

BLAIR ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Deron Rippey, Jr. of Blair Academy is the 2025-26 Gatorade New Jersey 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 Rippey as New Jersey’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 state’s returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-2, 185-pound senior point guard led the Bucs to a 30-2 record and a third-straight Prep Open State Tournament championship this past season. Rippey averaged 15.7 points, 6.3 assists, 5.3 rebounds and 2.0 steals while also leading Blair to a runner-up finish at the National Prep Championship. A McDonald’s All-American Game selection, he is a finalist for the Naismith Award and is ranked as the nation’s No. 10 recruit in the Class of 2026 by 247Sports.com.

Near his home in Brooklyn, Rippey has volunteered with the GFB Develop Toy Drive in addition to donating his time at a food kitchen and homeless shelter. He has also served as a youth basketball coach. “With Ron Ron at the helm, his team is never out of a game thanks to his remarkably strong command of the court as a lead guard,” said Matt McKay, Pro Insight Founder & CEO. “Like the best point guards, he stands out in his inherent ability to inspire confidence in his teammates.”

Rippey has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play basketball at Duke University 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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