

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

CHICAGO (January 16, 2025) — In its 40th year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Sadie Engelhardt** of **Ventura High School** is the **2024-25 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.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their success on the field, in the classroom and in the community. The award distinguishes Engelhardt as California’s best high school girls cross country athlete, and she joins an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches and star athletes such as Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, Ca.), Katelyn Tuohy (2017-18, 2018-19 & 2019-20, North Rockland High School, N.Y.) and Addison Ritzenhein (2023-24, Niwot High School, Co.).

The 5-foot-9 senior won the CIF Division II state title this past season with a time of 16:57.6, becoming the first three-time champion in that classification and pacing the Cougars to fourth place as a team. Engelhardt also earned Second Team All-America honors by crossing the line 11th at the Nike Cross Nationals. She won the Clovis (Pre-State) Invitational in 16:24.2, breaking the course record at the venue, which has hosted every state championship since its inception in 1987. The state’s two-time returning Gatorade Player of the Year, she took fifth at the Woodbridge Classic, the nation’s largest cross-country invitational.

An active member of Runners for Public Lands, Engelhardt has volunteered locally cleaning and clearing running trails and public-access open space. “When the most decorated female distance talent in Golden State history smashed the all-time record on California’s most historically significant course, it marked the final notch in Sadie Engelhardt’s championship belt of achievements,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “Despite suffering from a limiting injury over the final month of the season, she maintained her successful bid to win a third consecutive state title and emerge as the state’s top performer at Nike Cross Nationals. A 2024 Olympic Trials qualifier on the track, her resume is weighty with accomplishments.”

Engelhardt has maintained a weighted 4.57 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run cross country and track at North Carolina State University this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states across 12 different high school sports – 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 Cross Country Players of the Year Dalia Frias (2021-22, Mira Costa High School) and Riley Chamberlain (2020-21, Del Oro 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 \$5.6 million in grants to winners across more than 2,000 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 Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

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