

OAK MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ALABAMA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 18, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Kati Anne Shepherd of Oak Mountain High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Alabama Girls 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 Shepherd as Alabama’s best high school girls soccer player, and she joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Mallory Swanson (2014-15, Mountain Vista High School, Colorado), Riley Jackson (2021-22, Blessed Trinity Catholic High School, Georgia) and Addison Halpern (2024-25, Rutgers Preparatory School, New Jersey).

The 5-foot-7 senior midfielder scored 37 goals and passed for 28 assists this past season, leading the Eagles (24-2-1) to the Class 7A state championship game. Shepherd compiled 10 multi-goal games, including two five-goal games and one six-goal game. She is a two-time First Team All-State selection and concluded her prep career with 82 goals and 60 assists.

Shepherd has volunteered locally as a sports photographer at Oak Mountain High School athletic contests. She has also donated her time assisting the Oak Mountain Middle School bookkeeper and registrar and as youth ministry mentor. “Shep is just so dominant,” said Dan DeMasters, head coach of Thompson High School. “At any point of a game, she can take over. She has great separation speed, which helps her face up opponents and take them on 1v1.”

Shepherd, who graduated high school in three years, has maintained a weighted 4.07 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play soccer on scholarship at Mississippi State 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 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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