

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**LAFAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 Austin Hindman of Lafayette High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hindman is the first Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Lafayette 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 Hindman as Missouri'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, Hindman 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-3, 160-pound senior won the MSHSAA Class 4 state meet this past season, breaking the tape in a course-record 15:22.30 to finish 16.54 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Lancers to a third-place finish as a team. Hindman followed up with a personal-best 15:04.40 to earn sixth at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships before racing in the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships, where he crossed the line in 27th.

A certified Eagle Scout, Hindman has donated many hours to his community fulfilling the requirements of that Boy Scouts badge. In particular, he has volunteered locally creating solar-powered taxi lights for the Humanitarian Aviation Organization Wings of Hope. "A consistent and significant contributor to three team titles for one of the most decorated programs in state history, Austin finally enjoyed the crowning individual achievement of his career and did so in historic fashion," said Erik Boal, editor at DyeStat.com. "His record-setting effort at the state final was the culmination of years of patience and perseverance, cementing a legacy as one of Missouri's most talented performers, especially in championship races."

Hindman has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run cross country on scholarship at University of Missouri 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.

Hindman joins Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Ben Naeger (2015-16, Ste. Genevieve High School), Michael Karls (2014-15, Festus High School), Noah Kauppila (2013-14, Marquette High School), Simon Belete (2012-13, Blue Springs High School), Zach Herriott (2011-12 & 2010-11, Rockhurst High School), Maksim Korolev (2009-10, Harrisonville High School), Kevin Colon (2008-09, Lee's Summit West High School), and Eric Fernandez (2007-08, Parkway West High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hindman 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.

###