

NORTHWEST RANKIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MISSISSIPPI BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 20, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced De'Shawn Dillon of Northwest Rankin High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Mississippi 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 Dillon as Mississippi’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-4, 180-pound junior guard led the Cougars (21-12) to the 7A state semifinals this past season. Dillon averaged 17.9 points, 5.1 rebounds, 1.8 steals and 1.4 assists per game and was named the 7A, Region 3 Player of the Year. He made a game-tying, buzzer-beating 3-pointer in the first round of the state tournament, as well as the game-winning putback in overtime. He followed up that performance with a 26-point effort in the state quarterfinals.

Dillon has volunteered locally with the Little Cougars basketball program by helping to organize practices and offering demonstrations for drills. He has also donated his time as a member of the Momentum Life Group at his church, sharing life experiences in an effort to inspire youth members. “De’Shawn has shown on a daily basis that he has a gift that he cherishes and uses to make the people around him better,” said Northwest Rankin High School head coach Sirdonta Washington. “His unselfishness is truly one of the things that makes him so outstanding.”

Dillon has maintained a 3.2 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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 or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

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