

**SPAIN PARK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 20, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Brandon Hazouri of Spain Park High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Alabama Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hazouri is the first Gatorade Alabama Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Spain Park 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 Hazouri as Alabama's best high school boys cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Hazouri 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 6-foot junior raced to the Class 6A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:45.12. An ESPN RISE/DyeStat Cross Country Top 25 series Honorable Mention selection, Hazouri placed 73rd at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 15:59.00. He captured first place at the Section 4-6A meet, the Hoover Cross Country Invitational, the Saint Vincent's Husky Challenge and the Jesse Owens Classic Boys Silver 5-6A race this past fall. Hazouri also placed third at the SouthEast Cross Country Showdown, recording the state's fastest time at the event. He finished 17th at the 2009 Class 6A state meet as a sophomore.

Hazouri has maintained a B average in the classroom. In addition to volunteering as part of community-service initiatives on behalf of his church, he has donated his time locally to the Ronald McDonald House charities, as a youth basketball instructor and referee, and by serving food to the homeless. A member of his school's chess club and Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, Hazouri has also sponsored a child through Compassion International.

"Brandon is extremely humble and gracious," said Spain Park High head coach Michael Zelwak. "He enjoyed being the underdog competitor early this season, because there wasn't a lot of attention on him. As he became more and more successful, he seemed to become more and more humble. His work ethic is unparalleled, and his commitment to learn what it takes to become a better distance runner has really helped establish him as a quality runner this season."

Hazouri will begin his 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.

Hazouri joins Gatorade Alabama Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Nathan Lewis (2009-10, Cold Springs), and two-time winner Patrick McGregor (2008-09 & 2007-08, Hoover) 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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