

WILSON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA 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 Josh Leonard of Wilson High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade South Carolina 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 Leonard as South Carolina’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-7, 220-pound junior wing led the Tigers (21-7) to the 4A state quarterfinals this past season. Leonard averaged 22.3 points, 12.9 rebounds, 2.8 steals, 2.5 assists and 1.5 blocks per game while shooting 55.7 percent from the floor. Also the South Carolina Basketball Coaches Association 4A Player of the Year, he finished his career with 1,114 rebounds, a program record, and is ranked as the nation’s No. 9 recruit in the Class of 2027 by Rivals.

Leonard has volunteered locally with the Christmas for Kids initiative at Walmart, helping underprivileged children shop for holiday gifts. He has also donated his time to mentoring younger student-athletes, focusing not only on basketball skills, but also positive habits and confidence. “Josh Leonard poses challenges due to his size and versatility on both sides of the ball,” said Cameron Lee, head coach at Lakewood High School. “His ability to put pressure on the rim and make plays for his teammates makes him extremely dangerous, and if his jump shot is falling, it’s a tough task for any opposing coach.”

Leonard has maintained a 3.43 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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