

**GRETNA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEBRASKA BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 16, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Michael Stukenholtz** of **Gretna High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Soccer Player of the Year**. Stukenholtz is the second Gatorade Nebraska Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Gretna 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 Stukenholtz as Nebraska's best high school boys soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Stukenholtz joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ben Bender (2019-20, Calvert Hall College High School, Md.), Jacob Shaffelburg (2017-18, Berkshire School, Mass.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire School, Mass.) and Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel High School, Calif.).

The 5-foot-6, 135-pound junior forward led the Dragons to a 15-4 record and a berth in the Class A state championship game this past season. Stukenholtz finished with 18 goals and 14 assists on his way to being named First-Team All-State by the Omaha World Herald. He was also selected as Team Captain for the Lincoln Journal-Star Super-State Team.

Stukenholtz has volunteered locally as a coach and instructor on behalf of multiple youth sports programs. He has also donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "He was just undefendable this season for most of the year," said Derek Scheich, Lincoln Southwest High School head coach. "His pace, technical ability and (knack for) always popping up when his team needed him stood out to me."

Stukenholtz has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Nebraska-Omaha beginning in the fall of 2024.

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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Stukenholtz joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Boys Soccer Players of the Year Brett Perkins (2021-22, Gretna High School), Edwin Cisneros-Garcia (2020-21, Omaha South High School), Parker Jeppson (2019-20, Lincoln Southwest High School), and Royce Austen (2018-19, Kearney High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

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 Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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