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**CARDINAL GIBBONS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 Connor Lane of Cardinal Gibbons High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade North Carolina Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Lane is the first Gatorade North Carolina Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Cardinal Gibbons 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 Lane as North Carolina'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, Lane 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, 140-pound senior won the NCHSAA Class 4A state meet this past season with a time of 15:12.57, breaking the tape 18.55 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Crusaders to a third-place finish as a team. Lane took second at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 14:59.80, then crossed the line in 15:13.80 at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, capturing 8th place and earning All-American honors. He finished unbeaten against in-state competition in 2016.

An active member of his school's student council, Lane has donated his time preparing and serving lunch at a local soup kitchen every summer. He has also volunteered locally as an assistant coach with a youth running club in addition to helping coordinate a 2016 Red Cross blood-donation drive at Cardinal Gibbons. "Connor demonstrated early in the season at the Great American Cross Country Festival that he had a desire to race some of the nation's best athletes, and his tenacity and determination resulted in one of the most impressive years by any runner in state history," said Erik Boal, editor at DyeStat.com. "Not only did he qualify for nationals for the first time, but he secured his school's first ever All-American honors in the sport."

Lane has maintained a 5.09 weighted GPA in the classroom on a 4.0 scale. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run cross country on scholarship at Stanford University 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.

Lane joins Gatorade North Carolina Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Jeremy Brown (2015-16 & 2014-15, Broughton High School), Ben Huffman (2013-14, Providence Day School), Bakri Abushouk (2012-13, Cary High School), Thomas Graham (2011-12, Cary Academy), Blake Williams (2010-11, Northern High School), Jake Hurysz (2009-10, Eastern Alamance High School), Taylor Gilland (2008-09, Chapel Hill High School), and Ryan Hill (2007-08, Hickory High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Lane 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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