

## **CODY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WYOMING 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 Grace Hays of Cody High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Wyoming 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 Hays as Wyoming’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-11 junior guard had led the Fillies (19-0) to the quarterfinals of the Class 3A state tournament. Hays averaged 27.1 points, 6.7 rebounds and 7.1 steals through 19 games, including a 41-point masterpiece in a 74-38 win over Buffalo High School. A two-time All-State selection, she had recorded 1,314 points, 253 assists, 461 rebounds and 398 steals in her prep career entering the tournament’s round of eight.

Hays has volunteered with Unified Sports, which pairs youth athletes with intellectually challenged peers in celebration of sport. She’s also a member of the National Honor Society and serves on the board of Cody High School’s Change Attitudes Now initiative, which focuses on anti-drugs education and preventing abuse and addiction. “Grace Hays is one of the most exceptional athletes to come through Wyoming,” stated Drew Powell, head coach of Lander Valley High School. “You will not see fancy and flashy moves when you watch her play, but you will notice that her fundamentals are spot on: her handle, reading defenders, keeping her nose on the ball and her chest in front on defense. Grace shares the ball unselfishly, communicates on defense and picks up her teammates on the court. Maybe most importantly, she’s the first one to cheer when she’s sitting on the bench, making her exactly the kind of player any coach wants on their team.”

Hays has maintained a weighted 4.03 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 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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