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**GLASTONBURY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT 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 Reid Watson of Glastonbury High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Connecticut Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Watson is the first Gatorade Connecticut Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Glastonbury 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 Watson as Connecticut'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, Watson 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 senior raced to the State Open individual championship this past season with a time of 18:35. Watson also won the Class LL state title, breaking the tape in 19:03, and took first at the Hartford Riverfront Invitational, the Stratton Brook Invitational and the Central Connecticut Conference Championships. Watson finished 15th at the New England Cross Country Championships and earned 25th at the Nike Cross Nationals Northeast Regional championships.

Watson has maintained a 3.64 GPA in the classroom. A peer tutor in her school, she has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America in addition to fundraising to benefit the American Cancer Society.

"Having Reid on the team is like having another coach," said Glastonbury head coach Brian Collins. "She's been a great inspiration to all levels of runners. She took over a young and inexperienced team and helped guide them to a very successful season."

Watson 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 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.

Watson joins Gatorade Connecticut Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Jackie Nicholas (2010-11, Nonnewaug High School), Lauren Sara (2009-10, Frank Scott Bunnell), Moira Kenny (2008-09, Immaculate), and Heather Stephens (2007-08, Ridgefield) 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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