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**LAKE BRADDOCK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Sophie Chase of Lake Braddock High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Chase is the first Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Lake Braddock 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 Chase as Virginia'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, Chase 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-7 junior raced to the Group AAA individual state championship with a time of 17:33 this past season. Also the Runner of the Year as named by The Washington Post, Chase placed second at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 17:06 in addition to finishing 11<sup>th</sup> at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 17:44.2. Chase also won the MileStat.com Invitational in a course-record time of 17:22 and finished this past fall unbeaten against in-state competition. She captured second place at the 2010 Group AAA state meet as a sophomore and finished third in 2009 as a freshman.

Also an accomplished swimmer, Chase has maintained a 4.19 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a youth running and swim instructor, she has volunteered on behalf of the Special Olympics and the Girls on the Run non-profit organization to promote healthy lifestyle choices among youth student-athletes.

"Although she did not start her running career until ninth grade, Sophie has excelled due to her outstanding work ethic and attention to detail," said Lake Braddock High head coach Mike Mangan. "She has taken ownership of her efforts through consultation with her coaches. Sophie is also a tremendous team player and leader, always helping and encouraging others on her team with their running."

Chase 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.

Chase joins Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Annie LeHardy (2010-11, Hidden Valley High School), Kathleen Stevens (2009-10, Blacksburg), Megan Marsico (2008-09, Glenvar), and Kathleen Lautzenheiser (2007-08, Midlothian) 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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