

**RICHMOND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 **Paul McNeil** of **Richmond Senior High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade North Carolina Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. McNeil is the first Gatorade North Carolina Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Richmond Senior 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 McNeil as North Carolina'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, McNeil 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-5, 180-pound sophomore guard led the Raiders to a 26-2 record and the quarterfinals of the Class 4A state tournament this past season. McNeil averaged 24.5 points, 9.7 rebounds, 3.8 assists, 1.8 blocks and 1.7 steals per game. An All-State honoree, he was also named Sandhills Athletic Conference Player of the Year.

McNeil has volunteered locally with his school's African-American Students organization. "McNeil is a special talent at a young age," said Paul Biancardi of ESPN Basketball. "He can create his own shot and shoots it with deep range. His feel for the game is advanced and he's an active rebounder. He's a winner with a bright future."

McNeil has maintained a B average in the classroom. He will begin his junior year of high school 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.

McNeil joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Boys Basketball Players of the Year Terquavion Smith (2020-21, Farmville Central High School), Jaden Bradley (2019-20, Cannon School), Wendell Moore (2018-19, Cox Mill High School), and Coby White (2017-18, Greenfield 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, McNeil 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. McNeil 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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