

**SEELEY-SWAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MONTANA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (July 2, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Klaire Kovatch of Seeley-Swan High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Montana Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Kovatch is the first Gatorade Montana Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Seeley-Swan 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 Kovatch as Montana's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Player of the Year award to be announced in July, Seeley-Swan 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 6-foot senior won the discus for a third time and was a member of the winning 4x100-meter and 4x400-meter relay teams at the Class C state meet this past season, leading the Black Hawks to a first-place finish as a team. Kovatch also took second in the shot put at the state meet. At the time of her selection, her personal-best discus throw of 159 feet, 3 inches in April represents a Class C state record and ranked No. 21 nationally among prep competitors in the event in 2021.

The student council president at Seeley-Swan High, Kovatch was a two-year student trustee for the Missoula County Public School Board. She has volunteered locally as a youth ski coach and basketball referee. "My kids competed against Klaire several times this year, and not only was she an exceptional athlete, she always exhibited exemplary sportsmanship," said Shawn Ragnerus, head coach of Sheridan High. "Klaire is arguably the best female thrower ever in Montana."

Kovatch has maintained a 4.0 in the classroom and graduated as her school's valedictorian. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Colorado State University.

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 works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Kovatch joins recent Gatorade Montana Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Angellica Street (2019-20 & 2018-19, Columbia Falls High School), Camila Noe (2017-18, Bozeman High School), and Annie Hill (2016-17, Glacier High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Kovatch has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Kovatch is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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