

**GALLATIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MONTANA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 16, 2025) — In its 40<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Claire Rutherford** of **Gallatin High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Montana Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Rutherford is the first Gatorade Montana **Girls Cross Country** Player of the Year to be chosen from Gallatin 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 Rutherford as Montana’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 state’s two-time returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-6 senior won the Class AA state meet for a third consecutive year this past season with a time of 18:16.2, breaking the tape 12.6 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Raptors to the team title. Rutherford was the top Montana finisher at the Nike Cross Northwest Regional Championships, crossing the line in 18:41.9 to place 41st. She won five of her eight races in 2024.

An avid hiker, Rutherford is a member of Future Health Professionals club, a student-led organization with a mission to promote career opportunities in the health industry and enhance the delivery of quality health care. “Claire is an incredible leader, teammate and person,” said Graydon Curry, head coach of Gallatin High School. “She has exceeded our expectations in every possible way. She is our team’s hardest worker and sets a great example for our younger athletes.”

Rutherford has maintained a weighted 4.22 GPA in the classroom. She remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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 Rutherford joins recent Gatorade Montana Girls Cross Country Player of the Year Kensey May (2021-22 & 2020-21, Hellgate 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](http://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](https://x.com/Gatorade).

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