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**BOX ELDER HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE UTAH 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 Kelsey Braithwaite of Box Elder High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Utah Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Braithwaite is the first Gatorade Utah Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Box Elder 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 Braithwaite as Utah'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, Braithwaite 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-2 senior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:36.4. Braithwaite took second at the Foot Locker West Regional championship in 17:55 and clocked a 17:38.4 to finish eighth nationally at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships. She also won the BYU Autumn Classic and earned second at the Bob Firman Invitational.

Braithwaite has maintained a 3.81 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has volunteered locally on behalf of an area nursing home, youth track programs and a city beautification project.

"Kelsey hasn't missed a day of running since eighth grade. She has earned everything that she's gotten," said Box Elder head coach Wayne McConkie. "She has worked incredibly hard and set a great example for her teammates."

Braithwaite remains undecided upon a college 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.

Braithwaite joins Gatorade Utah Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Shea Martinez (2010-11, Davis High School), Gillian Gorelik (2009-10, Park City), Danielle Menlove (2008-09, Jordan), and Hailey Knettles (2007-08, Judge Memorial Catholic) 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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