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**HIGHLAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Joshua Clark of Highland Regional High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Clark is the first Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Highland Regional 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 Clark as New Jersey'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, Clark 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-2, 140-pound senior raced to the state Meet of Champions individual title this past season with a time of 15:33. Clark also won the Group 3 state championship in 16:17 and broke the tape at the Brown Invitational, the South Jersey Shootout, the Passaic County Coaches Invitational and the Manhattan Invitational (Varsity F race). He took fourth at the Foot Locker Northeast Region championships and finished 26th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships.

Clark has maintained a B average in the classroom. Also a wrestling standout, he has served on his school's student-leadership committee and has volunteered locally on behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

"He had no idea what cross country was until he got to high school," said Highland Regional coach Bob Wagner. "We nicknamed him 'The Natural.' He works hard, he's a team leader, and he improves every year. He's a great kid and a great competitor."

Clark 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.

Clark joins Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Nikhil Pulimood (2014-15, West Windsor-Plainsboro South High School), Mike McClemens (2013-14, Christian Brothers Academy), Edward Cheserek (2012-13, St. Benedict's Prep.), Tim Ball (2011-12, Piscataway High School), Jim Rosa (2010-11, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North), Joe Rosa (2009-10, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North), Tyler Udland (2008-09, Millburn High School), and Brandon Jarrett (2007-08, St. Benedict's Prep) 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).