

## **NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE IOWA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 20, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Colin Rice of Northwest High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Iowa Boys Basketball Player of the Year.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Rice as Iowa’s best high school boys basketball player, and he joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Jayson Tatum (2015-16, Chaminade College Preparatory School, MO), Cooper Flagg (2023-24, Montverde Academy, FL) and Cameron Boozer (2022-23 & 2024-25, Christopher Columbus High School, FL).

The 6-foot-8, 200-pound senior guard/forward averaged 21.6 points, 9.4 rebounds and 3.1 assists this past season, leading the Wolves (20-5) to the Class 4A state tournament quarterfinals. Rice chipped in 2.2 steals and 2.2 blocks per game, shooting 53.5 percent from the field and 42.9 from beyond the arc in addition to sinking 80.4 percent of his free throws. Ranked as the nation’s No. 95 prospect in his class by ESPN and No. 81 by 247Sports, he was a 2026 Des Moines Register Preseason All-Iowa selection, a 2025 NBA Players Association Top 100 Camp invitee and a 2025 Under Armour Rise First Team honoree in club play last summer.

Rice has volunteered in association with the men’s ministry group of his church community, helping to lead retreats and supporting congregational programs like Vacation Bible School. The fan student section leader at Wolves athletic events, he has also donated his time on behalf of Meals From the Heartland in addition to instructing at youth basketball camps “Colin’s growth, impact and consistency throughout his high school career have been exceptional,” said Waukee Northwest High School head coach Brett Watson. “This season, we intentionally played what I believe was the toughest schedule in the state. Despite being guarded every game by the opponent’s best defender—and taking on the responsibility of guarding their top perimeter or post threat—Colin has produced unbelievable numbers night in and night out. His ability to impact the game at both ends of the floor separates him from his peers.”

Rice has maintained a 3.22 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play basketball at the University of Nebraska this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one state winner from each of the 50 states and Washington D.C., in 12 different sports: football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls track & field. In total, 610 high school athletes are honored each year. From the pool of state winners, one national winner is selected in each of the 12 sports. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the winners in each sport.

As part of Gatorade’s commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$6.4 million in grants to winners across more than 2,200 organizations.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](https://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).

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