

VENTURA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 22, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Sadie Engelhardt of Ventura High School is the 2023-24 Gatorade California Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Engelhardt is the first Gatorade California Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Ventura High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation’s top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Engelhardt as California’s best high school girls cross country player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Irene Riggs (2022-23, 2021-22 & 2020-21, Morgantown High School, Morgantown, W. Va.), Katelyn Tuohy (2019-20, 2018-19 & 2017-18, North Rockland High School, Thiels, N.Y.) and Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.)

The 5-foot-9 junior won the Division 2 state title this past season, breaking the tape in a divisional record time of 16:40.7 to finish a stunning 61.2 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Cougars to the state team title. Engelhardt also won the Clovis (Pre-State) Invitational at Woodward Park in 16:39.3, the second-fastest time in history on the same layout that hosts every state meet. The state’s returning Gatorade Player of the Year, she was the top California finisher at the Woodbridge Classic, where she took third.

An active member of Runners for Public Lands, Engelhardt has volunteered locally cleaning and clearing running trails and public-access open space. “Competing in the deepest state in the nation for individual talent, Sadie Engelhardt once again compiled a near-perfect ledger,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “The Ventura High School junior matched the second-fastest clocking in history on the state meet course, then posted the all-divisions best performance of the day by more than seven seconds at the state meet. No Californian enjoyed more success last fall.”

Engelhardt has maintained a 4.54 weighted GPA in the classroom. She 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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Two-time winner Engelhardt joins recent Gatorade California Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Dalia Frias (2021-22, Mira Costa High School), Riley Chamberlain (2020-21, Del Oro High School), and Carlie Dorostkar (2019-20, Canyon Crest Academy), among the state’s list of former award winners.

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, Gatorade Player of the Year winners’ grants have totaled more than \$4.9 million across more than 1,600 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 Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

###