

**LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEVADA 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 **Dedan 'DJ' Thomas** of **Liberty High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Nevada Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Thomas is the first Gatorade Nevada Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Liberty 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 Thomas as Nevada's best high school boys basketball player. Thomas 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-1, 170-pound junior guard averaged 22.8 points and 5.1 assists per game this past season, leading the Patriots (21-10) to the Class 5A state championship game. Thomas also averaged 3.9 rebounds and 1.2 steals while connecting on 81.4 percent of his free throw attempts (179-of-220). He is ranked as the nation's No. 21 recruit in the Class of 2024 by ESPN.com.

A member of his local chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Thomas has volunteered locally on behalf of food and clothing drives for the homeless, and he has donated his time as a youth basketball coach and counselor. "He's one of the best point guards in the country at running a team and setting up his teammates," said Paul Biancardi, National Recruiting Director for ESPN. "He's a student of the game and when it comes to handling the ball or facing pressure, he does so with maturity and purpose. What separates him from others is his high-assist [to] low-turnover ratio. He's the ultimate point guard, whether playing an up-tempo pace or in the half-court. He's a pass-first player, but not a pass-only point guard."

Thomas has maintained a weighted 3.34 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior 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.

Thomas joins recent Gatorade Nevada Boys Basketball Players of the Year Darrion Williams (2021-22, Bishop Gorman High School), Jaden Hardy (2020-21 & 2019-20, Coronado High School), and Jalen Hill (2018-19, Clark 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.