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**KEARNEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NEBRASKA 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 Jacob Olson of Kearney HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Olson is the first Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Kearney 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 Olson as Nebraska'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, Olson 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-1 senior earned second place at the Class A state meet this past season with a time of 16:04.1, leading the Wolfpack to the state title as a team. The 2010-11 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Olson won the District A-1 championships, breaking the tape in 16:41.22. He also won the UNK High School Invitational with a time of 16:00.00.

Olson has maintained a 4.32 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of his multiple community service initiatives in association with his church youth group.

"Kearney high has a long line of great runners and Jacob Olson is one of the hardest working ones I've seen," said Kearney High head coach Luke Garringer. "He has adopted the skill of leading his teammates to higher levels of success which is the true mark of a great athlete."

Olson remains undecided upon a college 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.

Olson joins Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Jacob Olson (2010-11, Kearney High School), Jarren Heng (2009-10, 2008-09, Norfolk Catholic) and Jon Ronhovde (2007-08, Fremont) 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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