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**NORTH HALL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Cody Barger of North Hall High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Georgia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Barger is the first Gatorade Georgia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from North Hall 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 Barger as Georgia'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, Barger 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-10 senior raced to the Class AAA individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:35.91, leading the Trojans to second place as a team. Barger placed 16th at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 15:20.00. He captured first place at the NEGA Championships, the Berry Invitational Class 1A-3A race, the War Eagle Invitational, the West Hall Invitational, the Warpath Invitational, the Hall County Championships, the Alexander/ASICS Invitational, the Runners Fit Mountain Invitational, the Carrollton Last Chance meet and the Region 8-AAA meet this past fall. He finished fourth at the 2009 Class AAA state meet as a junior and ninth in 2008 as a sophomore.

Barger has maintained a 4.00 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth running instructor, he has volunteered as part of several local road races and on behalf of the Boy Scouts of America as an Eagle Scout.

"He's not only a great runner, but a team leader," said North Hall High head coach Drew Rogers. "He brought other athletes to practice during the summer and school year, and led the team to a second-place finish at state this season."

Barger will attend the United States Military Academy at West Point 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.

Barger joins Gatorade Georgia Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Kirubel Erassa (2009-10, Grayson), Taylor Lord (2008-09, Chapel Hill), and Zack Flickinger (2007-08, Lassiter) 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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