

**SIOUX FALLS LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 Sam DeGroot of Sioux Falls Lincoln High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade South Dakota 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 DeGroot as South Dakota'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).

At the time of his selection, the 6-foot-7, 205-pound senior forward had led the Patriots to a 21-0 record and a trip to the Class AA state tournament quarterfinals. DeGroot averaged 20.9 points, 8.8 rebounds and 2.2 assists per game entering the postseason round of eight. He shot 57 percent from the floor, including 45.9 from beyond the arc, and hit 82 percent of his free throws through 21 games. He's also the program record-holder for single-game points (43) and single-game 3-pointers made (10). Ranked as the state's No. 3 prospect in his class by PrepHoops, he was a 2025 Class AA All-State selection and was part of two state championship football teams.

DeGroot has volunteered locally on behalf of St. Francis House, The Banquet, Feeding South Dakota, Sleep in Heavenly Peace and the Salvation Army. He has also donated his time helping out at school power lifting meets, officiating youth basketball games and instructing at youth sports camps. A member of his school's Lincoln Leadership Council, he operates his own window-washing business, completed a Spanish immersion program to earn a South Dakota Seal of Biliiteracy and recently participated in a service-mission trip to Puerto Rico. "Sam is as complete of a high school player as I have coached against," said Jeff Tobin, head coach at Sioux Falls Washington High School. "There's not an area in which he doesn't impact winning, and that has shown through the success that his teams have had. He scores the ball in a variety of ways and makes his teammates better while also consistently defending and rebounding at a high level."

DeGroot has maintained a weighted 4.07 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play basketball at Augustana University 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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