

## **LINCOLN SOUTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEBRASKA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 20, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Uzziah Sanders of Lincoln Southwest High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Nebraska Boys 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 Sanders as Nebraska’s best high school boys basketball player, and he joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Jayson Tatum (2015-16, Chaminade College Preparatory School, MO), Cooper Flagg (2023-24, Montverde Academy, FL) and Cameron Boozer (2022-23 & 2024-25, Christopher Columbus High School, FL).

The 5-foot-10, 145-pound senior guard led the Silver Hawks to a 21-4 record and the Class A state championship this past season. Sanders averaged 23.6 points, 3.9 rebounds, 3.2 assists and 2.6 steals, including scoring 29 points and shooting 14-for-14 from the field in a January win over rival Lincoln Northeast High School. He led Nebraska Class A in scoring and concluded his prep career with nine school records, including single-season scoring (651), career scoring (1,270), single-season steals (72) and career 2-point field goal percentage (65).

Sanders has volunteered locally with the Young African American Boys Organization at Dawes Middle School. He has also donated his time as a youth coach and mentor for BeastTraining. “Uzziah is a truly great basketball player who dominates at both ends of the court,” said Monte Ritche, head coach at Lincoln Northeast High School. “While a good player might excel offensively or defensively, Uzziah’s impact is felt everywhere. When you play against him, you can never relax; he consistently creates scoring opportunities for himself and his teammates while simultaneously causing havoc defensively for opponents. His presence is undeniable throughout the entire game.”

Sanders has maintained a B average in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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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