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**BAY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE OHIO 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 Michael Brajdic of Bay High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Ohio Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Brajdic is the first Gatorade Ohio Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Bay 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 Brajdic as Ohio'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, Brajdic 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, 145-pound senior raced to his second straight Division II individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:01.9. The 2009 and 2010 Cleveland Plain Dealer Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Brajdic took ninth at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships, crossing the line in 15:08.7. Brajdic was the fastest Ohio runner at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, earning 26th place in 15:45. He also finished seventh at the 2010 Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships with a time of 15:22.

Brajdic has maintained a 3.85 GPA in the classroom. The vice president of the senior class and a member of his school's choir, he has volunteered locally as a youth basketball coach and soccer referee.

"Michael Brajdic is completely dedicated to making himself better all the time," said Bay High head coach Steve Babson. "He is one of the hardest-working and most dedicated distance runners I have ever coached."

Brajdic has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at The Ohio State University 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.

Brajdic joins Gatorade Ohio Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year two-time winner Zach Wills (2009-10 & 2008-09, Mason), and Donny Roys (2007-08, Medina) 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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