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**ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE LOUISIANA 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 Eric Coston of St. Paul's School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Coston is the second Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from St. Paul's 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 Coston as Louisiana'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, Coston 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-11, 134-pound senior won his second LHSAA Class 5A state title this past season, breaking the tape in 15:19.50 over three miles to finish 12.7 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Wolves to the state championship as a team. Coston, who was unbeaten against in-state competition this past fall at three miles, won six of seven meets he entered at that distance in 2016, setting two meet and four course records, including a new state 3-mile record in October (14:25.70). Coston was the top Louisiana finisher (7th overall) at California's prestigious Woodbridge Cross Country Classic, and also ran the state's fastest prep time at 5K (15:03.88) in 2016.

A member of the Lasallian Youth Leaders organization at his school, Coston has volunteered over 110 hours at the New Orleans Veterans Hospital and more than 40 hours at a local physical therapy clinic. He organized a clothing drive for the Restoration House Pregnancy Center and has also donated his time to an area sports performance club, the Louisiana Kidney Foundation, the Louisiana Lupus Foundation and the American Cancer Society. "One of the traits that is so admirable about Eric is his ability to push himself to the max in every race," said Catholic High head coach Pete Boudreaux. "Whether he is leading the pack by a huge margin or is in an extremely competitive race, he's always pushing the pace, pushing himself and challenging himself and his opponents to the fullest. He is a very, very tough guy mentally and physically. He brings his 'A' game every time out."

Coston has maintained a 3.71 GPA in the classroom. 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.

Coston joins Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Devyn Keith (2015-16 & 2014-15, John Curtis Christian School), Zachary Albright (2013-14, Saint Paul's School), Enrique Soto (2012-13, Lakeside High School), Cole Stafford (2011-12, Catholic High School), Matthew Rice (2010-11, Runnels High School), Philip Primeaux (2009-10 & 2008-09, Catholic High School), and Philipp Goettert (2007-08, Baton Rouge Magnet High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Coston 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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