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**HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 Jacob Thomson of Holy Cross HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Thomson is the first Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Holy Cross 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 Thomson as Kentucky'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, Thomson 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-9 junior raced to the Class A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:55.83. The 2011 Kentucky Track and Cross Country Coaches Association Class A Runner of the Year, Thomson earned seventh place and was the fastest Kentucky runner at the Foot Locker South Regional championships, crossing the line in 14:55. The 2011 First Team All-State selection qualified for the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, where he finished 19th with a time of 15:42.

Thomson has maintained a 3.70 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community and his school's environmental club, he has volunteered locally as a youth cross country coach.

"In the 28 years that I have been coaching, Jacob Thomson is the most intense and competitive runner I have ever encountered," said Holy Cross High head coach Richard Reynolds. "He is not satisfied with doing OK. He wants to do better than that and he frequently looks down the road and evaluates his work to see if he is improving."

Thomson 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.

Thomson joins Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Evan Ehrenheim (2010-11, Daviess County High School), Ryan Eaton (2009-10, 2008-09, Greenwood) and Gordy Dooley (2007-08, St. Henry District) 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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