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## **DUTCH FORK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA 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 Roland Hakes of Dutch Fork High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hakes is the first Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Dutch Fork 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 Hakes as South Carolina'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, Hakes 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 junior raced to the Class AAAA individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:34. Hakes captured first place at the Trojan Invitational and the Class AAA Middle State regional meet this past fall. He also placed second at the Run Wild Festival, the Lake Murray Invitational and the Sandhills Invitational in addition to finishing third at the South Carolina Track & Cross Country Coaches Classic. Hakes finished 16th at the 2009 Class AAAA state meet as a sophomore and 68th at the 2008 Class AAAA state meet as a freshman.

Hakes has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. In addition to serving as a lifeguard at a community pool, he has volunteered as an active member of his church's youth group.

"Roland is an amazing individual and student-athlete," said Dutch Fork High head coach Barry Lindler. "He is focused, and he understands the goal of the training program as well as patience and the value of hard work. His focus is always what is best for the team, and he never seeks recognition for his accomplishments. Roland takes every race as a learning experience, analyzes everything and applies what he learns."

Hakes will begin his senior 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.

Hakes joins Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year two-time winner Aaron Ramirez (2009-10 & 2008-09, Woodmont), and Luke Lovelace (2007-08, Chapin) 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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