

**RAYMOND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (March 21, 2024) — In its 39<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Eric Paymon, Jr. of Raymond High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Mississippi Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Paymon, Jr. is the first Gatorade Mississippi Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Raymond 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 Paymon, Jr. as Mississippi’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, touting 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-9, 225-pound senior forward averaged 23.4 points, 9.7 rebounds, 4.7 assists and 3.5 blocks this past season, leading the Rangers (31-4) to the 4A state championship. Paymon was also named the state’s 4A Mr. Basketball. He is rated as the nation’s No. 141 recruit in the Class of 2024 by On3 and No. 1 in Mississippi.

Paymon, Jr. has volunteered locally as a traffic guide during Jackson State University football home games. He also has donated his time as part of multiple community service initiatives through his church and other non-profit organizations. “He’s very versatile, which makes him extremely hard to defend,” said Sirdonta Washington, head coach of Provine High School. “His leadership style allows the individuals around him to grow.”

Paymon, Jr. has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to attend Mississippi State University, where he will play basketball, 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.

Paymon, Jr. joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Boys Basketball Players of the Year Josh Hubbard (2022-23, Madison-Ridgeland Academy), Kimani Hamilton (2021-22, Clinton High School) and Daeshun Ruffin (2020-21 & 2019-20, Callaway High School), 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](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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