

**CHERRY CREEK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE COLORADO BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 4, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Julian Hammond III of Cherry Creek High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Colorado Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Hammond III is the second Gatorade Colorado Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Cherry Creek 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 Hammond III as Colorado's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Hammond III joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Jayson Tatum (2015-16, Chaminade College Preparatory School, Mo.), Karl-Anthony Towns (2012-13 & 2013-14, St. Joseph High School, N.J.), Jabari Parker (2011-12, Simeon Career Academy, Ill.) and Dwight Howard (2003-04, Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.).

The 6-foot-2, 182-pound senior guard averaged 22.4 points and 5.5 rebounds per game this past season, leading the Bruins (17-1) to the Class 5A state semifinals. Hammond also recorded 3.8 assists, 2.3 steals and 1.1 blocks per game and he capped his career with 27 points, 10 rebounds, seven steals and four assists in a 64-66 loss to ThunderRidge High in the state semifinals. The 2021 Class 5A Player of the Year, he concluded his prep basketball career with 1,439 points.

Hammond has volunteered locally as a youth basketball and football coach. "Julian displays major versatility and leadership," said Paul Biancardi, ESPN National Recruiting Director. "His length can aid him on the defensive end of the court both on and away from the ball. He scores with opportunity and is a productive winning player."

Hammond has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Colorado this fall.

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 works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Hammond III joins recent Gatorade Colorado Boys Basketball Players of the Year Dominique Clifford (2019-20, The Vanguard School), Kenny Foster (2018-19, Smoky Hill High School), Sam Masten (2017-18, Rock Canyon High School), and Colbey Ross (2016-17, Eaglecrest High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Hammond III has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Hammond III is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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 [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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