

**MILTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE GEORGIA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (March 16, 2022) — In its 37<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Bruce Thornton** of **Milton High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Georgia Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Thornton is the first Gatorade Georgia Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Milton 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 court, distinguishes Thornton as Georgia'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 March, Thornton 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, 195-pound senior guard averaged 17.2 points, 7.7 rebounds and 7.5 assists per game this past season, leading the Eagles (23-8) to the Class AAAAAAA state quarterfinals. The 2021 Atlanta Journal Constitution Class AAAAAAA Player of the Year, Thornton is a three-time First Team All-State selection. Ranked as the nation's No. 35 recruit in the Class of 2022 by 247Sports, he concluded his prep basketball career with 1,554 points.

Thornton has volunteered locally as a youth mentor with both Waters Outreach, a non-profit organization for underprivileged children, and Seeds of Harvest, a reading and literacy non-profit. He has also donated his time to the Special Olympics and as a youth basketball coach. "There is no doubt in my mind that Bruce is the best player in Georgia," said Jason Dasinger, head coach of Etowah High School. "He may not have the highest scoring average of everyone, but that is by his choosing. He impacts the game more than any player I have ever coached against."

Thornton has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Ohio State University 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Thornton joins recent Gatorade Georgia Boys Basketball Players of the Year Jabari Smith (2020-21, Sandy Creek High School), Walker Kessler (2019-20, Woodward Academy), Sharife Cooper (2018-19, McEachern High School), and Ashton Hagans (2017-18, Newton High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the court. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Thornton has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Thornton is also eligible to submit a short 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 \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 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) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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