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**WEST SALEM HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE OREGON 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 Ahmed Muhumed of West Salem High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Oregon Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Muhumed is the first Gatorade Oregon Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from West Salem 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 Muhumed as Oregon'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, Muhumed 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-9, 120-pound junior raced to the Class 6A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:38. Muhumed also won The Invitational, the Northwest Classic, the Saxon Invitational and the Sandelie Classic. He took fourth at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships and finished 40th at the NXN Final.

Muhumed has maintained a 3.72 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has served as a mentor with the African Youth Community Outreach program.

"Ahmed is pretty amazing," said West Salem coach Tom Jimenez. "As gifted as he is as a runner, he's an even better person. He's selfless and his primary goal is to help his teammates become better runners."

Muhumed will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Muhumed joins Gatorade Oregon Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Matthew Maton (2014-15 & 2013-14, Summit High School), Jackson Darland (2012-13, Sheldon High School), Travis Neuman (2011-12, Summit High School), Matthew Melancon (2010-11, Sheldon High School), Drew Jordan (2009-10, North Medford High School), Elliott Jantzer (2008-09, Phoenix High School), and Bryce Burgess (2007-08, Franklin 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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