

**LA CUEVA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 Winston Starr of La Cueva High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade New Mexico 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 Starr as New Mexico’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, 167-pound senior midfielder and forward led the Bears to a 20-1-2 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Starr scored 15 goals and passed for 12 assists, setting up the game-winning goal as La Cueva beat Rio Rancho, 1-0, in the state title game. A four-time All-State and All-District honoree, he is New Mexico’s sole 2025-26 United Soccer Coaches All-American.

Starr has volunteered locally with Project Share, an organization that helps provide resources for the homeless. He has also donated his time with Unified Sports, which pairs youth athletes with intellectually challenged peers in celebration of sport. “Winston Starr led his team to unprecedented metro, district and state titles in the same season,” said Brian Weems, head coach of Rio Grande High School. “His play-making ability on the ground and in the air is outstanding. He commands the respect of his teammates and opponents because he’s a fantastic leader and soccer player. He can single-handedly take over a game with his play and command it. Winston has a very bright future.”

Starr has maintained a B average in the classroom. He remains undecided on 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 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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