

VENTURA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE CALIFORNIA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 25, 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 Track & Field Player of the Year**. Engelhardt is the first Gatorade California Girls Track & Field 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 track & field athlete. 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 Sanya Richards-Ross (2001-02, St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Fla), Sydney McLaughlin (2016-17, 2015-16 & 2014-15, Union Catholic High School, N.J.) and Angelina Napoleon (2022-23, Allegany-Limestone Central School, N.Y.).

The 5-foot-9 junior distance talent finished as the national leader in four events this past season and sparked the Cougars to a second-place team finish at the state meet. Engelhardt, who has now three-peated as Gatorade State Player of the Year in track, crossed the line in 4:28.46 seconds to break the national high school record in the mile at the HOKA Festival of Miles. She also clocked a 4:08.86 in the 1500-meter run while competing against pros at the Portland Track Festival—her time ranks No. 5 in U.S. girls prep history and qualified her for the U.S. Olympic Trials. Also the Gatorade State Girls Cross Country POY from 2022-24, she broke the California record in the 1600 with a 4:32.06 at the state meet, the fastest time ever in the event in a high school-only meet. Showing her versatility at the early season Distance Meet of Champions, she broke the tape in the 800 in 2:03.46, which was the nation’s No. 1 time by a prep girl at the time of her selection. For good measure, she rallied on the anchor leg of the 4x800 at the CIF championship meet to erase a 50-meter deficit and lead the Cougars, who finished second as a team, to a relay win.

Engelhardt has volunteered locally on behalf of Runners For Public Lands, helping to clean trails and other places to run around Ventura County. “Sadie Engelhardt delivered a Master Class for the ages this past season,” said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack.com. “From breaking the revered prep national mile record to defeating a flock of professionals at their preferred, 1500-meter distance, the head-turning phenom repeatedly entertained fans and destroyed race fields placed before her. The 17-year-old marvel displayed moxie beyond her years, ascending to new levels within the distance arena with both the grace and the grit to emerge as the celebrated face of the sport. Finishing this past season as the national leader in four events, she’s an all-timer whose run on the prep scene isn’t over yet.”

Engelhardt has maintained a weighted 4.59 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to compete on scholarship at NC State beginning in the fall of 2025.

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.

Three-time winner Engelhardt joins recent Gatorade California Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Mia Barnett (2020-21, Crescenta Valley High School) and Paige Sommers (2019-20, Westlake High School) 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, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$4.9 million in grants to winners across more than 1,900 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 X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

###