

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

**WASHBURN RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE KANSAS 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 Jacob Morgan of Washburn Rural HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Morgan is the first Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Washburn Rural 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 Morgan as Kansas'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, Morgan 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 senior raced to a second consecutive Class 6A individual state championship with a time of 15:28.50 this past season. A four-time All-City selection as named by The Topeka Capital-Journal, Morgan placed 15th at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships in 15:28.50. Morgan also won the Rim Rock Farm High School Cross Country Classic in a course-record time of 15:13.18. He finished ninth at the 2009 Class 6A state meet as a sophomore and fourth in 2008 as a freshman.

Morgan has maintained a 4.10 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and National Honor Society, he has volunteered locally as part of his school's tutoring program, as a fundraiser for the athletic program and on behalf of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

"During the high school season, Jacob's closest race was a 12-second win he posted at Rim Rock," said Washburn Rural head coach Scott Shufelberger. "Otherwise, his victories were 30 seconds or more. He ran the fastest time of any Kansas high school cross country runner on any course anywhere this season."

Morgan 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.

Morgan joins Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Evan Landes (2010-11, Mulvane High School), Roy Wedge (2009-10, Lawrence), PJ Greer (2008-09, Saint Thomas Aquinas), and Bryce Volz (2007-08, Bishop Carroll Catholic) 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).

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