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**MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE 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 Courtney Hawkins of Milford High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hawkins is the first Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Milford 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 Hawkins as New Hampshire'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, Hawkins 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 junior raced to the Meet of Champions individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:34.1. The Runner of the Year as named by the Nashua Telegraph, Hawkins placed 13th at the New England Cross Country Championships in 18:52 in addition to finishing 30th at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships in 19:35.8. Hawkins captured first place at the Manchester Invitational large school race. She finished 21st at the 2010 Meet of Champions as a sophomore.

Hawkins has maintained a 3.71 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and National Art Honor Society, she has volunteered locally at a summer day camp, as part of a holiday gift-giving campaign and on behalf of the St. Joseph Hospital Breast Care Center. Hawkins has also donated her time in association with conservation land cleanup efforts, with Project Linus to benefit needy children and as a youth athletic instructor. She has served as a fundraiser for the Gate City Striders track program, New England Pediatric Care and the American Cancer Society.

"Courtney is a true gem," said Milford High head coach Mike Wright. "Not only is she a great athlete, but she is extremely coachable, dedicated, and loved by her opponents."

Hawkins 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.

Hawkins joins Gatorade New Hampshire Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Chloe Maleski (2010-11, Keene High School), Heidi Caldwell (2009-10 & 2008-09, Hanover), and Georgia Griffin (2007-08, Hanover) 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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