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**CEDAR FALLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE IOWA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 30, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Sam Schillinger of Cedar Falls High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Schillinger is the first Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Cedar Falls 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 Schillinger as Iowa'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, Schillinger 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 6-foot-1 senior finished second at the Class 4A state meet this past season with a time of 15:43, leading the Tigers to a 15th-place finish as a team. Schillinger won seven of 10 races in 2016 and was the top Iowa finisher at the Foot Locker Cross Country Midwest Regional championships. He is a two-time Class 4A All-State selection and a three-time metro champion. An outstanding singer, Schillinger has volunteered locally with the Mentors in Violence Protection program at his school and at multiple road races. "Sam was a load to deal with this season, as in the past," said Bill Schwartz, head coach of Prairie High. "He is tough and tenacious."

Schillinger has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria.

He 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 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.

Schillinger joins Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Ryan Schweizer (2015-16, Dowling Catholic High School), Thomas Pollard (2014-15 & 2013-14, Gilbert High School), Jason Thomas (2012-13, Dowling Catholic High School), Ben Anderson (2011-12, Valley High School), Marshall Moyer (2010-11 & 2009-10, Burlington High School), Lewi Manirumva (2008-09, Washington High School), and Devin Allbaugh (2007-08, Pleasant Valley High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Schillinger 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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