

NIWOT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE COLORADO GIRLS TRACK AND FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 25, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Addison Ritzenhein of Niwot High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Colorado Girls Track and Field Player of the Year.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Ritzenhein as Colorado’s best high school girls track and field athlete and she joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Sanya Richards (2001-02, St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Florida), Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone (2015-16 & 2016-17, Union Catholic Regional High School, New Jersey) and Jane Hedengren (2024-25, Timpview High School, Utah).

The 5-foot-3 senior distance specialist pulled off the ‘triple-triple’ in winning the 1600- and 3200-meter runs as well as the 4x800 relay title at the Class 4A state meet this past season—for the third year in a row. Ritzenhein led the Cougars to their seventh straight team championship. The 2023-24 Gatorade National Cross Country Player of the Year, Ritzenhein was undefeated in Colorado in both the 1600 and the 3200 this spring. A three-time Gatorade State Cross Country Player of the Year, she set the state record in the 3200 at the Arcadia Invitational with a time of 10:00.13, which ranks No. 14 nationally among prep girls competitors this spring.

A member of the Niwot High School Leadership Academy and a Student Aide at her school, Ritzenhein is also a member of her school’s choir. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the REAL Training youth running club and in the concessions booth for NHS boosters. “Addy Ritzenhein closed out an incredible prep distance-running career doing it her way, meaning with a self-effacing demeanor while wholly focused on her team’s success,” said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack.com. “The Niwot distance program has become among the most respected nationally in recent years with Ritzenhein’s unwavering leadership being a key reason why.”

Ritzenhein has maintained a weighted 4.41 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to compete on scholarship at Northern Arizona University this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one state winner from each of the 50 states and Washington D.C., in 12 different sports: football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls track & field. In total, 610 high school athletes are honored each year. From the pool of state winners, one national winner is selected in each of the 12 sports. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the winners in each sport.

As part of Gatorade’s commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$6.4 million in grants to winners across more than 2,200 organizations.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X (Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

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