

**BLAIR OAKS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 16, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Luke Northweather** of **Blair Oaks High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Missouri Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Northweather is the first Gatorade Missouri Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Blair Oaks 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 Northweather as Missouri'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, Northweather 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-10, 220-pound senior forward averaged 29.2 points and 11.4 rebounds per game this past season, leading the Falcons (26-2) to the Class 4, District 9 championship game. Northweather also clicked for 3.4 assists, 2.4 blocks and 2.0 steals per game, connecting on 71.6 percent of his field-goal attempts, including 38.8 percent of his 3-pointers. A two-time Tri-County Conference Player of the Year, he scored a career-high 51 points in a 91-41 win over Eldon High on Feb. 8. He concluded his prep basketball career with 2,018 points.

Northweather has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and as a youth basketball coach. He has also donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church. "I've been coaching for about 20 years and I can honestly say he's the best big guy that I've ever seen," said Ryan Robertson, head coach of Fatima High School. "He gets double-teamed every night and he's still almost unstoppable. He steps out and shoots the 3, he will take you down into the low block and shoot a jump hook. He alters the game completely on the defensive end with his size and agility."

Northweather has maintained a weighted 4.08 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Northweather joins recent Gatorade Missouri Boys Basketball Players of the Year Aminu Mohammed (2020-21 & 2018-19, Greenwood Laboratory School), Caleb Love (2019-20, Christian Brothers College High School) and Torrence Watson (2017-18, Whitfield 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, Northweather 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. Northweather 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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