

**ST. RAPHAEL ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 29, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Darius Kipyego of St. Raphael Academy as its 2019-20 Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Kipyego is the second Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from St. Raphael 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 Kipyego as Rhode Island's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in July, Kipyego 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-8, 147-pound junior set state records in the 600-meter run and the 800 during this past indoor season. Kipyego's 600 time of 1:19.65 at the Boston Holiday Challenge ranked as the nation's No. 3 clocking among prep competitors during the indoor season, while his 1:52.55 time in the 800 ranked No. 5. Last summer, Kipyego set another state record in the outdoor 800 at the Pan-Am Under-20 Championships with a national-best 1:49.46. He also took second in the 800 at the USATF Under-20 Outdoor Championships.

Kipyego has volunteered at the 2019 New England Cross Country Junior Olympics and has donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "Darius is someone who is extremely motivated to do well and he thrives on the competition," said Amy Noecker, head coach of Mount St. Charles High School. "He is one of the most exciting competitors to watch on the track."

Kipyego has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. He will begin his 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.

Kipyego joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Conor Murphy (2018-19, Classical High School), Jeffery Pedersen (2017-18, East Greenwich High School), D.J. Principe (2016-17, La Salle Academy), Bobby Colantonio (2015-16, Barrington High School), Jack Salisbury (2014-15, La Salle Academy), and Adam Kelly (2013-14, Barrington High School) 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, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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