

TAYLOR COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE KENTUCKY GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 13, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Kennedy Deener of Taylor County High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Kentucky Girls Basketball Player of the Year.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Deener as Kentucky’s best high school girls basketball player, and she joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Candace Parker (2002-03 & 2003-04, Naperville Central High School, IL) Paige Bueckers (2020-21, Hopkins High School, MN) and Aaliyah Chavez (2024-25, Monterey High School, TX).

At the time of her selection, the 5-foot-9 freshman point guard had led the Cardinals to a 26-6 record this season and a berth in the 5th Region tournament championship game. Deener had averaged 23.4 points, 4.5 rebounds, 3.7 steals and 2.9 assists through 32 games. She was named the 5th Region Player of the Year and MVP of the 20th District.

Deener has volunteered locally with Beta Club, a national youth organization that emphasizes academic achievement, character, leadership and service. She is also a member of the Health Occupations Students of America, a student-led organization that seeks to empower students to become leaders in the global health community. “I haven’t seen a kid like that in quite some time,” said Destiny Bramblett, head coach at North Hardin High School. “She has a quick crossover and a physical mentality that allows her to get to the free throw line. She will burn you from the 3 if you forget about her and she makes her team better.”

Deener has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore year of high school this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one state winner from each of the 50 states and Washington D.C., in 12 different sports: football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls track & field. In total, 610 high school athletes are honored each year. From the pool of state winners, one national winner is selected in each of the 12 sports. 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 winners in each sport.

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 \$6.4 million in grants to winners across more than 2,200 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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