

**LINN-MAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IOWA GIRLS TRACK AND FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 25, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Abby Mecklenburg of Linn-Mar High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Iowa Girls Track and Field 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 Mecklenburg as Iowa’s best high school girls track and field athlete and she joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Sanya Richards (2001-02, St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Florida), Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone (2015-16 & 2016-17, Union Catholic Regional High School, New Jersey) and Jane Hedengren (2024-25, Timpview High School, Utah).

The 5-foot-8 senior jumper won the long jump event at the USA Track & Field U20 Championships with a state-record effort of 21 feet, 0.5 inches, which ranked No. 2 nationally among prep girls competitors this spring. Mecklenburg is a three-time state champion in the long jump, having won the 2026 Class 4A title with a leap of 19 feet. The state’s returning Gatorade Player of the Year, she’s the only high school long-jumper in state history to reach 20 feet and her 21-0.5 at the USATF U20 Championships ranks 37th in prep history.

Mecklenburg has volunteered locally with S.O.D.A (Students Okay without Drugs or Alcohol) and T.R.Y. (Teens Reaching Youth). She has also donated her time as a youth softball coach. “Mecklenburg is the best long-jumper in state history and the only prep girl there to surpass the 20-foot barrier,” said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack.com. “She’s eclipsed the 20-foot long jump barrier seven times in her career.”

Mecklenburg has maintained a 3.82 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to compete on scholarship at Iowa 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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