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**CONRAD SCHOOLS OF SCIENCE STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® DELAWARE GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 19, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Julie Kulesza of Conrad Schools of Science as its 2017-18 Gatorade Delaware Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Kulesza is the first Gatorade Delaware Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Conrad Schools of Science.

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 Kulesza as Delaware's best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award announced in March, Kulesza joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Maya Moore (2005-06 Collins Hill HS, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville HS, N.C.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo HS, Calif.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis HS, Ind.) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-9 sophomore guard had led the Red Wolves to a 20-3 record and a berth in the state championship game at the time of her selection. Kulesza averaged 17.4 points, 6.0 rebounds, 5.9 assists and 3.7 steals through 23 games. The first 1,000-point scorer in school history, she is a two-time All-State honoree and a three-time All-Conference selection.

Kulesza has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and elementary school tutoring programs. "Kulesza can shoot from anywhere, she handles the ball well and she plays good team basketball," said Paul Smith, head coach at Tatnall School. "I think she's the best overall player we faced."

Kulesza has maintained a weighted 4.90 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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 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.

Kulesza joins recent Gatorade Delaware Girls Basketball Players of the Year Maggie Connolly (2016-17, Ursuline Academy), Altia Anderson (2015-16, Woodbridge High School), Adrianna Hahn (2014-15, 2013-14 & 2012-13, Ursuline Academy), Anjaleace White (2011-12, Sanford School), Betnijah Laney (2010-11 & 2009-10, Smyrna High School), Dara Taylor (2008-09, Caravel Academy), Elena Delle Donne (2007-08, Ursuline Academy), and Khadijah Rushdan (2006-07, St. Elizabeth High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Julie will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

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 the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.

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