

**MATER DEI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 12, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced James Oblada of Mater Dei High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade California Boys Soccer 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 Oblada as California’s best high school boys soccer player, and he joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Alecko Eskandarian (1999-00, Bergen Catholic High School, New Jersey), Cristian Roldan (2012-13, El Rancho High School, California) and Dan Klink (2024-25, Loyola Blakefield, Maryland).

The 5-foot-9, 150-pound senior midfielder led the Monarchs to a 21-1-3 record and both the Southern Section Open Division and Division 1 state tournament championship this past season. Oblada scored 12 goals and passed for 14 assists, setting up a score in Mater Dei High School’s 2-1 win over Everett Alvarez High School in the state final. The Orange County Register Player of the Year, he was also the Southern Section Open Division and Trinity League Player of the Year.

The 2025-26 Anthony Barajas Foundation Scholarship for Acts of Kindness recipient, Oblada has volunteered locally as a camp counselor at RAD (Rise Above Disabilities). A member of the Mater Dei honors choir, he has donated his time as a Second Harvest Food Bank site coordinator as well as a special education class student aide. “James is a great player and a big reason for the Monarchs’ success this year,” said Al Brown, head coach of Mira Costa High School. “His greatest contributions were as a leader, doing all of the intangibles and making sure his team was always on the same page.”

Oblada has maintained a weighted 3.90 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play soccer at California State University, Dominguez Hills, where his father is an assistant coach, 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 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.

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