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**NAPERVILLE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE ILLINOIS GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 12, 2012) — In its 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN HS, today announced Amanda Fox of Naperville Central High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Fox is the first Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Naperville Central 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 Fox as Illinois'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, Fox 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-1 senior raced to the Class AAA individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:24. Fox won the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional in 18:09 and took ninth nationally at the NXN Final by clocking an 18:01. She also captured conference, regional and sectional championships and won the Peoria Woodruff Invitational, the Hornet-Red Devil Invitational and the Naperville Invitational.

Fox has maintained a 3.98 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally feeding needy families and tutoring students in her school system.

"Amanda always races hard and saves nothing," said Naperville Central head coach Aislinn Hicks. "She's very passionate about everything she pursues in life, whether it's academics or running."

Fox 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.

Fox joins Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Kayla Beattie (2010-11, Woodstock High School), Lavinia Jurkiewicz (2009-10, Whitney M. Young Magnet), Lindsay Flanagan (2008-09, Lake Park), and Kristin Sutherland (2007-08, Carl Sandburg) 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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