

DUNCANVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE TEXAS GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 6, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Deja Kelly of Duncanville High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Texas Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Kelly is the sixth Gatorade Texas Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Duncanville 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 Kelly as Texas’ 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, Kelly 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, 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 senior guard led the Pantherettes to a 38-3 record and a berth in the Class 6A state tournament semifinals at the time of her selection. Kelly averaged 23.5 points, 5.5 rebounds, 4.1 steals and 2.9 assists thru 41 games. A McDonald’s All-American Game selection, Kelly is ranked as the nation’s No. 17 recruit in the Class of 2020 by ESPN.com. She entered the state semifinals with 3,084 points in her prep basketball career.

A member of Duncanville High’s Student Ambassador program, Kelly has volunteered locally as a youth basketball coach and has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. “Deja Kelly is a leader on the court who always gets her teammates involved,” said Kelly Dansby, head coach of Richardson High. “Offensively she can change the game, she has great vision and great court awareness. She has a nice dribble pull-up jumper and can also be a defensive threat.”

Kelly has maintained a 3.37 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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 and 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 Gatorade Texas Girls Basketball Players of the Year Endyia Rogers (2018-19, Bishop Lynch High School), Charli Collier (2017-18, Barbers Hill High School), Alexis Morris (2016-17, Legacy Christian Academy), Lauren Cox (2015-16 & 2014-15, Flower Mound High School), and Brianna Turner (2013-14, Manvel High School) as athletes who have won the basketball award since its inception in 2007.

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.

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