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**DULANEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MARYLAND BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 22, 2016) — In its 31<sup>st</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Eric Walz of Dulaney High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Walz is the first Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Dulaney 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 Walz as Maryland'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, Walz 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, 130-pound senior raced to the Class 4A West Regional individual championship this past season with a time of 16:06.05, leading the Lions to a state title as a team. The 2015 Baltimore Sun All-Metro Boys Runner of the Year, Walz also took 10th at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships, crossing the line in 15:29.

Walz has maintained a 4.27 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the Key Club and an editor of his school's newspaper, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Gazelle Foundation in addition to serving as a member of his school's leadership board.

"Eric Walz is among the top athletes that I have coached in my 19-year coaching tenure," said Dulaney High head coach Chad Boyle. "He separates himself from his competitors with a combination of a relentless training regimen and a tenacious competitive desire that makes him difficult to defeat in races. He is at his best on the most difficult courses which is a credit to his competitiveness."

Walz remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Walz joins Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Diego Zarate (2014-15, Northwest High School), Ryan Forsyth (2013-14, Severna Park High School), William Bertrand (2012-13, Clarksburg High School), Braden Bruning (2011-12, Linganore High School), Chris Miller (2010-11, Northwest High School), Andrew Palmer (2009-10, Walt Whitman High School), Zach Sullivan (2008-09, Archbishop Spalding High School), and Joey Thompson (2007-08, Howard 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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