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Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**MCGILL-TOOLEN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 13, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Carmen Carlos of McGill-Toolen Catholic High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Alabama Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Carlos is the first Gatorade Alabama Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from McGill-Toolen Catholic 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 Carlos as Alabama's best high school girls cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Carlos joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-00, 2000-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-6 sophomore raced to a second consecutive Class 6A individual state championship this past season with a course-record time of 17:49.70, leading the Yellow Jackets to second place as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Runner of the Year, Carlos placed 23rd at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 17:58. She also captured first place at the Jesse Owens Classic, clocking a course-record time. Carlos finished eighth at the 2008 Class 6A state meet as an eighth-grader.

Also a basketball standout, Carlos has maintained a 4.18 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to serving as a student ambassador at her school, she has volunteered on behalf of her church as well as McGill Toolen Catholic's campus ministry.

"This season, Carmen Carlos 'raced' her competition," said McGill-Toolen Catholic High head coach Drew Bentley. "When challenged at the Jesse Owens Classic, she managed to beat an opponent whose personal record coming into the race was faster than hers. Carlos had to set a new course record and break her personal-best time to win. More times than not this season, she has learned to rise to the occasion each weekend."

Carlos will begin her junior 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 ESPN RISE and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, 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.

Two-time winner Carlos joins Gatorade Alabama Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year two-time winner Madeline Morgan (2007-08 & 2008-09, Mountain Brook) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com.

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