

LINN-MAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE IOWA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 13, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Abigail Santana of Linn-Mar High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Iowa Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Santana is the first Gatorade Iowa Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Linn-Mar High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Santana as Iowa's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Santana joins an elite alumni association of past state soccer award-winners, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook High School, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel High School, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick High School, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-05, Blue Valley West High School, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire High School, Mass.) and Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista High School, Colo.).

The 5-foot-2 junior midfielder and forward recorded 14 goals and 12 assists this past season, leading the Lions (18-2) to the Class 3A state quarterfinals. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Santana was named a 2019 Allstate All-American. She concluded her junior year with 29 goals and 27 assists in her prep soccer career.

Santana has volunteered locally at a senior living center and as a youth soccer coach. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. "Abigail is such a dangerous player and has the ability to make something out of nothing," said Annie Feltes, head coach of Kennedy High. "She has the ability to read the game very well and understands pressure at a different level."

Santana has maintained a 3.93 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at Creighton University beginning in the fall of 2020.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Santana joins recent Gatorade Iowa Girls Soccer Players of the Year Melina Hegelheimer (2017-18, Ames High School), Regan Steigleder (2016-17, Iowa City West High School), Meg Brandt (2015-16 & 2014-15, Ankeny Centennial High School) and Rose Ripslinger (2013-14, Assumption High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Santana also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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