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**LAKESIDE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE LOUISIANA 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 Enrique Soto of Lakeside High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Soto is the first Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Lakeside 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 Soto as Louisiana'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, Soto 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-7 senior raced to a runner-up finish at the Class 2A state meet this past season with a time of 15:22.23, leading the Warriors to fifth place as a team. Soto finished 38th at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 15:36 and captured 24th at the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional championships in 16:03.7. He finished unbeaten against Louisiana competition during the regular season. In addition to winning the young men's division at USA Track & Field's 2011 National Junior Olympics Cross Country Championships, he raced to the 2011 Class 2A individual state championship as a junior and took second at the 2010 Class 2A state meet as a sophomore.

Also a track standout, Soto has maintained a 3.65 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade Award's broad criteria. A member of the National Honor Society and Future Business Leaders of America, he has participated in the Louisiana State Literary Rally. He has also volunteered on behalf of his church community and as a youth athletic instructor.

"Enrique has had some amazing accomplishments," said Lakeside head coach Dan Grantham. "He has put himself in position to receive an athletic scholarship, and he has done this by dedication, work ethic, and by having unique outstanding character. For our situation, a rural public school in north Louisiana, it's a great story."

Soto 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.

Soto joins Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Cole Stafford (2011-12, Catholic High School), Matthew Rice (2010-11, Runnels High School), Philip Primeaux (2009-10 & 2008-09, Catholic), and Philipp Goettert (2007-08, Baton Rouge Magnet) 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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