

CEDAR CREST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 Kaddel Howard of Cedar Crest High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Pennsylvania 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 Howard as Pennsylvania’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-6 senior sprinter broke the state record in the 400-meter run this past season, a mark that had stood for 49 years. Howard’s time of 51.48 seconds at the District 3 Championships eclipsed the old mark set in 1977 by Sharon Dabney. Howard’s new state standard ranked No. 1 nationally among prep girls competitors this spring and ranks No. 16 in prep history. She also won the 400 at the Class AAA state meet for a fourth straight year despite injuring her hamstring at the district meet where she set the state record then capped her career with a sixth-place finish in the 400 at the USATF Under-20 Championships.

A certified emergency medical technician, Howard has volunteered locally with the Aevidum Club at Cedar Crest High, which focuses on promoting positive mental health and preventing suicide. “Kaddel was incredibly fast,” said Derek Hockenbery, head coach of Cumberland Valley High School. “Her ability to maintain consistently fast times throughout multiple races at postseason meets also speaks to her preparation. She got faster each year.”

Howard has maintained a weighted 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to compete on scholarship at the University of Florida 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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