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**CULVER ACADEMIES STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE INDIANA 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 Waverly Neer of Culver Academies as its 2010-11 Gatorade Indiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Neer is the second Gatorade Indiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Culver Academies.

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 Neer as Indiana'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, Neer 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-7 senior raced to the individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:17.5. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Neer also won the New Prairie Invitational, the Portage Invitational and finished 14th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 17:51 to earn All-American status.

Neer has maintained a 3.58 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity and area soup kitchens.

"She competes hard and she works diligently every day in training and in the classroom," said Culver Academies head coach Mike Chastain. "She also did a wonderful job bringing along the young girls on the team this fall."

Neer 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 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 Neer joins Gatorade Indiana Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Sarah Higgens (2008-09, Center Grove), and Alex Banfich (2007-08, Culver Academies) 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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