

NORTHWEST CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE CONNECTICUT 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 Maeve Staunton of Northwest Catholic High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Connecticut 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 Staunton as Connecticut’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-8 senior midfielder led the Lions to a 15-6-1 record and the Class M state final this past season. Staunton scored 21 goals and passed for 17 assists, which accounted for over 73 percent of the team's goals. Despite the loss, she contributed a goal as well as an assist in her final game as Northwest Catholic High School fell, 3-2, to Foran in the state title game. The two-time All-New England and three-time All-State honoree, she is a 2025 United Soccer Coaches All-American selection.

Staunton has volunteered locally with Camp Inspire Ability, where she serves as a counselor for athletes with special needs. She also has donated her time with local food pantries and clothing drives to support the underserved. “When Maeve steps onto the field, there’s an undeniable presence: confident, composed and readymade to change the game in an instant,” said Brian Carr, head coach of Ellington High School. “Her combination of speed, skill and determination makes her a constant threat in the attack and an inspiring leader for her teammates. Whether it’s finishing with precision, creating opportunities for others or leading by example through her relentless work ethic, she’s been the heartbeat of her team’s success on and off the field. In my 25-plus years of coaching soccer, I’ve never seen a player do what Maeve can do on the pitch.”

Staunton has maintained a 3.48 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Connecticut 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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