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**RAPID CITY CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 Tony Smoragiewicz of Rapid City Central High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Smoragiewicz is the first Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Rapid City Central 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 Smoragiewicz as South 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, Smoragiewicz 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-8, 130-pound junior won the 2010 Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships this past season, finishing with a time of 15:16.76 and earning a berth in the 2010 Nike Cross Nationals Final where he crossed the line in ninth place in 16:29. A three-time First Team All-State selection, Smoragiewicz grabbed third place at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships, finishing in 15:00 and qualifying for the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships where he captured third place with a time of 15:16. Smoragiewicz also raced to the Class AA individual state championship this past season, finishing more than 30 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor in 15:43.07.

Smoragiewicz has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom and is ranked first in his class of 486 students. An accomplished alto saxophonist in his school's concert band and jazz band, he is a devoted parishioner in his church community and has volunteered locally as a peer leader and elementary school guest speaker.

"Tony Smoragiewicz is a mature young man with many abilities that make him a fine leader," said Rapid City Central head coach Loren Kambestad. "He is extremely goal-oriented, both academically and athletically. Anyone who has had the privilege to come in contact with him will sense the exceptional qualities that he exhibits."

Smoragiewicz 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.

Smoragiewicz joins Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Josh Heitkamp (2009-10, Washington), Alex Muntefering (2008-09, Parkston), and Bill Kogel (2007-08, Roosevelt) 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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