

## **BILLINGS CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MONTANA GIRLS TRACK AND FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 25, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Addison Kegel of Billings Central Catholic High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Montana 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 Kegel as Montana’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-5 freshman distance talent earned dual All-American honors at the Nike Outdoor Nationals earlier this month. Kegel finished third in the 2-mile run with a time of 10:05.59, which ranked No. 18 nationally among prep girls competitors this spring and she took fourth in the mile run in 4:41.85. The state’s 2025-26 Gatorade Girls Cross Country Player of the Year, Kegel also took third in the freshman mile race at the Brooks PR Invitational. Her time of 4:41.74 ranked No. 21 nationally. She swept the 800-, 1600- and 3200-meter runs at the Class A state meet, leading the Rams to a sixth-place finish as a team.

A member of her school’s American Sign Language Club and a clarinetist in the Pep Band, Kegel has volunteered locally with Refresh the Rims, which cleans up public walking paths. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. “The sky’s the limit for Addison,” said Laura Sundheim, head coach of Hardin High School. “She’s continued to get stronger throughout each season. Her discipline and performances are rare and she continues to raise the bar for female distance running in Montana.”

Kegel has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore year of high school 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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