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**HERITAGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 Evan Chiplock of Heritage HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Chiplock is the first Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Heritage 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 Chiplock as Michigan'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, Chiplock 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-11 senior raced to sixth at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships this past season with a time of 15:18. Chiplock finished 27th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships and earned victories at the Spartan Invitational, the Don Baese Invitational, the Saginaw Heritage Invitational, the Lancer Invitational, the Kayla O'Mara Invitational, the Region I championships and the Mid-East Meet of Champions Qualifier.

Chiplock has maintained a 3.26 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered as an elementary school mentor and has served in student government.

"Evan is the strongest person I know," said Heritage head coach Gary Loubert. "The way he bounced back this year is very rare. He showed great spirit, determination and unselfishness."

Chiplock 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.

Chiplock joins Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Caleb Rhynard (2010-11, Shepherd High School), Michael Atchoo (2009-10, Troy), Stephen Walker (2008-09, H.H. Dow), and Maverick Darling (2007-08, Ovid-Elsie) 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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