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**PALMER RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO 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 Spencer Wenck of Palmer Ridge High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Wenck is the first Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Palmer Ridge 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 Wenck as Colorado'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, Wenck 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 senior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:55.42. Wenck finished second at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships in 15:20.25, and was fifth nationally at the NXN Final in 16:19.8. He also earned victories at the Lori Fitzgerald Memorial Pre-State Invitational, the Battle Mountain Husky Invitational, The Pat Patten Invitational, the Colorado Springs Metro League Championships and the Region 3 Championships.

Wenck has maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A dedicated member of his church youth group, he has volunteered locally as a math tutor and has raised funds for Haitian disaster relief.

"Spencer is a driven, goal-oriented kid in everything he does," said Palmer Ridge head coach Kandee Normandin. "He set his goals, put in the time and it really showed."

Wenck remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Wenck joins Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Scott Fauble (2009-10, Wheat Ridge), Evan Appel (2008-09, Dakota Ridge), and Kevin Williams (2007-08, D'Evelyn) 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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