

100 YEARS OF MR. BASKETBALL

BCAM Announces 10th and Final Round of “Retro” Mr. Basketball Winners.

EAST LANSING, MI, April 1, 2019 - With the completion of the 2018-19 prep basketball season, the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan proudly wraps up their decade-long “Retro” Mr. Basketball project with the announcement of their final six honorees. Over the course of ten seasons, the project has examined the high school court careers of hundreds of the state’s finest. The list of 61 honorees, when combined with the winners of the current ‘Mr. Basketball’ award, first presented following the 1980-81 prep season, totals 100. A contiguous list of Michigan’s ‘Best of the Best’ now dates back to 1920.

Noting the amazing pool of talented basketball players produced by the state over the years, past Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan Executive Director Tom Hursey and Michigan High School Athletic Association historian Ron Pesch hatched a plan to replicate the ‘Mr. Basketball’ concept, and apply it to the past. The goal was to name the top high school senior ballplayer for each of the 61 years between 1920 and 1980.

To do so, Pesch hit the archives, examined the data, gathered names and assembled biographies, then provided a ballot. BCAM assembled a committee representing all parts of Michigan to examine the information, narrow the field to the best-of-the-best, and then vote for a winner.

“All along, the idea was to focus solely on the high school playing careers of these individuals, just like the current award,” said Hursey. “The committee did its best to ignore what came later, and to name a Mr. Basketball selection for each year. Now, with the 10th and final round of selections, the project is complete.”

“Just like with the current award, there will always be debate on the selections,” said Pesch. “Dave DeBusschere or Chet Walker? L.C. Bowen or Richie Jordan? Bill Chmielewski or Pete Gent? That’s a good thing. These players should never be forgotten in the halls of their high schools and by basketball fans across the nation. Michigan has produced and continues to turn out amazing athletic talent, year in and year out. So often, folks only recall the recent past. The ‘Retro’ Mr. Basketball project focuses a spotlight on our history.”

That spotlight now shines on the award that captures the names. Following the 2013 presentation of the award, BCAM retired the original Mr. Basketball trophy. The award has since been repurposed to capture the names of the “Retro” Mr. Basketball winners. The trophy now stands on display in East Lansing as part of the Tom Izzo Hall of History at the Breslin Center.

1929 RETRO MR. BASKETBALL

LOUIS JAGNOW, JACKSON – “A remarkable shot from almost any section of the floor and a splendid team player,” Led Jackson to the Class A state title in 1929 and a runner-up finish in 1928 and was twice named to the All-Tournament team. “Throughout the season Jagnow has been the outstanding player for Jackson and no team has been able to effectively stop him.” Was one of the leading scorers of the state tournament, and later earned All-American honors at the A.A. Stagg National Tournament in Chicago.

1929 FINALISTS

Forest Baldwin, Bridgman, captain of the Class D champions. Although not of unusual size, Baldwin was considered as lightning fast, and a deceptive dribbler with an uncanny shot. He scored 22 points in the team’s quarterfinal victory over Grand Rapids Godwin.

Neil Ludwick, Grand Rapids Creston – Center and top player on the best Creston team to date. Despite a quarterfinal loss in the Class A state tournament, Ludwick was singled out and named to the All-Tourney team in 1929. A mid-year graduate in 1930.

Lester Wamsley, Highland Park, 5-foot-9, 155 – A steady, smart cager, Wamsley was an All-City selection by both the *Detroit Times* and *Detroit Free Press*, and an United Press International All-Tournament selection. Praised as an outstanding guard, good on long shots.

1939 RETRO MR. BASKETBALL

GENE BROENE, GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN – The top vote-getter among coaches in the *Detroit Free Press* All-State balloting, Broene “averaged nearly 12 points a game against some of the strongest teams in the state.” According to the *Detroit Times*, where Broene also was named first team All-State, he was the reason Christian “cleaned up in the Furniture City league composed chiefly of Class A teams. He could do everything right,” while leading Christian to the Class B state title in 1938 and state runner-up honors in 1939. Later played college ball at Calvin.

