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**MIDDLESEX SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS 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 Viraj Deokar of Middlesex School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Deokar is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Middlesex 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 Deokar as Massachusetts'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, Deokar 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, 127-pound senior raced to a New England Preparatory School Track Association Division III Cross Country state championship this past season with a time of 15:54. A 2015 Boston Globe Boys' Cross Country All-Scholastic Team selection, Deokar also took sixth at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships, crossing the line in 16:03.1. He went on to compete at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, finishing 20th in 15:40.

Deokar has maintained an A average in the classroom. A talented saxophonist and a staff writer for his school newspaper, he is a member of the chess club and the robotics club. He has also volunteered locally on behalf of Open Table.

"Viraj Deokar's accomplishments are extremely impressive," said Jon Waldron, head coach at Concord Academy. "He has also always impressed me as a good person who is humble about his own abilities and encouraging to others."

Deokar will attend Princeton 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.

Deokar joins Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Quinn Cooney (2014-15, Chelmsford High School), Mohamed Hussein (2013-14, Northfield Mount Hermon School), Jonathan Green (2012-13, St. John's High School), Wesley Gallagher (2011-12, Pembroke High School), John Murray (2010-11, Shrewsbury High School), Patrick McGowan (2009-10, Mansfield High School), Mike Moverman (2008-09, Oliver Ames High School), and Robert Gibson (2007-08, Brookline 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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