

## **NASHUA SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 13, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Kara Kelliher of Nashua South High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade New Hampshire Volleyball Player of the Year**. Kelliher is the first Gatorade New Hampshire Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Nashua South 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 Kelliher as New Hampshire's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Kelliher joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahlert High School, Iowa), Alisha Glass (2005-06, Leland Public High School, Mich.), Jordan Larson (2004-05, Logan View High School, Neb.) and Foluke Akinradewo (2004-05, St. Thomas High School, Fla.).

The 5-foot-4 senior outside hitter and defensive specialist led the Purple Panthers to a 21-0 record and the Division I state championship this past season. Kelliher recorded 218 kills, 163 digs, 28 service aces and 20 blocks while posting a kill percentage of .469. The New Hampshire Volleyball Coaches Association's 2019 Division I Player of the Year, Kelliher is a three-time First Team All-State selection. She concluded her prep volleyball career with 721 digs and 677 kills.

The secretary of her school's Latin Honor Society, Kelliher has volunteered locally for a daycare center at the YMCA of Greater Nashua and as a teacher's aide. "Kara had an amazing year for the Panthers," said Ben Molnar, head coach of Winnacunnet High School. "Don't let her size fool you. Although she isn't the tallest on the team, I think she jumps the highest. The first time you see her attack the ball, you take notice."

Kelliher has maintained a weighted 4.54 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Assumption College this fall.

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.

Kelliher joins recent Gatorade New Hampshire Volleyball Players of the Year Leah Creteau (2018 – 19, Spaulding High School), Maddie Norris (2017-18, Hollis-Brookline High School), Lauren Hatch (2016-17, Concord High School), Jo Coffey (2015-16, Merrimack High School), Jen Coffey (2014-15, Merrimack High School), and Molly Wotton (2013-14, Dover High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Kelliher has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

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](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](https://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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