

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

CHICAGO (January 23, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Sadie Engelhardt** of **Ventura High School** is the **2022-23 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 recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Engelhardt as California's best high school girls cross country player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Engelhardt joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners, including Natalie Cook (2021-22, Flower Mound High School, Flower Mound, Texas), Katelyn Tuohy (2019-20, North Rockland High School, Thiels, N.Y.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester High School, Rochester Hills, Mich.) and Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.).

The 5-foot-7 sophomore raced to the Division 2 individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:57.84, leading the Cougars to a fifth-place finish as a team. Engelhardt also won the Woodbridge Classic, the Southern Section Championships and the Champs Sports West Regional Championships. She took 10th at the Champs Sports National Championships, earning All-America honors in the process.

Engelhardt has fundraised for Runners for Public Lands to help memorialize a teammate who was killed by a distracted driver. She has also volunteered locally at running events and marathons in addition to working at a local running store. "Sadie Engelhardt overcame illness that interrupted her training on multiple occasions to demonstrate why she is still one of the most impressive athletes in the country," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat.com. "In addition to winning a state championship and the Champs Sports West Regional title, she earned All-America honors at the Champs Sports National Championships. Sadie also produced one of the best 3-mile cross country performances in prep history, clocking 15:42.60 to prevail against an exceptional field at the Woodbridge Classic."

Engelhardt has maintained a weighted 4.50 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

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), Carlie Dorostkar (2019-20, Canyon Crest Academy), and Kristin Fahy (2018-19, La Costa Canyon High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

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.

###