

**MCEACHERN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 21, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Airious 'Ace' Bailey of McEachern High School is the 2023-24 Gatorade Georgia Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Bailey is the second Gatorade Georgia Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from McEachern High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the court, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Bailey as Georgia's best high school boys basketball player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Bailey joins an all-star group of alumni that includes LeBron James (2002-03 & 2001-02, St. Vincent - St. Mary High School, Ohio), Karl-Anthony Towns (2013-14 & 2012-13, St. Joseph High School, N.J.) and Jayson Tatum (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, Chaminade College Preparatory School, Mo.).

The 6-foot-10, 215-pound senior forward averaged 33.4 points and 15.5 rebounds per game this past season, leading the Indians (26-6) to the Class 7A state title game. Bailey, who also averaged 3.9 assists and 2.1 blocks, is a McDonald's All-American Game selection and a member of both Nike Hoop Summit Team USA and the Jordan Brand Classic squad. He is ranked as the nation's No. 2 recruit in the Class of 2024 by Rivals.

Bailey has volunteered locally as part of an elementary education literacy outreach program and on behalf of the McEachern Beta Club's student-supported shopping trip with district elementary schools. He has also donated his time at the Powders Springs Food Bank and as a youth basketball camp counselor. "Ace can do everything and is a matchup nightmare," said Jason Slate, head coach of Alexander High School. "He has put up amazing numbers against the best teams in the country. On top of everything, he plays with a tremendous motor."

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

Bailey joins recent Gatorade Georgia Boys Basketball Players of the Year Isaiah Collier (2022-23, Wheeler High School), Bruce Thornton (2021-22, Milton High School), Jabari Smith (2020-21, Sandy Creek High School) and Walker Kessler (2019-20, Woodward Academy), among the state's list of former award winners.

As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$4.9 million across more than 1,600 organizations.

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.

###