

## **TUALATIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE OREGON GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 13, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Love Lei Best of Tualatin High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Oregon 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 Best as Oregon’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 selection, the 5-foot-6 sophomore guard had led the Timberwolves to a 23-1 record this season and the quarterfinals of the Class 6A tournament. Best averaged 14.9 points, 5.1 assists and 3.9 steals per game, including a 28-point effort in a 65-45 win over West Salem. The MVP of the 2025 State Championship Game and a First Team All-State selection as a freshman, she’s ranked as the state’s No.1 recruit in the Class of 2028 by PrepGirlsHoops. Entering the postseason round of eight, Best had totalled 784 points, 249 assists and 201 steals in her prep career, breaking the school’s single-season record in 2024-25.

Best has volunteered locally at the Bloomin’ Boutique Organization, a nonprofit that collects and distributes clothes for underserved youth. She has also donated her time as a coach at the Maurice Lucas Foundation’s basketball camp as well as the Next 22 Middle School basketball camp run by two-time Gatorade Oregon Player of the Year Cameron Brink, a forward for the Los Angeles Sparks. “I’m not sure there’s a player in Oregon who opponents game plan for more than Love Lei Best,” said Eric Knox, former head coach of Benson High School. “She’s the best player on the best team in the state. Everything runs through her and her impact touches just about every possession of the game.”

Best has maintained a 3.85 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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](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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