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**NORTH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 Justin Janke of North Central High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Janke is the fourth Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from North Central 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 Janke as Washington'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, Janke 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, 150-pound senior raced to the Class 3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:02, leading the Indians to the state title as a team. Janke also won the Nike Border Clash, the Tracy Walters Invitational and the Richland Invitational. He took sixth at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships and seventh at the Foot Locker West Regional championships before finishing 25th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships.

Janke has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. Also a talented artist and saxophonist, he has volunteered locally on behalf of Women's and Children's Free Restaurant and Community Kitchen and environmental conservation efforts.

"Justin is the product of hard work," said North Central coach Jon Knight. "He's a lunch pail kind of kid. He saw what he had to do and he sculpted himself into the runner he became."

Janke 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.

Janke joins Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Tanner Anderson (2014-15, North Central High School), Kai Wilmot (2013-14, North Central High School), Andrew Gardner (2012-13, Mead High School), Nathan Weitz (2011-12, Shadle Park High School), Kenji Bierig (2010-11, Lewis & Clark High School), Shane Moskowitz (2009-10, Central Kitsap High School), Andrew Kimpel (2008-09, North Central High School), and Miles Unterreiner (2007-08, Gig Harbor 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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