:08.90 this past season, leading the Patriots to second place as a team. The 5-foot-9, 160-pound senior distance runner took second at the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional championships in 17:10.10, and then finished 84th at the NXN Final in 16:05.10. Keith's winning effort of 14:30.80 at the St. Joseph Invitational was the state's fastest 5K among prep competitors this past fall. He captured the Class 3A individual state championship as a sophomore and junior in 2014 and 2015.

Keith has maintained a 3.22 GPA in the classroom. A member of his school's student council, spirit club and poetry club as well as a columnist for the student newspaper, he has volunteered as a youth running instructor, as part of Rotary International's Interact club and on behalf of his church.

"He really has taken the John Curtis team to a whole different level of competition," said Miguel Becerra, head coach at rival St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High. "He is a great kid. He's very respectful, and the younger kids really look up to him as well."

Keith has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on an athletic scholarship at Tulane 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.

Two-time winner Keith joins Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Zachary Albright (2013-14, Saint Paul's School), Enrique Soto (2012-13, Lakeside High School), Cole Stafford (2011-12, Catholic High School), Matthew Rice (2010-11, Runnels High School), Philip Primeaux (2009-10 & 2008-09, Catholic High School), and Philipp Goettert (2007-08, Baton Rouge Magnet 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.

###