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**PEMBROKE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS 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 Wesley Gallagher of Pembroke HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Gallagher is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Pembroke 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 Gallagher as Massachusetts'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, Gallagher 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 the Division II individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:43, leading the Titans to second place as a team. The 2011 Boston Globe All-Scholastic Division II Runner of the Year, Gallagher earned third place and was the fastest Massachusetts competitor at the Nike Cross Nationals Northeast Regional championships, crossing the line in 16:14.6. He qualified for the 2011 Nike Cross Nationals Final, where he finished 70th in 16:13.

Gallagher has maintained a 3.49 GPA in the classroom. An accomplished guitarist, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life and as a summer camp counselor and lifeguard.

"Wesley Gallagher is an exceptional athlete and I have watched him grow and mature in recent years," said David Jewett, head coach of rival Hingham High. "He is personable, respectful and always displays good sportsmanship. He is clearly very talented and has worked very hard for his success."

Gallagher 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.

Gallagher joins Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year John Murray (2010-11, Shrewsbury High School), Patrick McGowan (2009-10, Mansfield), Mike Moverman (2008-09, Oliver Ames), and Robert Gibson (2007-08, Brookline) 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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