

## WAUKEE NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE IOWA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 5, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Sophia Schlader of Waukee Northwest High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Iowa Softball 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 Schlader as Iowa's best high school softball player and she joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Cat Osterman (2000-01, Cypress, TX), Alicia Hollowell (2001-02, Fairfield, CA) and Hannah Wells (2024-25, Coahoma, TX).

The 5-foot-8 sophomore right-handed pitcher and utility player led the Wolves (40-5) to the Class 5A state championship this past season. Schlader compiled a record of 30-1 in the circle with a 1.20 ERA and 296 strikeouts in 187 innings. Ranked as the nation's No. 1 prospect in her class by Softball America, she also hit .357 with 29 RBI and 15 home runs, earning a spot on the Des Moines Register All-Iowa Elite Team.

Schlader has volunteered locally with Miracle League, a baseball league for kids with special needs. She has also donated her time packaging meals for Meals for the Heartland and as a bell-ringer for the Salvation Army. "Her performance this season was outstanding from start to finish, both defensively and offensively," said Christina Smith, head coach at Des Moines Roosevelt High School. "She was unstoppable at the state tournament and dominated in the circle. Outside of her performance, her leadership and the tone she sets for her team is fun to watch and is well respected."

Schlader has maintained a 4.12 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior year of high school in the 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).

###