

**Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)**

**UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 Philip White of University High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade West Virginia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. White is the second Gatorade West Virginia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from University 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 White as West Virginia'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, White 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-8, 135-pound junior won the Group AAA state meet this past season with a time of 16:14.1, breaking the tape 14.1 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Hawks to a first-place finish as a team. White placed 78th at the Foot Locker South Regional championships. He is a two-time First Team All-State selection.

An avid outdoorsman who also plays the banjo, White has volunteered locally as a youth running coach and mentor. "Philip is the strongest runner in the state," said Jacob Galik, head coach of Wheeling Park High. "He dominated this season. I believe Region 1 to be the strongest region in the state and he crushed it all year."

White has maintained a 3.62 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

White joins Gatorade West Virginia Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Seth Edwards (2015-16 & 2014-15, University High School), Matthew Brafford (2013-14, George Washington High School), Jacob Burcham (2012-13, 2011-12 & 2010-11, Cabell Midland High School), Cody Pelliccioni (2009-10 & 2008-09, Morgantown High School), and Ryan Beabout (2007-08, Wheeling Park High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, White 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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