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**ROCKHURST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 Zach Herriott of Rockhurst HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Herriott is the first Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Rockhurst 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 Herriott as Missouri'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, Herriott 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 6-foot-2 senior raced to a ninth-place finish at the Nike Cross Nationals Final this past season with a time of 15:37.24. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Herriott placed fourth at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships in 16:00.60. Also the Runner of the Year as named by Mo.MileSplit.com and the Kansas City Star, he finished 13th at the Class 4 state meet in 16:34.26, leading the Hawklets to second place as a team. Herriott won the Kansas City Metro Championships in a course-record time of 15:21.30 this past fall. He won the 2010 Class 4 individual state championship as a junior.

Also an accomplished singer as part of two performance choirs at his school, Herriott has maintained a 3.87 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, he has volunteered more than 200 hours of community service on behalf of Rockhurst High in addition to donating his time as a peer tutor.

"I have had the opportunity to see Zach handle some of the highest levels of success and the shocking moments of defeat, and what stands out is how good of a sport he is in both scenarios," said Rockhurst head coach Michael Dierks. "He really understands that the sport is about learning, and with each experience he has come back and used it to his advantage. He is the face of our program now, and I can't think of a finer example. Zach has gone from an unheralded freshman who was defined by a strong work ethic to now being a leader and a visionary in how he leads his life."

Herriott 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.

Herriott joins Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Maksim Korolev (2009-10, Harrisonville), Kevin Colon (2008-09, Lee's Summit West), and Eric Fernandez (2007-08, Parkway West) 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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