

**RICE MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VERMONT 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 **Drew Bessette** of **Rice Memorial High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Vermont Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Bessette is the eighth Gatorade Vermont Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Rice Memorial 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 Bessette as Vermont'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-8, 220-pound senior forward averaged 16.2 points and 7.7 rebounds this season, leading the Green Knights (21-2) to the Division I state championship. Ranked as the Class of 2024's No. 5 recruit in Vermont by the New England Recruiting Report, Bessette was named the Vermont Basketball Coaches Association's 2024 Player of the Year. He is also a two-time Vermont Coaches Association Dream Dozen selection.

A National Honor Society member, Bessette has volunteered locally on behalf of the Meals on Wheels program and has also donated his time with the Hope Happens Here club, which raises awareness of mental health issues facing student-athletes. "Drew is a matchup nightmare at the forward position with his athleticism at the rim and ability to knock down 3-pointers," said Dylan Baker, head coach at Burr and Burton Academy. "His size and skill make him extremely difficult to contain and he is truly a one-of-a-kind this year in Vermont."

Bessette has maintained an A average in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to attend the University of Vermont, 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.

Bessette joins recent Gatorade Vermont Boys Basketball Players of the Year Sawyer Ramey (2022-23, Fair Haven Union High School), Jonah Cattaneo (2021-22, Montpelier High School), Michel Ndayishimiye (2020-21, Rice Memorial High School), and Logan Wendell (2019-20, St. Johnsbury 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.

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