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CORNWALL CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE NEW YORK 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 **Aisling Cuffe of Cornwall Central High School** as its **2010-11 Gatorade New York Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Cuffe is the first Gatorade New York Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Cornwall Central 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 Cuffe as New York'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, Cuffe 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 senior enjoyed an unbeaten season and raced to the national title at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships this past fall with a time of 16:53, breaking the tape 34 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Cuffe captured the Class A state title in 17:19.6 and won the all-class New York Federation Championship with a course-record time of 17:17. She added victories at the Great American Cross Country Festival, the Manhattan Invitational and the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships (in 17:51).

Cuffe has maintained an A average in the classroom. A four-year member of the Cornwall Central Math Team and the returning High Scorer, Cuffe has donated her time to and fund-raised for multiple local and national community-service initiatives in association with her school's Key Club chapter. Also a member of the National Honor Society, she has volunteered on behalf of area youth road races and track invitational meets.

"Aisling Cuffe more than fulfilled expectations as the top returner at Foot Locker nationals, tearing through her regular season undefeated and then triumphing in San Diego with disarming ease," said ESPN RISE/Dyestat Senior Editor Dave Devine. "Her 34-second margin of victory at Foot Locker over Nike Cross Nationals Final champion Rachel Johnson was the race's largest since 2001, and only emphasized Cuffe's status as the top girl in the nation this fall."

Cuffe has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at Stanford University beginning 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 Cuffe joins Gatorade New York Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year two-time winner Emily Lipari (2007-08 & 2008-09, Roslyn) 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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