

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)**

**COLONIAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE FLORIDA 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 Andres Arroyo of Colonial HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Arroyo is the first Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Colonial 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 Arroyo as Florida'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, Arroyo 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-8 junior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:13.74, leading the Grenadiers to the state title as a team. Arroyo also won the Little Everglades Pre-State Meet, the Metro East Championships, the District 4 Championships and the Region 1 Championships.

Arroyo has maintained a B average in the classroom. Also a baseball standout, he has volunteered locally on behalf of charity running events.

"Andres had an amazing breakout season as a sophomore and just kept it going this year," said Colonial head coach Rene Plasencia. "He's an extremely hard worker and very dedicated. He became smarter about his races this year. He would actually study film on people he was racing against and listen to their interviews to get an edge."

Arroyo will begin his 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 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.

Arroyo joins Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Jimmy Clark (2010-11, Creekside High School), Matt Mizereck (2009-10, Leon) and Brian Atkinson (2008-09, 2007-08, Melbourne) 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).

###