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**JOHNS CREEK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 10, 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 Allie Buchalski of Johns Creek High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Buchalski is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Johns Creek 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 Buchalski as Georgia's best high school girls cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Buchalski 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.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-8 senior raced to the Class AAAAAA individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:46.23, leading the Gladiators to eighth place. Also the Atlanta Track Club's Ray Buckley Award winner as Georgia's Female Runner of the Year, Buchalski won six regular-season meets by an average of 17.4 seconds, including the Atlanta Classic and Coach Wood Invitational. She won the Class AAAA individual state title as a junior and the Class AAA individual state championship as a freshman.

Also a track standout, Buchalski has maintained an A average in the classroom. A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Student Venture Atlanta, she has volunteered locally on behalf of Girl Scouts of America and Unsung Heroes, a service group she founded in order to provide lunches to her school's custodial staff on special occasions. She has also donated her time as a camp counselor.

"Allie is every coach's dream athlete," said Johns Creek head coach Danny Brock. "She is a model of character, determination and perseverance. She is the hardest worker I have ever coached, and she is the only state champion I have coached. She is a student of cross country, as she tries to learn every step of a course before she competes. Every Sunday, she and her father scout out the course, and she puts a name to every section of the course. Then, every night before the race she visualizes how she is going to race."

Buchalski has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at Furman 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 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.

Buchalski joins Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Grace Tinkey (2011-12 & 2010-11, First Presbyterian Day School), Nicky Akande (2009-10, Collins Hill), Amanda Winslow (2008-09, Collins Hill), and Emily Reese (2007-08, Chamblee) 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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