

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

LOUDOUN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Drew Hunter of Loudoun Valley High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hunter is the second Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Loudoun Valley 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 Hunter as Virginia'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, Hunter 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 returning Gatorade State Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-11, 140-pound senior won the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships national title this past season with a time of 14:55.7, crossing the line 12.2 seconds ahead of his closest competitor. Hunter won the Group 4A state title by 56 seconds in 15:04, leading the Vikings to the state championship as a team. He was undefeated in 2015 and also set a course record at the Foot Locker South Regional championships with his time of 14:26.

Hunter has maintained an unweighted 4.01 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth basketball coach, he has volunteered locally as a mentor at his church, where he has instructed younger parishioners in basic theology. He also serves as the teaching assistant at Loudoun Valley High's Career Center.

"In my opinion, Drew Hunter is the most focused high school athlete I have ever met," said Doug Gilbert, head coach of Heritage High. "He sets short- and long-term goals and hits them with an accuracy that is uncanny. He follows his training plan perfectly and is a stickler for doing the small things that most others neglect. Because of this, he enters all races focused and confident that he can tackle anything."

Hunter has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on an athletic scholarship at the University of Oregon beginning 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.

Hunter joins Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Andrew Hunter (2014-15, Loudoun Valley High School), Louis Colson (2013-14, Thomas Edison High School), Sean McGorty (2012-13, Chantilly High School), Ahmed Bile (2011-12 & 2010-11, Annandale High School), Kevin Dowd (2009-10, Fairfax), Thomas Porter (2008-09, Mountain View), and Jason Witt (2007-08, Midlothian) 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.

###