

MONTVERDE ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE® FLORIDA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 26, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Cade Cunningham of Montverde Academy** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Florida Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Cunningham is the third Gatorade Florida Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Montverde Academy.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Cunningham as Florida's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award, Cunningham joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Karl-Anthony Towns (2012-13 & 2013-14, St. Joseph High School, N.J.), Dwight Howard (2003-04, Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln High School, Texas), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood High School, Calif.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington High School, Colo.) and Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame High School, Calif.).

The 6-foot-7, 215-pound senior forward had led the Eagles to a 25-0 record, a No. 1 national ranking and a berth in the GEICO High School Nationals at the time of his selection. Cunningham averaged 13.9 points, 6.4 assists, 4.2 rebounds and 1.4 steals through 25 games for one of the deepest prep teams in the country. A McDonald's All-American selection, Cunningham is one of five finalists for the Naismith High School Trophy. He is ranked as the nation's No. 2 recruit in the Class of 2020 by 247Sports.com.

Cunningham has volunteered locally as a youth mentor and a youth basketball coach. "Cade Cunningham is an outstanding leader," said Carlos Sample, head coach of Scotlandville Magnet (Baton Rouge, La.) High. "He plays with a high basketball IQ and confidence in his game. Cade stays even-keeled through the entirety of the game and has all the things you look for in a floor general."

Cunningham has maintained a 3.51 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Oklahoma State University this fall.

Cunningham joins Gatorade Florida Boys Basketball Players of the Year Vernon Carey Jr. (2018-19, NSU University School), R.J. Barrett (2017-18, Montverde Academy), Chaundee Brown (2016-17, The First Academy), Tony Bradley (2015-16, Bartow High School) and Ben Simmons (2014-15, Montverde Academy) among the state's list of former award winners.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

The 2019-2020 Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year announcement has been temporarily postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. To ensure the safety of everyone involved, The Gatorade Company will follow the guidance of experts and health officials as it determines the appropriate time to announce this year's winner.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Cunningham also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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