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Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**RICHFORD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE VERMONT 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 Elle Purrier of Richford High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Purrier is the first Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Richford 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 Purrier as Vermont'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, Purrier 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 sophomore raced to the Division 3 individual state championship this past season with a time of 20:06. Purrier was also the top Vermont finisher at the New England Cross Country Championships—4th overall in 19:44.1—and earned titles at the Essex Invitational, the Peoples Academy Invitational and the Harwood Invitational.

Purrier has maintained a 3.94 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and an area food pantry.

"Elle is a model student-athlete—she loves to compete and learn," said Richford head coach Andrew Hathaway. "There are few kids anywhere in the country who would tackle the mountain runs she does, let alone with enthusiasm."

Purrier will begin her junior 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.

Purrier joins Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year two-time winner Hannah Rowe (2008-09 & 2009-10, St. Johnsbury Academy) and Sarah Lange (2007-08, Brattleboro Union) 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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