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## **ARCHMERE ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE DELAWARE BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 20, 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 Sebastian Oja of Archmere Academy as its 2010-11 Gatorade Delaware Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Oja is the second Gatorade Delaware Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Archmere 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 Oja as Delaware'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, Oja 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 senior raced to a second-place finish at the Division 2 state meet this past season with a time of 16:33.78, leading the Auks to second place as a team. Also the Vik Zwolak Award winner as the state's Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Oja placed 34th at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships in 15:56.40. He captured first place at the University of Delaware Invitational, the Joe O'Neill Invitational and the Diamond State Athletic Conference championships. Oja also placed at the Paul Short Run in Pennsylvania, clocking the state's top time at the event. He finished third at the 2009 Division 2 state meet as a junior, 12th in 2008 as a sophomore and 24th in 2007 as a freshman.

Oja has maintained a 3.45 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time at a local children's hospital, he has volunteered on behalf of the Boys & Girls Club of America.

"Sebastian is a gritty runner, often biding his time before making a move at the end of races," said Archmere Academy head coach John Jordan. "He is tough and ultra-determined when he races. He does it quietly but with an intensity unrivaled by his peers."

Oja will attend New York University 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.

Oja joins Gatorade Delaware Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Ryan Lee (2009-10, Archmere Academy), Greg Morrin (2008-09, Saint Mark's), and George Vernon (2007-08, Concord) 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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