

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

**CHICAGO** (June 20, 2024) — In its 39<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Sonora DeFini** of **Gretna East High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Nebraska Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. DeFini is the first Gatorade Nebraska Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Gretna East High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation’s top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes DeFini as Nebraska’s best high school girls soccer player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Aly Wagner (1997-98, Presentation High School, Calif.), Mallory Swanson (2014-15, Mountain Vista High School, Colo.) and Kennedy Fuller (2022-23 & 2021-22, Southlake Carroll High School, Texas).

The 5-foot-10 junior forward led the Griffins (21-1) to the Class B state championship in the program’s first year. DeFini set a new single-season state record with 55 goals, breaking the previous mark of 54 set in 1998. She also added 11 assists and scored nine of her team’s 20 goals in the Class B state tournament.

DeFini has volunteered locally as a soccer and basketball coach at various youth camps. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through the National Honor Society chapter at Gretna East. “Good players use their physical ability to make plays, but great players—generational players like Sonora—use not only their physical ability, but they study the game, watch the game,” said John Carlson, head coach at Skutt Catholic High School. “As a result, Sonora sees the game in slow motion, and she’s always in the right place at the right time.”

DeFini has maintained a 3.78 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at Oklahoma State University beginning in the fall of 2025.

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.

DeFini joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Girls Soccer Players of the Year Allison Marshall (2022-23 & 2021-22, Gretna High School) and Sarah Weber (2020-21 & 2019-20, Gretna High School), among the state’s list of former award winners.

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 \$4.9 million in grants to winners across more than 1,900 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](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 X(Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).