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**RICHFORD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE VERMONT 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 Elle Purrier of Richford High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Purrier is the first Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Richford 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 Purrier as Vermont'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, Purrier 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 senior raced to her third straight Division 3 individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:38. Vermont's two-time returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Purrier also won the New England Cross Country Championships in 18:42 and the Nike Cross Nationals Northeast Regional championship with a time of 18:09.4 in 2012. She finished 17th nationally at the NXN Final.

Purrier has maintained a 3.92 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of food drives for the hungry, youth sports programs and blood-donation drives.

"Elle's ability to stay focused is exceptional," said Richford head coach Andrew Hathaway. "She's achieved a lot in running thus far, but running is a part of the whole that does not dominate her life."

Purrier 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.

Purrier joins Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Hannah Rowe (2009-10 & 2008-09, St. Johnsbury Academy) and Sarah Lange (2007-08, Brattleboro Union) 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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