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**JENKS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OKLAHOMA 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 Matt Young of Jenks High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Young is the first Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Jenks 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 Young as Oklahoma'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, Young 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-6, 125-pound senior won the Class 6A state meet this past season with a time of 15:50.3, breaking the tape 4.6 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Trojans to a third-place finish as a team. Young placed ninth at the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional championships and finished 11th at the Foot Locker South Regional championships, missing out on a trip to the national championship race by 1.2 seconds.

A member of the Spanish National Honor Society and Drug Free Youth at Jenks High, Young has volunteered locally at a food bank and homeless shelter and as a peer tutor. "Matt Young is a fierce competitor and a very consistent runner," said David Ayres, head coach of Bartlesville High. "He takes charge from the beginning of the race and pushes himself across the finish line every time."

Young has maintained a weighted 4.19 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.

Young joins Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Isai Rodriguez (2015-16, Ringwood High School), Ben Barrett (2014-15 & 2013-14, Norman North High School), Noah Gade (2012-13, Stillwater High School), Tanner Satterthwaite (2011-12, Norman High School), Andrew Leahey (2010-11, Plainview High School), Toby Bothwell (2009-10, Westmoore High School), Taylor Monaghan (2008-09, Union High School), and Steven Baker (2007-08, Union High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Young 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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