

NIWOT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE COLORADO 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 **Addison Ritzenhein** of **Niwot High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Ritzenhein is the second Gatorade Colorado **Girls Cross Country** Player of the Year to be chosen from Niwot 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 Ritzenhein as Colorado’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.) and Katelyn Tuohy (2017-18, 2018-19 & 2019-20, North Rockland High School, N.Y.).

The 5-foot-4 junior won the CHSAA Class 5A state title at altitude this past season with a time of 16:54.7, pacing the Cougars to fifth place as a team. Ritzenhein earned First Team All-America honors by crossing the line fifth at the Nike Cross Nationals in 17:15.3. The state’s returning Gatorade Player of the Year, she won six of her eight races this year, including the Desert Twilight meet in Arizona, where she clocked a 16:41.3.

A member of the Niwot High School Leadership Academy and a Student Aide at her school, Ritzenhein is also a member of her school’s choir. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the REAL Training youth running club and in the concessions booth for NHS boosters. “Competing in a remarkably competitive era, Addison Ritzenhein remained a measuring stick for success,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “The defending national champion and daughter of an Olympian (Dathan Ritzenhein, a former two-time Gatorade Track and Field Player of the Year in Michigan), she avoided the ‘pressure trap’ to remain among the nation’s premier racers and embodied a selfless and exemplary teammate as well.”

Ritzenhein has maintained a weighted 4.31 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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 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.

Two-time winner Ritzenhein joins recent Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Brooke Wilson (2022-23, Valor Christian High School) and Riley Stewart (2021-22 & 2020-21, Cherry Creek 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.