

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**STE. GENEVIEVE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 Taylor Werner of Ste. Genevieve High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Missouri Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Werner is the first Gatorade Missouri Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Ste. Genevieve 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 Werner as Missouri'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, Werner 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-2 freshman raced to the Class 3 individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:19.88, leading the Dragons to the state title as a team. Also the Runner of the Year as named by Mo.MileSplit.com and the Missouri Track & Cross Country Coaches Association, Werner placed second at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships in 17:06 and finished 13th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 17:52.4. She also captured third place at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships in 18:08.6 and placed 40th at the NXN Final in 20:34.

Also a track standout, Werner has maintained a 4.00 GPA in the classroom and has served on her school's student council. A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and President of her school's National Junior Honor Society chapter, she has volunteered on behalf of a canned food drive, the American Red Cross and her church community. Werner has also donated her time to the Adopt-A-Highway program and assisting at an annual Christmas dinner for senior citizens.

"Taylor is an extraordinary competitor with an appetite for success," said Sainte Genevieve head coach Brian Jett. "Her dedication and work ethic are unsurpassed."

Werner will begin her sophomore year of high school 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.

Werner joins Gatorade Missouri Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Samantha Nightingale (2011-12, Blue Springs South High School), Colleen Quigley (2010-11, Nerinx Hall), Emily Sisson (2009-10 & 2008-09, Parkway Central) and Diane Robison (2007-08, Parkway Central) 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.

###