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**PALO VERDE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEVADA 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 Katie Gorczyca of Palo Verde High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Nevada Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Gorczyca is the first Gatorade Nevada Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Palo Verde 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 Gorczyca as Nevada'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, Gorczyca 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 freshman raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 19:49, leading the Panthers to the state title as a team. Gorczyca also won the Las Vegas Labor Day Classic, the Larry Burgess Las Vegas Invitational, the Laughlin Invitational, the Central Park Invitational, the Sunset Regional Championships and the Div. I Varsity Yellow race at the Mt. SAC Invitational.

Gorczyca has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of her student council, she has volunteered locally as part of fundraising campaigns to benefit leukemia and lymphoma research.

"I think what makes Katie special is the side of her most people don't get a chance to see," said Palo Verde head coach Robert Davis. "Running makes her happy, and that makes her a perfect fit for our team. While everyone is speculating about her future, Katie is just being a kid, running cross country and having fun."

Gorczyca will begin her sophomore 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.

Gorczyca joins Gatorade Nevada Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year three-time winner Kelsey Smith (2007-08, 2008-09 & 2009-10, South Tahoe) 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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