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**UNIONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 Courtney Smith of Unionville High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Smith is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Unionville 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 Smith as Pennsylvania'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, Smith 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 junior raced to the Class AAA individual state championship this past season with a course-record time of 18:16, leading the Indians to second place as a team. Smith also earned victories at the District 1 Championships, the Ches-Mont Championships, the Cherokee Challenge, the West Chester Henderson Invitational and the PIAA Foundation Invitational.

Smith has maintained a 4.67 GPA in the classroom. A peer tutor in her school, she has volunteered locally on behalf of Operation Smile, which assists children who are born with facial deformities.

"Courtney is obviously a top student-athlete, but she cares more about her team than her individual performances," said Unionville head coach Mark Lacionca. "Her work ethic and drive have helped our team improve from 16th in the district to back-to-back state runners-up."

Smith will begin her senior 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.

Smith joins Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Angel Piccirillo (2011-12 & 2010-11, Homer-Center High School), Sara Sargent (2009-10, Pennsbury), Sophia Ziemian (2008-09, Lewisburg Area) and Neely Spence (2007-08, Shippensburg) 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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