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MULVANE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE KANSAS 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 Evan Landes of Mulvane High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Landes is the first Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Mulvane 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 Landes as Kansas'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, Landes 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 the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:08.47, leading the Wildcats to second place as a team. Landes placed 37th at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships in 15:43.60. He captured first place at the Chaparral Invitational, the J.K. Gold Classic, the Wamego Invitational, the Berean Academy Invitational, the Circle Invitational, the Ark Valley/Chisholm Trail League Division III meet and the Class 4A El Dorado Regional this past fall. Landes also placed second at the Rim Rock Farm High School Cross Country Classic, clocking the state's fastest time at the event. He helped lead Mulvane to the Class 4A team title in his first three seasons.

Landes has maintained a 3.91 weighted GPA in the classroom, ranks No. 7 in his graduating class and served as his class vice president as a junior. In addition to donating his time as a youth basketball instructor, he has volunteered on behalf of the National Honor Society, his church's Catholic Youth Organization and the Kansas Food Bank.

"He truly is a student of the sport, not only physically but also mentally," said Mulvane High head coach Dale Landes. "He spends as much time educating himself about the science of running as he does putting in mileage. When you look at him, you might not think of him as a strong runner, but he's actually very strong in the second and third mile of the race. He has the ability to wear other runners down. Add that quality with his knowledge of the sport, and you have a truly special runner."

Landes has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at the University of Kansas beginning 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.

Landes joins Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Roy Wedge (2009-10, Lawrence), PJ Greer (2008-09, Saint Thomas Aquinas), and Bryce Volz (2007-08, Bishop Carroll Catholic) 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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