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**PROCTOR HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE MINNESOTA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 17, 2013) — In its 28<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Matt Welch of Proctor High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Welch is the first Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Proctor 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 Welch as Minnesota'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, Welch 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, 135-pound senior raced to a Class A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:34. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Proctor earned seventh place at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships, crossing the line in 15:37.1. He also earned 99th place at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships in 16:10.

Welch has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A talented trumpet and French horn player, he has volunteered locally on behalf of his school's peer leadership program.

"Matt Welch is a tremendous competitor and a wonderful ambassador to the sport and his school," said Proctor High head coach Lowell Harnell. "He is extremely focused on what he sets out to accomplish."

Welch 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.

Welch joins Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Josh Thorson (2011-12, Wayzata High School), Adam Zutz (2010-11, St. Francis High School), Aaron Bartnik (2009-10, Eden Prairie), Lukas Gemar (2008-09, Moorhead), and Jordan Carlson (2007-08, Rosemount) 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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