

WAGNER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 13, 2025) — In its 40th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Ashlyn Koupal** of **Wagner High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Koupal is the second Gatorade South Dakota Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Wagner High School.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation's best high school athletes for their success on the court, in the classroom and in the community. The award distinguishes Koupal as South Dakota's best high school girls basketball player and she joins an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches and star athletes such as Candace Parker (2002-03 & 2003-04, Naperville Central High School, Illinois), Paige Bueckers (2019-20, Hopkins High School, Minnesota) and Joyce Edwards (2023-24, Camden High School, South Carolina).

At the time of her selection, the 6-foot-3 junior forward had led the Red Raiders (17-5) to the Class A state tournament quarterfinals, averaging 22.2 points, 10.4 rebounds and 5.0 assists through 22 games. Ranked as the nation's No. 9 recruit in her class by 247 Sports, Koupal added 2.5 steals and 3.3 blocks per game entering the postseason round of eight. She entered this season as a two-time All-State selection.

Koupal has volunteered locally on behalf of local businesses in association with the Wagner Athletic Boosters program and by officiating boys and girls youth basketball tournaments. At school, she participates in band, chorus, student council and the activities council in addition to being a member of both the volleyball and track teams. She has also donated her time at a nursing home and serves as part of the Lighthouse Church Youth Group. "Ashlyn Koupal is a special player," said Mike Zerr, head coach at Brandon Valley High School. "From a college recruiting standpoint, she's the best player in the state and it's not even close."

Koupal has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states across 12 different high school sports - 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.

Koupal joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Girls Basketball Players of the Year Katie Vasecka (2023-24, Tea Area High School), Reese Ross (2022-23, St. Thomas More High School), Ndjakalenga Mwenentanda (2021-22, Washington High School) and Haleigh Timmer (2020-21, St. Thomas More 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 \$5.6 million in grants to winners across more than 2,000 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](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.