

**SALINA CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE KANSAS GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 23, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Katelyn Rupe** of **Salina Central High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Kansas Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Rupe is the first Gatorade Kansas Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Salina Central 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 Rupe as Kansas' 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, Rupe 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-4 sophomore raced to the Class 5A individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:13.84. Rupe also won the Rim Rock Classic and the state regional among her six victories. She also finished 13th at the Nike Heartland Regional Championships in South Dakota.

A recipient of an award from the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Foundation, Rupe is also a member of the Future Health Professionals (HOSA) group, a student-led organization with a mission to promote career opportunities in the health industry and enhance the delivery of quality health care. She is also actively involved with her First Presbyterian Church youth group. "Katelyn Rupe made quite an impact in her first cross country season after previously playing tennis, building on her Class 5A track titles in the in the 1,600- and 3,200-meter events this spring to go unbeaten against Kansas competition last fall," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat.com. "Her success was highlighted by a masterful performance to win the state championship by more than a minute at Rim Rock Farm."

Rupe has maintained a weighted 4.04 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.

Rupe joins recent Gatorade Kansas Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Anjali Hocker Singh (2021-22, Olathe North High School), Taylor Briggs (2020-21, Chapman High School), Hope Jackson (2019-20, Bishop Carroll Catholic High School), and Jaybe Shufelberger (2018-19, Washburn Rural 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).