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**PISCATAWAY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Tim Ball of Piscataway HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Ball is the first Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Piscataway 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 Ball as New Jersey'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, Ball 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 the state Meet of Champions title this past season with a time of 15:31. Ball also won the Group 4 individual state championship in 15:38 and earned victories at the Shore Coaches Invitational, the Old Bridge Fall Classic and the Section II Championships. He finished third at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships with a time of 15:47.6 and took 16th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships.

Ball has maintained an A average in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered as a youth swim instructor.

"Tim's an outstanding runner with tremendous talent, but he's a team player first," said Piscataway head coach Pete Buccino. "He's a ferocious worker who led by example and had a tremendous impact on the younger athletes."

Ball has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at the University of Notre Dame beginning this fall.

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.

Ball joins Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Jim Rosa (2010-11, 2009-10, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North), Tyler Udland (2008-09, Millburn), and Brandon Jarrett (2007-08, St. Benedict's Prep) 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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