

SOUTH WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE CONNECTICUT 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 Hayden Xhokaxhiu of South Windsor High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Connecticut 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 Xhokaxhiu as Connecticut’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-10, 155 -pound senior midfielder led the Bobcats to a 16-4-2 record and the Class LL state semifinals this past season. Xhokaxhiu scored 35 goals and passed for 18 assists and netting both goals, including a late-game penalty kick that he earned and converted, as South Windsor High School upset Farmington High School, 2-1, in the third round of the playoffs. Xhokaxhiu was directly involved in over 73% of his team’s goals on the season and set a single-season school scoring record with 35 goals. Ranked as the Northeast Region’s No. 26 recruit by TopDrawerSoccer, he is a two-time All-State selection and a 2025 United Soccer Coaches All-American honoree.

Xhokaxhiu has volunteered locally as a mentor and tutor for elementary and middle school students. He has also donated his time as a coach at the Bobcat Soccer Academy youth camp. “Hayden is a player who can control any game with his skill, tactical presence and leadership,” remarked Mike Caccamo, head coach of Tolland High School. “He elevated his team to very high levels and never shied away from putting his team on his back when needed. Moments like that separate the good from the great. Hayden is 100 percent among the greats that I’ve seen on a high school soccer field.”

Xhokaxhiu has maintained a 3.78 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play soccer on scholarship at Stonehill College 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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