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**MARCUS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE TEXAS 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 Craig Lutz of Marcus High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Lutz is the first Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Marcus 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 Lutz as Texas'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, Lutz 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-9 senior raced to his second consecutive Class 5A individual state championship this past season with a time of 14:41.51, leading the Marauders to third place as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Lutz won the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional championships in 14:54 and was third nationally against a deep and talented field at the NXN Final, in 16:04.4. Lutz also captured regular-season wins at the Nike South Invitational, the Marcus I Invitational, the Marcus II Invitational, the Haltom Buffalo Stampede and the Region 1 Championships.

Lutz has maintained a 3.63 GPA in the classroom. A youth leader at his church, he has volunteered locally on behalf of Habitat for Humanity.

"Craig has an internal drive and fire to do well," said Marcus head coach Steve Telaneus. "But he's not just an outstanding runner, he's an outstanding person."

Lutz has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at the University of Texas 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.

Two-time winner Lutz joins Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Reed Connor (2008-09, The Woodlands), and Colby Lowe (2007-08, Southlake Carroll) 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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