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**ROGERS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ARKANSAS GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 12, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN HS, today announced Maggie Montoya of Rogers High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Montoya is the first Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Rogers 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 Montoya as Arkansas's best high school girls cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Montoya 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.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-4 junior raced to the Class 7A individual state title this past season with a time of 19:12, leading the Mounties to the state title as a team. The 2010-11 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, Montoya was the fastest Arkansas competitor at the Foot Locker South Regional championships, crossing the line in 17:40.

Montoya has maintained a 3.85 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has volunteered locally as a bible camp leader and on behalf of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"Maggie Montoya is best athlete, male or female, I've coached in 25 years," said Rogers High head coach Carlton Efurd. "But what makes her so special is that she is modest about her God-given athletic ability and trains like a champion. Her attitude is fantastic and contagious."

Montoya will begin her 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 HS 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.

Montoya joins Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Valerie Reina (2010-11, Har-Ber High School), Erika Setzler (2009-10, Conway), Grace Heymsfield (2008-09, Elkins), and Grace Heymsfield (2007-08, Elkins) 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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