

LINN-MAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE IOWA 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 Dreya Kern of Linn-Mar High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Iowa 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 Kern as Iowa’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 attacking and holding midfielder led the Lions (12-4-3) to the Class 3A quarterfinals this past season. Kern scored 19 goals and passed for a state-leading 28 assists, averaging 2.8 points per contest in 17 games played. A member of the 2026 IGHSA All-Tournament team, Kern is a two-time Second Team All-State honoree and the 2026 All-Metro Player of the Year. She led her club team, FC United, to the U-16 Premier Group National Championship in 2024. Also a standout basketball player, she was a First Team All-Metro selection last season and concluded her prep career as a 1,000-point scorer.

A Certified Nursing Assistant, Kern was the recipient of the Lea Jost Nursing Scholarship at Linn Mar, awarded to students for outstanding service to their community. A member of her school’s Students Opposed to Drugs and Alcohol organization, she has served as the school mascot at public events and has volunteered locally on behalf of park and school cleanup initiatives. She has also donated her time as a youth soccer coach. “Dreya Kern is the kind of player you hope to get once in 20 years of coaching,” said Linn-Mar High School head coach Hannah Clark. “She broke our school’s single-season assists record—passing a U.S. Women’s National Team player, Sofia Bush and 2024-25 Iowa Gatorade Player of the Year Abi Roberts in the same breath. And somehow, she made it look routine. She’s a captain who leads by example, a teammate who lifts up everyone around her and a competitor who has won at every level: conference, regional and national club championships.”

Kern has maintained a weighted 3.72 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play soccer on scholarship at South Dakota 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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