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**AMERICAN FORK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE UTAH 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 Casey Clinger of American Fork High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Clinger is the third Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from American Fork 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 Clinger as Utah'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, Clinger 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, 135-pound junior raced to a national title this past season with a time of 15:03.2 at the Nike Cross Nationals Final. Clinger also won the Class 5A individual state championship in a course-record time of 14:52.8 and the NXN Southwest Regional championships in 14:42.

Clinger has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. An Eagle Scout with the Boy Scouts of America and a talented musician, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Utah State Developmental Center, which assists people with intellectual disabilities.

"Casey has been fortunate to have state champions and All-Americans to give him a model since his freshman year, and he's learned from all of them," said American Fork coach Timo Mostert. "It's been a joy to watch him this year, and I think he'll continue to improve, next year and after high school."

Clinger 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.

Clinger joins Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Conner Mantz (2014-15 & 2013-14, Sky View High School), Ben Saarel (2012-13, Park City High School), Clayton Young (2011-12 & 2010-11, American Fork High School), Austin West (2009-10, American Fork High School), Jonathan Nelson (2008-09, Timpview High School), and Luke Puskedra (2007-08, Judge Memorial Catholic 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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