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**BISMARCK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA 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 Jake Leingang of Bismarck High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Leingang is the second Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Bismarck 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 Leingang as North Dakota'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, Leingang 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-6 sophomore raced to the Class A individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:03.3, leading the Demons to first place as a team. An ESPN RISE/DyeStat Cross Country Top 25 series national Honorable Mention selection, Leingang placed fourth at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships in 15:30.67 in addition to finishing 64th at the Nike Cross Nationals Final in 17:17.80. He captured first place at the Becki Wells Invitational, the Rusty Bucket Invitational, the Mandan Kiwanis Invitational, the Magic City Lions Invitational and the Western Dakota Association Championships this past fall. Leingang also placed eighth at the Roy Griak Invitational, recording the state's fastest time at the event. He finished fourth at the 2009 Class A state meet as a freshman.

Also a track standout, Leingang has maintained a 3.71 GPA in the classroom. An active member of his church's youth group, he has volunteered locally at a soup kitchen and retirement home, in addition to donating his time as a youth running instructor.

"Jake is a passionate competitor," said Bismarck High head coach Darrell Anderson. "He's successful because he doesn't just play the game, he lives the game he loves to play—in this case training and racing."

Leingang will begin his junior 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.

Leingang joins Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Brett Kelly (2009-10, Century) and two-time winner Joash Osoro (2008-09 & 2007-08, Bismarck) 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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