

**CASTEEL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE  
ARIZONA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 18, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Kendall Pechacek of Casteel High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Arizona 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 Pechacek as Arizona’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 goalkeeper led the Colts to a 16-1 record and the Open Division state championship this past season. Pechacek allowed four goals while making 55 saves for a .932 save percentage. The Conference 6A Defensive Player of the Year, she also made two saves in a shootout victory over Xavier Prep in the state final, where she was named the game’s MVP.

The president of the Casteel High School senior class, Pechacek is a board member of the school’s National Honor Society and Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter. She has volunteered locally as a youth soccer coach and has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. “While Casteel has a solid defensive unit, Kendall’s performance stands out,” said Brigette Tarwater-Fioresi, head coach of Highland High School. “Her ability to organize and direct her backline significantly reduces scoring opportunities. Goalkeepers often don’t receive recognition they deserve and Kendall is absolutely worthy of this honor.”

Pechacek has maintained a weighted 4.27 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play soccer at Florida Atlantic 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](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).

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