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**PEACHTREE RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Josh Brickell of Peachtree Ridge HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Georgia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Brickell is the first Gatorade Georgia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Peachtree Ridge 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 Brickell as Georgia'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, Brickell 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 a second consecutive Class AAAAA individual state championship with a time of 15:40.68 this past season, leading the Lions to fifth place as a team. Also the Runner of the Year as named by the Gwinnett Daily Post, Brickell placed fourth at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 14:41 and eighth at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 15:24.2. He finished 25th at the 2010 Foot Locker South Regional championships as a sophomore.

Also a track standout, Brickell has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of his church's youth group, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the National Honor Society.

"As a junior, Josh has proven to be one of those highly motivated athletes that will do whatever it takes to be successful," said Peachtree Ridge head coach Ron Clanton. "He always does the little things to prepare himself for the competition. In his training schedule, there are never any shortcuts to success. He has devoted himself to high academic and athletic standards. He has developed into a leader in the classroom and on the athletic field."

Brickell 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.

Brickell joins Gatorade Georgia Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Cody Barger (2010-11, North Hall High School), Kirubel Erassa (2009-10, Grayson), Taylor Lord (2008-09, Chapel Hill), and Zack Flickinger (2007-08, Lassiter) 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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