

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

## UNIVERSITY LAKE SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE WISCONSIN 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 Seidel of University Lake School** as its **2011-12 Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Seidel is the first Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from University Lake 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 Seidel as Wisconsin'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, Seidel 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 won the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships this past season, breaking the tape in 17:08. The 2011 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Area Runner of the Year, Seidel also claimed first place at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships with a winning time of 17:22. The four-time Wisconsin Cross Country Coaches Association First Team All-State selection completed an undefeated season this past fall and earned her fourth consecutive Division 3 individual state championship, joining three-time Olympian Suzy Favor-Hamilton as the only Wisconsin runners to ever win state cross country titles all four prep seasons. Seidel covered the 4K state championship course in 13:39.59, more than 40 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor.

Seidel has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom and is a National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalist. An active parishioner in her St. Joan of Arc church community, she serves as vice president of her school's student government. Also an accomplished pianist and ukulele player Seidel has further donated her time on behalf of The Gathering interfaith meal ministry, the Lifestridders Equine Physical Therapy Center and as a sailing instructor in association with the Pine Lake Yacht Club.

"There is not a more deserving girl to be the Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year than Molly Seidel," said Michael Mulrooney, assistant coach of rival Arrowhead High. "She went totally unchallenged throughout the season. She ran times that have never been approached by runners from Wisconsin and there have been many accomplished runners from here."

Seidel has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at the University of Notre Dame beginning 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.

Seidel joins Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Allison Woodward (2010-11, Notre Dame de la Baie Academy), Marya Haegler (2009-10, Winnebago Lutheran Academy), Morgan Sickels (2008-09, Catholic Memorial), and Ashley Beutler (2007-08, New Glarus) 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).

###