

CALLAWAY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE® MISSISSIPPI 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 **Daeshun Ruffin of Callaway High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Ruffin is the second Gatorade Mississippi Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Callaway High School.

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 Ruffin as Mississippi's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award, Ruffin 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 5-foot-10, 155-pound junior guard led the Chargers to a 25-5 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Ruffin averaged 26.8 points, 4.1 rebounds, 3.4 assists and 2.9 steals per game. A First Team All-State selection, he is a member of the Clarion Ledger Dandy Dozen and is ranked as the nation's No. 21 recruit in the Class of 2021 by ESPN.

Ruffin has served as an elementary school mentor and has volunteered locally on behalf of a youth summer camp. "Ruffin is the best scorer I've coached against in my five years here," said Daniel Worsham, head coach at Lake Cormorant High. "He can really shoot and he finishes at the rim too. We started running a double team at him whenever he touched the ball and he always made the correct pass. He's just a great player."

Ruffin has maintained a B average in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school this fall.

Ruffin joins Gatorade Mississippi Boys Basketball Players of the Year D.J. Jeffries (2018-19, Olive Branch High School), Robert Woodard (2017-18 & 2016-17, Columbus High School), Tyson Carter (2015-16, Starkville High School), and Malik Newman (2014-15, Callaway High School) 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," Ruffin 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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