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**ANNANDALE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Ahmed Bile of Annandale HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Bile is the first Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Annandale 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 Bile as Virginia'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, Bile 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-3 senior raced to a second consecutive Group AAA individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:16. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Bile placed second at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 14:38 and took 12th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 15:29.2, earning All-American honors in the process. The Runner of the Year as named by MileStat.com and The Washington Post, he earned 14th at the 2010 Foot Locker nationals as a junior.

Also a track standout, Bile has maintained a 3.31 GPA in the classroom. In addition to having served as secretary of his school's Young Democrats of America chapter and participating in the model United Nations conference at the University of Virginia, he has volunteered locally as a youth soccer instructor, as part of the annual Annandale parade and at electoral polling venues.

"In an era when athletes are obsessed with times, course records, website top-20 lists and being content with running personal bests, Ahmed Bile is a refreshing throwback to the days when a cross country runner's one and only goal was to win the race," said Annandale head coach David O'Hara. "Call me a purist, but the point of running a race is to win it regardless of time, and Ahmed does that quite often. Ahmed also never counts himself out of a competition and always believes he can win."

Bile has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at Georgetown University 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.

Bile joins Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Kevin Dowd (2009-10, Fairfax), Thomas Porter (2008-09, Mountain View), and Jason Witt (2007-08, Midlothian) 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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