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LA SALLE ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 Molly Keating of La Salle Academy as its 2010-11 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Keating is the second Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from La Salle Academy.

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 Keating as Rhode Island'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, Keating 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 second consecutive All-State Meet individual championship this past season with a time of 18:51.9—the second-fastest clocking in history on the state-meet course—leading the Rams to first place as a team. A two-time First Team All-State selection as named by the Providence Journal, Keating also captured first place for the second straight year at the Class A meet in 18:33.74. She finished third at New York's Manhattan Invitational Varsity B race and placed 28th at the prestigious Great American Cross Country Festival, recording the fastest time by a Rhode Island female runner at both meets. Keating won the 2009 All-State Meet as a sophomore and finished 12th as a freshman.

Keating has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of her church, her school's peer-mentoring program and multiple charity-fundraiser road races.

"Molly is one of the toughest competitors Rhode Island running has ever seen," said La Salle Academy head coach Kelly Martin. "She displays an unbelievable desire to be the best, and her work ethic and determination are unparalleled. She is also extremely devoted to her teammates and cares for them a tremendous amount. She comes from a very supportive family, and it shows in the graceful way this champion conducts herself."

Keating 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.

Keating joins Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Abigail Jones (2009-10, Barrington), Jenna Riley (2008-09, Coventry), and Jeanne Mack (2007-08, La Salle Academy) 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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