

**OCEAN SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 **Addison Rainey of Ocean Springs High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Rainey is the first Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Ocean Springs 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 Rainey as Mississippi'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, Rainey 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 6A individual state championship this past season with a time of 19:10.39, leading the Greyhounds to the state title as a team. She also won the Class 6A Southern Regional Championships, in addition to placing second at the Admiral Brickyard Bayou Classic, Pass Christian Invitational and Admiral Invitational.

Growing up as a child of a parent in the military, Rainey has consistently volunteered her time supporting military personnel and veterans wherever her family has been stationed, including coat drives, food drives and serving food at homeless shelters. She has continued that service by donating her time at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, entertaining and supporting 3,500 active-duty military and their family members at several holiday events. Rainey also helped prepare sports equipment to support Special Olympics of Mississippi's Softball team during their annual Training Camp at Keesler, along with collecting toys and key household goods for donation to the base's "Airmen's Attic" a place where junior enlisted military members and their families can get needed items at no cost. "With so much competitive young talent in the state being showcased throughout the fall in both the MHSAA and MAIS, Addison Rainey rose to the occasion to produce the strongest performance of her career in the race with the highest stakes: at the state final," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat.com "She achieved her fifth sub-20 effort of the season at the state championship after not breaking that barrier once last year."

Rainey has maintained a 4.26 weighted 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.

Rainey joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Player of the Year Brooklyn Biancamano (2021-22, 2020-21, 2019-20, & 2018-19, Long Beach 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.

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