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**NIWOT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO 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 Elise Cranny of Niwot High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Cranny is the first Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Niwot 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 Cranny as Colorado'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, Cranny 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-4 junior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:41.3. Cranny also won the Nike Cross Nationals Southwest Regional championship in 16:59.9 and finished seventh nationally at the NXN Final, with a time of 19:43.

Cranny has maintained 4.21 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, she has volunteered locally on behalf of an area food bank.

"Elise is always extremely humble, but her athletic accomplishments speak for themselves," said Niwot head coach Sam Catterson. "What truly sets her apart are her leadership skills and her character."

Cranny 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.

Cranny joins Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Jordyn Colter (2011-12, Cherry Creek High School), Kelsey Lakowske (2010-11 & 2009-10, Boulder High School), Allie McLaughlin (2008-09, Air Academy), and Kaitlin Hanenburg (2007-08, The Classical Academy) 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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