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**CIBOLA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE ARIZONA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 23, 2012) — In its 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Bernie Montoya of Cibola HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Arizona Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Montoya is the first Gatorade Arizona Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Cibola HS.

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 Montoya as Arizona's best high school boys cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Montoya 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.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-11 junior raced to the Division 1 individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:46.74. Montoya won the Desert Twilight Festival, the Sole Sports Running Zone Festival, the Central Park Invitational and the Cibola Invitational. He also finished 12th at the Nike Cross Nationals Final with a time of 15:39.01.

Montoya has maintained a B average in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of a shelter for victims of domestic abuse.

"Bernie has a passion and love for the sport, and he desires to compete and win at the highest level," said Cibola head coach Kris Norton. "He fits the perfect mold of the athlete who never misses a practice and always pushes each and every workout to the limit."

Montoya will begin his senior year of high school in the 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 ESPNHS 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.

Montoya joins Gatorade Arizona Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Billy Orman (2010-11, Tuba City High School), Brian Shrader (2009-10, 2008-09, Sinagua) and Jim Walmsley (2007-08, Horizon) 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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