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**A&M CONSOLIDATED HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE TEXAS 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 Karis Jochen of A&M Consolidated High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Texas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Jochen is the first Gatorade Texas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from A&M Consolidated 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 Jochen as Texas'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, Jochen 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-5 junior raced to the Class 5A state title this past season with a time of 11:12.44. Jochen also won the Nike South Invitational and the Ricardo Romo Classic. She finished ninth at the Foot Locker South Regional championships, 12th nationally at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, clocking a 17:44.8, and also took second at the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional championship in 18:07.23.

Jochen has maintained a 4.49 GPA in the classroom. A chemistry tutor in her school and a member of the student council, she has volunteered locally on behalf of summer reading programs, youth sports programs and food drives to benefit the needy.

"To say Karis is driven is a gross understatement," said A&M Consolidated head coach Rodney Wellman. "She's the embodiment of dedication. It's a joy to watch as a coach and a fantastic example for her teammates."

Jochen 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.

Jochen joins Gatorade Texas Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Rachel Johnson (2010-11, Plano Senior High School), and Chelsey Sveinsson (2009-10, 2008-09 & 2007-08, Greenhill School), 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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