

**CARDINAL HAYES HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW YORK 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 **Tobe Awaka** of **Cardinal Hayes High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade New York Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Awaka is the first Gatorade New York Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Cardinal Hayes 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 Awaka as New York'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, Awaka 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-8, 235-pound senior forward had led the Cardinals to a 24-3 record and a berth in the Catholic High School Athletic Association championship game at the time of his selection. Awaka averaged 19.2 points, 13.9 rebounds, 3.0 blocks and 2.0 assists through 27 games. The CHSAA Most Valuable Player, he was also MVP of the New Jersey vs. New York Catholic Showcase.

Awaka has assisted the homeless and has volunteered locally on behalf of food-donation drives and youth basketball camps. "Tobe Awaka is a tremendous talent," said Jimmy Lynch, head coach at St. Francis Preparatory School. "No other team in the league has a weapon like him. He's big, strong, physical and great around the basket. He's effective from the perimeter too. Defensively, he rebounds everything and is a major presence as a rim protector."

Awaka has maintained an A average 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.

Awaka joins recent Gatorade New York Boys Basketball Players of the Year Jordan Riley (2020-21, Brentwood High School), R.J. Davis (2019-20, Archbishop Stepinac High School), and Joe Girard III (2018-19 & 2017-18, Glens Falls 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, Awaka 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. Awaka 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).