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**LEE'S SUMMIT WEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 21, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Makayla Kelby of Lee's Summit West High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Missouri Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Kelby is the first Gatorade Missouri Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Lee's Summit West 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 track, distinguishes Kelby as Missouri's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Kelby joins an elite alumni association of state track & field award-winners, including Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa), Allyson Felix (2002-03, Los Angeles Baptist High School, Calif.), Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas), Grant Fisher (2013-14 & 2014-15, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The 5-foot-8 senior won both the discus and the shot put at the Class 5 state meet this past season, launching the former a meet-record 166 feet, eight inches and hurling the shot 46-7.25. Kelby also set a new state record with her season-best discus throw of 170-9, which ranked as the nation's No. 4 performance among prep competitors in 2018 at the time of her selection.

A devoted member of her church community, Kelby has volunteered locally on behalf of flood relief efforts and Habitat for Humanity. "Makayla sets herself apart by approaching every day with a great attitude and desire to improve," said Lee's Summit West coach Jesse Griffin. "She has been a great team leader."

Kelby has maintained a 3.48 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at the University of Washington 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.

Kelby joins recent Gatorade Missouri Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Alicia Burnett (2016-17, Fort Zumwalt South High School), Sophia Rivera (2015-16, Brentwood High School), Hannah Long (2014-15 & 2012-13, Eureka High School), Taylor Werner (2013-14, Ste. Genevieve High School), Tianna Valentine (2011-12, Hazelwood East High School), Colleen Quigley (2010-11, Nerinx Hall High School), Tiffani McReynolds (2009-10, The Pembroke Hill School), Emily Sisson (2008-09, Parkway Central High School), and Alishea Usery (2007-08 & 2006-07, McCluer South-Berkeley High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Kelby 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 us on Twitter. 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

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