

**JOLIET WEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 15, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Jeremy Fears of Joliet West High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Illinois Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Fears is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Joliet West 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 Fears as Illinois' best high school boys basketball player. Fears joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Chet Holmgren (2020-21, Minnehaha Academy, Minn.), Trae Young (2016-17, Norman North High School, Ok.), Jayson Tatum (2015-16, Chaminade College Preparatory School, Mo.), and Karl-Anthony Towns (2013-14 & 2012-13, St. Joseph High School, N.J.).

The 6-foot-2, 182-pound senior guard averaged 18.8 points and 5.6 rebounds per game this past season, leading the Tigers (28-6) to the Class 4A sectional final. He also contributed 5.3 assists and 1.5 steals per game. A McDonald's All-American Game selection, Fears played as a sophomore and junior at La Lumiere School in LaPorte, Ind. He's ranked as the nation's No. 20 recruit in the Class of 2023 by ESPN.com.

Fears has volunteered locally as a Tiger Tots supervisor at a childcare development program at Joliet West High. He has also donated his time as a member of the Black Student Union and as a youth basketball coach. "Fears is one of the most aggressive on-ball defenders in the ESPN 100," said Paul Biancardi, National Recruiting Director for ESPN. "His speed and ability to handle in the open floor is impressive, and he owns the burst to get to the rim consistently. His decision-making is sound and he has the vision to find the open teammate to finish in the paint. He brings endless energy and toughness to the court with vocal and active leadership."

Fears has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Michigan 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.

Fears joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Basketball Players of the Year Jaden Schutt (2021-22, Yorkville Christian High School), Max Christie (2020-21, Rolling Meadows High School), and Adam Miller (2019-20 & 2018-19, Morgan Park High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

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.