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

CHICAGO (January 14, 2016) — In its 31<sup>st</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Katie Rainsberger of Air Academy High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Rainsberger is the second Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Air Academy 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 Rainsberger 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, Rainsberger 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-9 senior raced to the national title at the Nike Cross Nationals Final this past season, breaking the tape in 16:56.8. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Rainsberger was unbeaten against all distance competition in 2015. She won the Class 4A individual state championship with a course-record time of 17:39, leading the Kadets to the state title as a team. Rainsberger also won the NXN Southwest Regional championship in 17:07.

Rainsberger has maintained a weighted 4.49 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and sports editor of her school newspaper, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the USATF as well as charity road races. The recipient of the Sportswomen of Colorado 2015 High School Cross Country Award, Rainsberger has also been honored as a student-athlete by Rotary Club International.

"Despite Katie's remarkable talent, she's humble and puts her team before herself," said Air Academy coach Steve Rischling. "She is a once-in-a-career runner, but she's still a better person than she is a runner."

Rainsberger has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on an athletic scholarship at the University of Oregon beginning 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.

Two-time winner Rainsberger joins Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Elise Cranny (2013-14 & 2012-13, Niwot High School), Jordyn Colter (2011-12, Cherry Creek High School), Kelsey Lakowske (2010-11 & 2009-10, Boulder High School), Allie McLaughlin (2008-09, Air Academy High School), 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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