

**PADUA ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE DELAWARE GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 25, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Erin Kelleher of Padua Academy as its 2019-20 Gatorade Delaware Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Kelleher is the fifth Gatorade Delaware Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Padua Academy.

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 Kelleher as Delaware'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, Kelleher joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, 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-4 junior set a state record in the pole vault this past winter, and her best effort of 13 feet, two inches ranked as the nation's No. 9 performance among prep competitors during the indoor track season. Kelleher has won the state indoor pole vault championship in each of her three varsity seasons, while she captured the event outdoors at the Division 1 state meet and the Meet of Champions in both 2018 and 2019. She placed sixth at the New Balance Nationals Indoor in 2019.

Kelleher has volunteered locally on behalf of Stockings for Soldiers and her church's religious education program. "Erin's sheer determination in chasing her goals is what sets her apart," said Padua coach Marnie Giunta. "She's a perfectionist at her specialty and will continue repetitions until she gets it right. She's an intense competitor and always believes she'll achieve a personal best every time she competes."

Kelleher has maintained 3.40 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. 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.

Kelleher joins recent Gatorade Delaware Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Destiny Bailey-Perkins (2018-19, Caesar Rodney High School), Lydia Olivere (2017-18, Padua Academy), Daija Lampkin (2016-17 & 2015-16, Middletown High School), Ashley Bailey (2014-15, Middletown High School), and Maiya Dendy (2013-14, Padua Academy) among the state's list of former award winners.

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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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