

**SIMPSON COUNTY ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 **Lilly Overby** of **Simpson County Academy** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Overby is the first Gatorade Mississippi **Girls Cross Country** Player of the Year to be chosen from Simpson County Academy.

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 Overby as Mississippi’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-5 junior broke the tape at the MAIS Class 5A state meet this past season, leading the Cougars to third place as a team. Overby also won the Watson High School XC Classic with a personal-best time of 17:53.30. She won seven of her 10 races, finished unbeaten against in-state competition and clocked Mississippi’s fastest girls prep 5K of last fall.

A member of Mendenhall’s Mayor’s Youth Council and a Hoby Mississippi Leadership Ambassador, Overby has served as her class president for five years and is a member of her school’s Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter. She has volunteered locally on behalf of Operation Christmas Child and Diamond Dolls, and has also donated her time as chapel leader at Simpson Academy. “Once again, Lilly Overby was the class of Mississippi,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “She now owns the third-fastest girls prep 5K in state history and she defended her MAIS title. She also improved from 142nd at the national RunningLane Championships in 2023 to 60th place in 2024.”

Overby has maintained a 3.68 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.

Overby joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Kaitlyn Burge (2023-24, Hernando High School), Addison Rainey (2022-23, Ocean Springs High School) and Brooklyn Biancamano (2021-22 & 2020-21, Long Beach 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.