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**FORT MILL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH 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 Meredith Kilburn of Fort Mill High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade South Carolina Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Kilburn is the first Gatorade South Carolina Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Fort Mill 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 Kilburn as South 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, Kilburn 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 senior raced to the Class AAA individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:10, leading the Yellow Jackets to fourth place as a team. Also named Runner of the Year by SCRunners.com and High School Sports Report, Kilburn placed 42nd at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 18:16. She also captured first place at the Trojan Invitational, Furman Invitational, York County Championships, Region 4-AAA meet and Class AAA Upper State meet this past fall. The Fort Mill standout finished sixth at the 2010 Class AAA state meet as a junior and seventh in 2008 and 2009 as a freshman and sophomore.

Kilburn has maintained a 5.07 weighted GPA in the classroom and ranks No. 2 in her graduating class. A member of her school's Beta Club chapter and chemistry club, she has volunteered locally on behalf of her church, the Humane Society, a charitable running event and the Girls on the Run non-profit organization to promote healthy lifestyle choices among youth student-athletes.

"Meredith is an extremely driven individual," said Fort Mill High head coach Marc Pyrc. "She holds herself to a standard of excellence that is not often seen in a high school age student. She is a great runner and an outstanding student. She is a model of sportsmanship and makes those around her better. I'm sure she will have a tremendous senior track season and then do quite well in the college ranks."

Kilburn 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.

Kilburn joins Gatorade South Carolina Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Sinead Haughey (2010-11 & 2009-10, Daniel High School), Tameka Jackson (2008-09, Seneca), and Mary Kate DuBard (2007-08, Northwestern) 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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