

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

CHICAGO (March 8, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Julie Kulesza of Conrad Schools of Science** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Delaware Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Kulesza is a two-time winner and was 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 to be announced in March, Kulesza joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Maya Moore (2005-06, Collins Hill High School, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville High School, N.C.), Candace Parker (2001-02, 2002-03 & 2003-04, Naperville Central High School, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo High School, Calif.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis High School, Ind.), Katie Smith (1991-92, Logan High School, Ohio) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside High School, Calif.).

The 5-foot-9 junior guard led the Red Wolves to a 16-5 record and a berth in the state quarterfinals at the time of her selection. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year, Kulesza averaged 16.2 points, 5.8 rebounds, 5.2 assists and 3.4 steals through 21 games. A three-time All-State honoree, she was named to the Diamond State Classic All-Tournament Team.

Kulesza has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, a food shelf and elementary school tutoring programs. "Julie Kulesza is the most complete player in the state," said Dan Pisani, head coach at Archmere Academy. "She can beat you in so many different ways. She has great court vision, a high basketball IQ and she's a great defender too."

Kulesza has maintained a weighted 5.04 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 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Two-time winner Kulesza joins Gatorade Delaware Girls Basketball Players of the Year Maggie Connolly (2016-17, Ursuline Academy), Altia Anderson (2015-16, Woodbridge High School), and Adrianna Hahn (2014-15 & 2013-14, Ursuline Academy) as athletes who have recently won the basketball award.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Kulesza also 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, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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