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**MACARTHUR HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 Michael Clevenger of MacArthur HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Clevenger is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from MacArthur 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 Clevenger as Illinois'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, Clevenger 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-10 senior won his second Class 2A individual state championship this past season with a time of 14:26. Clevenger finished second at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships in 15:56.8, took third at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships with a time of 15:11 and earned 25th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships.

Clevenger has maintained a 4.46 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, he has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports teams and the Macon County Teen Court program.

"Michael puts in two-a-day runs and lifts weights, but he has his academic and athletic careers in the correct order," said MacArthur head coach Angelo Rinchiuso. "He's driven by competition in the classroom first and on the field second."

Clevenger 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.

Clevenger joins Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10, Carl Sandburg High School), Steve Sulkin (2008-09, York), and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley) 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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