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**SHAWNEE MISSION WEST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE KANSAS 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 Alli Cash of Shawnee Mission West High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Kansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Cash is the first Gatorade Kansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Shawnee Mission West 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 Cash as Kansas'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, Cash 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-8 junior raced to the Class 6A individual state championship this past season with a time of 14:36.70, leading the Vikings to second place as a team. The Bob Timmons Award recipient as the top performer at the state meet, Cash placed fifth at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships in 18:25.47 in addition to finishing 40th at the Nike Cross Nationals Final in 18:37. She finished eighth at the 2010 Class 6A state meet as a sophomore and third in 2009 as a freshman.

Cash has maintained a 4.42 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and her school's dance team, she has volunteered locally on behalf of a soup kitchen, her school's Cadet Teaching peer-mentoring program and the Johnson County Christmas Bureau food and clothing drive.

"Alli is a very intrinsically motivated athlete," said Shawnee Mission West High head coach Jeff Onnen. "She doesn't seem to race so much for medals, awards or trophies—or even against other athletes—so much as she races and competes against herself and her idea of what she's capable of. She has very high goals for herself and is very disciplined and focused about preparing herself in such a way to be successful on her own terms."

Cash 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.

Cash joins Gatorade Kansas Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Molly Milbourn (2010-11, El Dorado High School), Avery Clifton (2009-10 & 2008-09, Washburn Rural), and Laura Roxberg (2007-08, Blue Valley Northwest) 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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