

BARRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE RHODE ISLAND GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 20, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Annika Kelly of Barrington High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year**. Kelly is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Barrington 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 Kelly as Rhode Island'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, Kelly 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 set a state record in the hammer throw at 190 feet, 8 inches which ranked No. 1 in the nation among prep competitors at the time of her selection. Kelly won the hammer with a meet-record effort of 189-9 at the state championships, leading the Eagles to a second-place finish as a team. A dual citizen of the United States and Estonia, Kelly won the 2018 Estonian Under-18 championships and took ninth at the European Under-18 Championships to qualify for the World Youth Olympic Games in Argentina. She finished seventh at that event, setting an Estonian national U-18 record.

Kelly, whose brother Adam was the state's Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year in 2014-15, has volunteered locally as a math tutor and youth soccer referee. She is a member of Barrington's state-champion Science Olympiad team and has competed three times at nationals. "Annika Kelly has had a great season," said Bob Palazzo, Classical High head coach. "She was dominant. No one in the state was close."

A National Merit Scholar finalist, Kelly has maintained a 3.80 GPA in the classroom. She will attend Princeton University this fall, where she will compete in track & field.

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.

Kelly joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Nikki Merrill (2017-18 & 2016-17, Portsmouth High School), May Stern (2015-16, Classical High School), Quashira McIntosh (2014-15, Hope High School) and Maddy Berkson (2013-14, Classical High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Kelly 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.