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**LA SALLE ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 Molly Keating of La Salle Academy as its 2011-12 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Keating is the second Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from La Salle Academy.

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 Keating as Rhode Island'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, Keating 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 a third consecutive All-State Meet individual championship this past season with a time of 18:25, leading the Rams to second place as a team. A three-time First Team All-State selection as named by the Providence Journal, Keating placed second at the New England Cross Country Championships in 18:11 in addition to finishing 10th at the Nike Cross Nationals Northeast Regional in 19:09.9. She also captured first place at the 2009 and 2010 Class A meet as a sophomore and junior.

Keating has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of her church, her school's peer-mentoring program and multiple charity-fundraiser road races.

"One of the things I can easily say about her is that throughout her entire career, she's had a tremendous, tremendous work ethic," said Jim Doyle, head boys cross country coach at Bishop Hendricken High. "At one point, she had a terrible setback when she suffered a stress fracture, but she overcame that, rebounded again this year and was outstanding all year long. That's the way she's been for four years. I've always been impressed with her."

Keating 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.

Keating joins Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Abigail Jones (2009-10, Barrington), Jenna Riley (2008-09, Coventry), and Jeanne Mack (2007-08, La Salle 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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