

PAUL VI CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Jordan Smith, Jr. of Paul VI Catholic High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Virginia 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 Smith as Virginia’s best high school boys basketball player, and he’s also been selected as a finalist for the distinguished Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced later this month. Smith 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).

At the time of his selection, the 6-foot-2, 195-pound senior guard had led the Panthers to a 33-2 record, the No. 1 national ranking by MaxPreps and a berth in the Chipotle National Championships. Smith averaged 25.1 points, 6.0 rebounds, 5.3 assists and 3.0 steals through 35 games, leading Paul VI to both the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference and the Virginia Independent School Athletic Association Division I tournament championships. Also a 2026 McDonald’s All-American Game selection, Smith won a gold medal with USA Basketball at the 2025 FIBA U19 Men’s World Cup. He’s ranked as the nation’s No. 2 recruit in the Class of 2026 by ESPN and 247Sports.com.

Smith has donated his time as a peer mentor for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and intends to pursue a degree in special education. As a student in his school’s advanced peer mentor course this year, he completed a college-level class in Foundations of Education. Smith has also given his time and attention to the school’s Options basketball team, which competes in the Special Olympics. A Black & Gold Ambassador for St. Paul VI Catholic High School, he engages with prospective students and their families about his experience at the school. “When it all boils down, there may not be anyone in the country who impacts winning more than Jordan,” said Matt McKay, Pro Insight Founder & CEO. “His leadership, tenacity, motor and toughness are elite.”

Smith has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play basketball at the University of Arkansas 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.

###