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**AMERICAN FORK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE UTAH 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 Clayton Young of American Fork HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Young is the first Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from American Fork 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 Young as Utah'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, Young 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-10 senior raced to third place at the Nike Cross Nationals Southwest Regional this past season with a time of 15:14.7. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Young was 24th at the NXN Final, leading the Cavemen to a sixth-place finish as a team. He also finished third at the Class 5A state meet, helping American Fork to the team title, and earned victories at the Wasatch Invitational, the Nebo Invitational and the Provo Bulldog Invitational.

Young has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. An Eagle Scout with the Boy Scouts of America, he has volunteered locally at retirement homes, a food bank and a rehabilitation center.

"It's rare in our program to have a four-year varsity athlete contribute like Clayton has," said American Fork head coach Timo Mostert. "He has an incredible motor and has put in a lot of hard work to develop. This year he really helped the younger guys coming up too."

Young 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.

Young joins Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Clayton Young (2010-11, American Fork High School), Austin West (2009-10, American Fork), Jonathan Nelson (2008-09, Timpview), and Luke Puskedra (2007-08, Judge Memorial Catholic) 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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