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**HOMER-CENTER HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 Angel Piccirillo of Homer-Center High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Piccirillo is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Homer-Center 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 Piccirillo as Pennsylvania'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, Piccirillo 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-9 junior raced to the Class AA individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:44. Piccirillo also won the Altoona Mt. Lion Invitational, the Crimson Hawk Invitational, the Indiana County Invitational, the Heritage Conference Championships and the District 6 Championships. She finished second at both the Paul Short Run and the PTXC 2 Invitational, and placed 34<sup>th</sup> at last month's national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships.

Piccirillo has maintained an A average in the classroom. A member of her school government, she has volunteered locally raising funds for Haitian disaster relief and has participated in a church service-mission trip to Mississippi.

"Angel is a once-in-a-lifetime student athlete," said Homer-Center head coach Michael Gentile. "She's shown great resilience to become one of the top runners in the state and the country."

Piccirillo 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.

Piccirillo joins Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Sara Sargent (2009-10, Pennsbury), Sophia Ziemian (2008-09, Lewisburg Area), and Neely Spence (2007-08, Shippensburg) 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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