

MIDDLETOWN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE DELAWARE 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 Sarah McFarland of Middletown High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Delaware 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 McFarland as Delaware’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 senior goalkeeper and forward allowed 10 goals and made 98 saves this past season, leading the Cavaliers (12-4-1) to the Division I state semifinals. McFarland also played in the field for eight games and was Middletown’s leading scorer with 16 goals and four assists, including a penalty shot during one of her starts in the net. A two-time Delaware Soccer Coaches Association Best XI selection, she is a three-time First Team All-State selection and a three-time Blue Hen Conference Goalkeeper of the Year.

A member of her school’s chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, McFarland has volunteered locally with Wreaths Across America and Christmas in Odessa, a neighboring town. A barista and cashier at a Dunkin’ doughnut shop, she has also donated her time as a youth soccer coach. “Sarah is on a different level as a goalkeeper,” said Sebastian Acosta-Nijamkin, head coach of Odessa High School. “The [amazing] part is that for almost half of the games, Sarah played in the field to help her team score goals.”

McFarland has maintained a weighted 4.41 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play soccer on scholarship at Bucknell 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, Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY and X (Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

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