

**PAUL VI CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 **DeShawn Harris-Smith** of **Paul VI Catholic High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Virginia Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Harris-Smith is the second Gatorade Virginia Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Paul VI Catholic 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 Harris-Smith as Virginia’s best high school boys basketball player. Harris-Smith 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.).

At the time of his selection, the 6-foot-5, 208-pound senior guard had led the Panthers to a 31-3 record and a berth in the GEICO High School Nationals tournament. Harris-Smith averaged 17.8 points, 7.2 rebounds, 6.3 assists and 2.6 steals per game through 34 contests. He also led the Panthers to the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association Division I state championship and the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference tournament final. He’s ranked as the nation’s No. 45 recruit in the Class of 2023 by ESPN.com.

Harris-Smith has volunteered by performing maintenance and doing other odd jobs at a local convent. He has also donated his time as a youth basketball coach. “A physically tough prospect who gives all-out effort, he’s hard to stop once he gets going downhill,” said Paul Biancardi, National Recruiting Director for ESPN. “Harris-Smith loves to compete in attack mode. His jumper is legit when it’s needed and his defense is a major strength of his game. He’s productive across many stat categories and has great leadership qualities, which have helped get his team into the ESPN Top 25 rankings.”

Harris-Smith has maintained a 3.42 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Maryland 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.

Harris-Smith joins recent Gatorade Virginia Boys Basketball Players of the Year Chris Livingston (2021-22, Oak Hill Academy), Trevor Keels (2020-21, Paul VI Catholic High School), Jeremy Roach (2019-20, Paul VI Catholic High School), and Cole Anthony (2018-19, Oak Hill Academy), 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.