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**FAIRFIELD COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 23, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Connor Rog of Fairfield College Preparatory School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Rog is the first Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Fairfield College Preparatory 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 Rog as Connecticut'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, Rog 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-7 senior raced to the Class LL individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:50, leading the Jesuits to the state title as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Rog also won the State Open Championships in 15:22 and finished second at the New England Cross Country Championships with a time of 15:27. He earned victories at the Wickham Park Invitational, the Wilton Invitational, the Woods Trail Run, the Jesuit Championships and the Southern Connecticut Conference Championships, and finished 18th nationally at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships.

Rog has maintained a 3.20 GPA in the classroom. Also a talented musician, he has volunteered on behalf of a local nursing home and participated in a service-mission trip to help disabled children in Jamaica.

"Connor manages the challenging task of pursuing his own goals within the context of a team," said Fairfield Prep head coach Robert Ford Jr. "He's shown excellent leadership and continues to grow as a runner and a fine young man."

Rog has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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 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.

Rog joins Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year John Raneri (2009-10, 2008-09, New Fairfield) and Donn Cabral (2007-08, Glastonbury) 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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