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**NORTH HILLS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 Zach Hedba of North Hills Senior High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Pennsylvania Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hedba is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from North Hills Senior 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 Hedba as Pennsylvania'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, Hedba 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 18th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships this past season with a time of 15:38. Hedba also captured regular-season victories at the Red, White and Blue Classic, the Central Catholic Invitational and the District 7 Championships. He took third at the Class AAA state meet.

Hedba has maintained 3.48 GPA in the classroom. An Eagle Scout with the Boy Scouts of America, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and an area nursing home.

"Zach stands out as one of the finest student-athletes I've ever worked with in 38 years of coaching," said North Hills head coach John Wilkie. "He's not only a superb athlete, but a special young man of outstanding character."

Hedba remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Hedba joins Gatorade Pennsylvania Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Brad Miles (2009-10, North Penn), Ben Furcht (2008-09, Lower Merion), and Mark Dennin (2007-08, Boyertown Area Senior) 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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