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## **BENTON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE LOUISIANA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 13, 2011) — In its 26<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Kaitlin Flattmann of Benton High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Flattmann is the first Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Benton 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 Flattmann as Louisiana'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, Flattmann 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-4 junior raced to a fourth consecutive Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:03.43, leading the Tigers to first place as a team. Flattmann captured first place at the Byrd Yellow Jacket Invitational, Menard Invitational, NSU Pre-State Invitational and West Monroe Invitational this past fall. She finished undefeated against in-state completion.

Also a track standout, Flattmann has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom, ranks No. 1 in her graduating class and serves as the junior class president. In addition to donating her time as a youth athletic instructor and a fundraising run to benefit pregnant teenagers, she has performed volunteer service on behalf of her church, Students against Destructive Decisions, Drug Abuse Resistance Education, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Salvation Army.

"Her impact has been tremendous on our program," said Benton High head coach Frank Trammel. "Benton was a relatively small Class B school 20 years ago. When I first got here, we only had three or four kids running. The program got a little bit better, but we could never get past third, fourth, fifth at the state meet. Then, Kaitlin came on the scene. One thing led to the next, and she helped establish a tradition here. She helped us raise it to another level."

Flattmann will begin her 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 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.

Flattmann joins Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year three-time winner Malia Cali (2007-08, 2008-09 & 2009-10, St. Thomas Aquinas) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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