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**MILLBROOK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 Sammy George of Millbrook High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. George is the first Gatorade North Carolina Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Millbrook 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 George as North Carolina'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, George 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-6 senior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a course-record time of 17:27. An ESPNHS DyeStat Cross Country Top 25 series Honorable Mention selection, George placed sixth at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 17:15 in addition to finishing 29th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 18:18.9. She captured second place at the 2010 Class 4A state meet as a junior, third in 2009 as a sophomore and fourth in 2008 as a freshman, clocking top-15 times at the Foot Locker South Regional championships twice.

George has maintained a B average in the classroom. A member of her school's leadership group, she has volunteered on behalf of multiple charitable road races, her church's youth group and the Wake Interfaith Hospitality Network. George has also donated her time as a youth athletic instructor.

"Sammy George started the 2011 season fast with a sub-18 performance against collegians at the adidas Challenge in Cary and just took it from there," said Steve Underwood, ESPNHS DyeStat Senior Editor. "Her 17:31 5K at state gave her a superlative victory in Class 4A and a state meet course record, and she followed it up by making Foot Locker finals for the first time."

George has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at North Carolina State University beginning 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.

George joins Gatorade North Carolina Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Darby Middlebrook (2010-11, Watauga High School), Wesley Frazier (2009-10, Ravenscroft School), and Adrienne Soo (2008-09 & 2007-08, Durham Academy), 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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