

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

CHICAGO (June 17, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Abigail Santana of Linn-Mar High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Iowa Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Santana is the second 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 state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alexi Lallas (1987-88, Cranbrook High School, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel High School, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy School of 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 senior midfielder and forward concluded her prep career with 27 assists and 29 goals, 16 of them game-winners. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Soccer Player of the Year, Santana scored 14 goals and passed for 12 assists as a junior. A member of the Des Moines Register's Elite All-State team, she was also a United Soccer Coaches All-American and an Allstate All-America selection.

A peer mentor and a math tutor in her school, Santana has volunteered locally on behalf of a senior living facility and youth soccer programs. "Abigail Santana is a phenomenal player," said Robert Lynch, head coach at Dubuque Senior High. "She's super-technical and super-athletic, and she creates a lot of chances for herself and for her teammates. She's a game-changer."

Santana has maintained a 3.99 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play soccer on scholarship at Creighton University.

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. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Two-time winner 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, Ankeny Centennial High School), Meg Brandt (2014-15, Ankeny Centennial High School), and Rose Ripslinger (2013-14, Assumption High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).