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**IOLANI SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE HAWAII 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 Troy Esaki of Iolani School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Esaki is the first Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Iolani 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 Esaki as Hawaii'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, Esaki 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-6 senior raced to the Hawaii High School Athletic Association individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:29.0, leading the Raiders to third place as a team. The 2011 Interscholastic League of Honolulu Runner of the Year, Esaki won the ILH individual title, breaking the tape in 17:01.23.

Esaki has maintained a 3.26 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered as an assistant with his school's maintenance and security department.

"Troy Esaki was our best runner for three consecutive years," said Iolani High head coach James Rubasch. "He has been an inspiration to our younger athletes to truly be the best runners possible. For him, no practice was too hard and no challenge was left open."

Esaki remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Esaki joins Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Jordan Thibodeau (2010-11, Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama High School), Pierce Murphy (2009-10, Island School) and Bryce Jenkins (2008-09, 2007-08, Leilehua) 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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