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**POPLARVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 Jordan Travis of Poplarville HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Travis is the first Gatorade Mississippi Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Poplarville 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 Travis as Mississippi'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, Travis 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-6 senior raced to a second consecutive Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:43.2. Travis placed fourth at the Amateur Athletic Union Cross Country National Championships in the Intermediate/Young level in 16:43.2 this past December. He captured third at the 2009 Class 4A state meet as a sophomore.

Also a track standout, Travis has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a peer tutor, he has volunteered on behalf of his church, as part of the National Beta Club and as a fundraiser for a campaign to deliver Christmas cards to the incarcerated.

"He is a humble athlete who always puts God first," said Poplarville head coach Eddie Walker. "He might not be the most talented athlete on the racecourse, but his heart and determination allow him to persevere."

Travis 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.

Travis joins Gatorade Mississippi Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Chad Moore (2010-11, Oak Grove High School) and Max Holman (2009-10, 2008-09, 2007-08, Tupelo) 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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