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**SERVICE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 30, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Gus Schumacher of Service High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Alaska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Schumacher is the second Gatorade Alaska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Service 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 Schumacher as Alaska'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, Schumacher joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Prep., San Luis Obispo, Calif.), Donn Cabral (2007-08, Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury, Conn.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-7, 140-pound junior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:44. Schumacher also broke the tape first at the Region 4 championships, the Bartlett State Preview meet and the Big 8 Dash.

Also a talented Nordic skier, Schumacher has served as a tutor for younger students and has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics. "Gus has a tremendous work ethic and enjoys putting in high volume training year-round," said Service coach Luke Kiskaddon. "He has built himself into a champion."

Schumacher has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He 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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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.

Schumacher joins Gatorade Alaska Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Kaleb Korta (2015-16, Galena City Schools), Levi Thomet (2014-15, 2013-14 & 2012-13, Kodiak High School), Miles Knotek (2011-12, Seward High School), Silas Talbot (2010-11, Service High School), Jacob Kirk (2009-10, Grace Christian School), and Trevor Dunbar (2008-09 & 2007-08, Kodiak High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Schumacher will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

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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