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**Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)**

**NIWOT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE COLORADO GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 8, 2014) — In its 29<sup>th</sup> 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 2013-14 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-5 senior raced to second place nationally at the Nike Cross Nationals Final this past season with a time of 16:53.8. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Cranny also won the Class 4A individual state championship with a course-record time of 18:07.8, leading the Cougars to second place as a team. She captured the NXN Southwest Regional championships in 17:03.9.

Cranny has maintained 4.24 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, she has volunteered on behalf of area food banks.

"Elise's success is unparalleled," said Niwot head coach Sam Catterson. "In the two years I've been her coach, she hasn't lost a race in the state of Colorado, and she's set course records on nearly every course she has run. Still, she is selfless and humble. Despite her success, she always puts other people first."

Cranny 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.

Two-time winner 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 [www.gatorade.com/poy](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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