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**DENVER EAST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 17, 2013) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Ashi Geberkidane of Denver East High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Geberkidane is the first Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Denver East High School.

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 Geberkidane as Colorado'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, Geberkidane 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 Class 5A individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:21.7. Geberkidane also won the Denver Public Schools championship and the Region 1 championship. He was 12th at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships.

Geberkidane has maintained a 3.86 GPA in the classroom. Also a soccer standout, he has volunteered locally on behalf of a youth-mentoring program.

"Ashi is just a great natural runner," said Denver East head coach Steve Kohuth. "He has tremendous raw talent. It was his first year running cross country—and there are so many talented runners in Colorado—but we thought he had a chance to come in and make a mark right away. He certainly did that."

Geberkidane 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 the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Geberkidane joins Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Ty Williams (2011-12, Telluride High School), Spencer Wenck (2010-11, Palmer Ridge High School), Scott Faunle (2009-10, Wheat Ridge), Evan Appel (2008-09, Dakota Ridge), and Kevin Williams (2007-08, D'Evelyn) 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

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