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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN DAY SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Grace Tinkey of First Presbyterian Day School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Tinkey is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from First Presbyterian Day 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 Tinkey as Georgia'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, Tinkey 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-3 sophomore raced to the Class A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:04.74, leading the Vikings to second place as a team. The three-time All-Middle Georgia Runner of the Year as named by The Macon Telegraph, Tinkey placed 10th at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 17:41 in addition to finishing 15th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 17:53. She captured first place at the Mercy Invitational, Berry Invitational, Decision Bridge Invitational, Mercer RunFit Sports Invitational, Wesleyan Invitational, Carrollton Last Chance meet and Region 9-A meet this past fall. Tinkey won the 2008 and 2009 Georgia Independent Schools Association Class AAA individual state championship as a freshman and eighth-grader.

Also a track standout, Tinkey has maintained an A average in the classroom and serves as her school's class secretary. A member of the First Presbyterian Day School Spanish Club, she has volunteered locally at a food bank, as part of a youth ministry, on behalf of an animal shelter, with the Ronald McDonald House Charities and as a youth athletic instructor.

"She kind of put us on the radar," said First Presbyterian Day head coach April Cassell. "We had a great team overall, but she's stood out. This was our first year in public school competition, but everybody knew about her. It's a combination of work ethic and smarts on the course. She put in the extra hours, working out before and after school. She also knew before going into a race what to expect and what to do. She has it all planned out ahead of time."

Tinkey 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.

Tinkey joins Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Nicky Akande (2009-10, Collins Hill), Amanda Winslow (2008-09, Collins Hill), and Emily Reese (2007-08, Chamblee) 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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