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**GATORADE® NATIONAL BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE  
YEAR:  
ANDREW HUNTER**

*2004 U.S. Olympian & American Mile Record Holder Alan Webb Surprises Standout with Elite Honor*

**Purcellville, Va.** (Feb. 24, 2016) – In its 31<sup>st</sup> year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Andrew Hunter of Loudon Valley High School (Purcellville, Va.) as its 2015-16 Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year.

“I still remember the day when I was honored as the Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Runner of the Year. Winning the award is one of the most memorable moments in my career,” said Webb. “It’s such a coveted accomplishment, so I was honored to surprise Andrew with the award on behalf of Gatorade.”

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 Hunter as the nation’s best high school boys cross country runner. A national advisory panel comprised of sport-specific experts and sports journalists helped select Hunter from nearly 250,000 high school boys cross country runners nationwide. Hunter is now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade Male High School Athlete of the Year award, to be presented at a special ceremony prior to The ESPY Awards in July.

The returning Gatorade Virginia Runner of the Year won the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships national title this past season with a time of 14:55.7, crossing the line 12.2 seconds ahead of his closest competitor.

Hunter also won the Group 4A state title by 56 seconds in 15:04, leading Loudon Valley to the state championship as a team. He was undefeated in 2015 and also set a course record at the Foot Locker South Regional championships with his time of 14:26.

Hunter has maintained a 4.01 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth basketball coach, he has volunteered locally as a mentor at his church, where he has instructed younger parishioners in basic theology. He also serves as the teaching assistant at Loudon Valley High’s Career Center.

"An exceptional pedigree, smart coaching and big-time talent make Drew Hunter not only the best distance runner of 2016, but one of the all-time prep greats," said Doug Binder, Senior Editor of DyeStat.com. "His improvement from fourth (in 2014) to first at the Foot Locker national finals – even with the top three from 2014 absent due to graduation – showed an extra degree of maturity and poise. He handled himself as if there was no pressure, even

while a target was squarely on his back. And, he was in command from start to finish of the national championship race."

Hunter has signed a National Letter of Intent to run cross country on scholarship at the University of Oregon this fall.

"Without question, Andrew is deserving of recognition as the nation's best high school boys cross country runner based on his statistics on the racecourse and the impact his accomplishments have had on Loudon Valley's success," said Gatorade Chief Marketing Officer Morgan Flatley. "But he is also a shining example to peers and aspiring young athletes of what a leader and a student-athlete should be. He represents everything we hope for in a Gatorade Player of the Year recipient."

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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with USA TODAY High School Sports, 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.

Former notable Gatorade National Players of the Year include:

- 2015 NBA first overall pick Karl-Anthony Towns
- Three-time WNBA champion Maya Moore
- Four-time track & field gold medalist Allyson Felix
- Silver Medalist and Pro Beach Volleyball Player April Ross
- Three-time Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw

For more information on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of former winners, and future announcement dates, visit the Gatorade Player of the Year website at <http://www.gatorade.com/poy>, on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

**ALL-TIME GATORADE NATIONAL BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNERS OF THE YEAR**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NAME</b>		<b>HIGH SCHOOL</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b><u>BOYS CROSS COUNTRY</u></b>				
2015-16	Andrew Hunter	DIS	Loudon Valley High School, Purcellville, VA	University of Oregon
2014-15	Grant Fisher	DIS	Grand Blanc High School, Grand Blanc, MI	Stanford University
2013-14	Grant Fisher	DIS	Grand Blanc High School, Grand Blanc, MI	Stanford University
2012-13	Edward Cheserek	DIS	St. Benedict's, Newark, NJ	University of Oregon
2011-12	Futsum Zeinasellassie	DIS	North Central, Indianapolis, IN	Northern AZ Univ.
2010-11	Lukas Verzbicas	DIS	Carl Sandburg, Orland Park, IL	USA Triathlete
2009-10	Lukas Verzbicas	DIS	Carl Sandburg, Orland Park, IL	USA Triathlete
2008-09	Reed Connor	DIS	The Woodlands, The Woodlands, TX	Univ. of Wisc. Grad.
2007-08	Chris Derrick	DIS	Neuqua Valley, Naperville, IL	Nike Oregon Track

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