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## **LA SALLE STUDENT-ATHLETE AWARDS NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION FOR BLIND ATHLETES GRANT THROUGH GATORADE**

**VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON (August 20, 2025)** — Gatorade Oregon Boys Soccer of the Year, Vance Sheffield, awarded Northwest Association for Blind Athletes (NWABA) with a \$1,000 grant to help accomplish our mission to provide life-changing opportunities through sports and physical activity to individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

Sports have seen a double-digit decline over the past decade, largely due to tighter budgets in communities, but young people that participate in sports are found to be happier, healthier and better students. As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner.

"The Gatorade Player of the Year award highlights student-athletes who set an example both on and off the field," said Josh Lytel, Associate Marketing Manager for Gatorade Player of the Year. "The grants give these athletes a chance to donate to organizations like Northwest Association for Blind Athletes, which positively impacts the youth in their own communities."

"We are deeply grateful to Vance Sheffield and Gatorade's Community Grant program for this generous support," said Billy Henry, Founder and CEO of Northwest Association for Blind Athletes. "This grant will help us expand our life-changing programs and services for youth who are blind or visually impaired, allowing them to experience the physical, social, and emotional benefits of being part of a team."

All 610 Gatorade State Player of the Year recipients are awarded a grant to donate to a social impact partner of their choosing. Each Player of the Year can also submit a video about why their organization is deserving of one of 12 Spotlight Grants, which awards an additional \$10,000 to the organization. To date, Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$5.6 million across more than 2,000 organizations.

Gatorade has a longstanding history of serving athlete communities and it's ambition is to continue doing more to create positive change. Most recently, Gatorade announced its Fuel Tomorrow commitment, a multi-year initiative to provide opportunities for everyone to play sports and realize their potential.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. For more on Gatorade Player of the Year Community Grants, the Gatorade Player of the Year, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit [PlayerOfTheYear.Gatorade.com](https://PlayerOfTheYear.Gatorade.com)

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### **About Gatorade Player of the Year**

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation's most elite high school athletes for their success on and off the playing surface. Gatorade Players of the Year are not only the best in their sports, but they're also leaders in the classroom and in their communities. 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 Peyton Manning, Jayson Tatum, Mallory Swanson and Paige Bueckers.

### **About NWABA**

The mission of Northwest Association for Blind Athletes is to provide life-changing opportunities through sports and physical activity to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. Today, NWABA is a rapidly expanding

501(c)(3) charitable organization that provides more than 5,000 program and service interactions to children, youth, adults, and military veterans with visual impairments through tailored programming which improves self-confidence and self-esteem, promotes independence, creates an inclusive community of supporters, and builds the skills necessary to succeed in all areas of life including school and employment.