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## **ANNANDALE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Ahmed Bile of Annandale High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Bile is the first Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Annandale 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 Bile as Virginia'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, Bile 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-3 junior raced to the Class AAA individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:27.00. Bile placed fourth at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 15:02.00 and took 14th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 15:33.00, earning All-American status in the process. He captured first place at the Northern Region Championships and finished fourth at the Patriot District Championships this past fall.

Also a track standout, Bile has maintained a 3.15 GPA in the classroom. In addition to serving as secretary of his school's Young Democrats of America chapter, he has volunteered locally at annual election polling venues and the Annandale parade in addition to donating his time as a youth soccer coach.

"What distinguishes Ahmed is his ability to deal with adversity," said Annandale High head coach David O'Hara. "Kids come back from injury all the time, but I have never heard of a runner at the elite high school level who have missed five weeks of training and still come back to earn All-American honors. Whether it's being injured for most of the season and coming back to be the most decorated cross country runner in Annandale's 57-year history, getting knocked down in a race and coming back to win, or being down by an insurmountable gap with a state title on the line, Ahmed's dogged determination and never-say-die attitude is what sets him apart."

Bile 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.

Bile joins Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Kevin Dowd (2009-10, Fairfax), Thomas Porter (2008-09, Mountain View), and Jason Witt (2007-08, Midlothian) 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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