

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)**

**LEWIS & CLARK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 Kenji Bierig of Lewis & Clark High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Bierig is the first Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Lewis & Clark 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 Bierig as Washington'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, Bierig 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 senior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:09, leading the Tigers to second place as a team. Bierig also won the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships in 15:34.1, and finished 10th nationally at the NXN Final, in 16:30.5. During the regular season, he broke the tape at the Nike Border Clash and took second at the Bob Firman Invitational in Idaho.

Bierig has maintained a 3.21 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally with Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners (SNAP), a non-profit community action agency which provides assistance for families living in poverty.

"It would be tough to find an athlete more dedicated than Kenji," said Lewis & Clark head coach Michael Lee. "He is never satisfied, and always wants to train harder and improve."

Bierig 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.

Bierig joins Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Shane Moskowitz (2009-10, Central Kitsap), Andrew Kimpel (2008-09, North Central), and Miles Unterreiner (2007-08, Gig Harbor) 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).

###