1939 FINALISTS

Chet Jurwiak, Kalamazoo St. Augustine – “the state’s standout high school basketball player under the basket. He invariably grabbed 80 per cent of the balls off the back board during a game,” wrote the *Detroit Times* when selecting him for first-team all-state honors. “Jurwiak was all-state in football and lost none of his ability on the court.”

Earl Kelly, Flint Northern, 6-foot-3 – described by a veteran Saginaw Valley Conference official as the best player in the league. Scored 176 points in 20 games in leading Northern to their third Class A MHSAA state championship in the school’s 11-year history. A mid-year graduate in 1939-40.

Ed (Nowaczyk) Novak, Flint St. Mary, 6-foot-4. – First team All-State according to both the *Free Press* and the *Times*. Scored 260 points as a senior and, with his twin brother Edwin, “helped St. Mary annex the Class C state crown. Through his height he controlled the ball of both backboards, besides tossing in baskets on a highly productive basis.”

Frank Sabo, Detroit Southwestern – “Sabo was considered by many coaches as the best passer in the (Detroit city) league,” said the *Free Press*. “An outstanding floorman,” added the *Detroit Times* when naming Sabo to their all-city team. “Superlative off the backboard, a good shot and, above all, a fine leader.” Later played at Wayne University.

1949 RETRO MR. BASKETBALL

KEN BURRELL, HAMTRAMCK, 6-FOOT-3, 182 – “Without Burrell, Hamtramck never would have won 13 out of 17 [regular season contests]” wrote the *Detroit Times* when naming him to their first team All-State squad. Burrell finished with 333 points leading the Cosmos in scoring over 19 games (17.5 points per game). Later played for Lawrence Tech.

1949 FINALISTS

Chuck Holloway, Detroit Northern, 5-foot-8 – “He’s an all-around star, outstanding in the clutch as exemplified in the (City League playoff) semifinal game against Central, where he led Northern in a rally to win. He topped the loop in scoring (14 point average), is fast and difficult to stop,” wrote the *Times*. “Despite his lack of height, was probably the most adept player in the (Detroit City) league. An uncanny shot, he led Northern into the finals of the (league) playoffs,” wrote the *Free Press*.

Harry Lauder, Ferndale, 5-foot-11, 155 – Spectacular scorer and all-around performer and the spark of his team. “Was ‘raved over’ by virtually everyone who saw him perform,” stated the *Times*, when selecting him for first team All-State honors. Called by his coach, Roy Burkhart, “one of the smoothest all-around players I’ve ever seen. The kid also is loaded with basketball sense.” Later played freshman and varsity basketball at Michigan.

Lysle Smith, Port Huron, 5-foot-11, 155 – “Known as a ‘pressure’ player who also draws the evening’s toughest defensive assignment for his team. His 193 points this season were mostly on set shots from far out on the court,” wrote the *Free Press*, honoring Smith with first team All-State accolades. Later played at Michigan, where he became the first cager from Port Huron to win a varsity letter.

Carl Tschirhart, Milan, 6-foot-0, 155 – An all-around athlete and key cog in Milan’s 1948 Class C state title, Tschirhart “connected on 33 per cent of his 288 shots from the floor” as Milan ran their win streak to 40 games straight, spanning two seasons, before falling in the regionals of the 1949 tournament. Later played for Michigan Normal (now Eastern Michigan University).

1959 RETRO MR. BASKETBALL

DAVID GAINES, DETROIT NORTHEASTERN, 6-FOOT-0, 180 – Averaged 27 points per game, including a high game of 41 points against Detroit Mackenzie in the Metropolitan League Tournament. “Gaines was hailed by several League coaches as ‘the best we’ve seen in some time’” noted the *Detroit Times* when they named him to their All-State “Dream Team” – the state’s top players regardless of school classification. Later attended LeMoyne College in Memphis, before joining the Harlem Globetrotters.

1959 FINALISTS

John Bandy, Pontiac Central, 6-foot-3, 160 – A jump shooting specialist. “Averaged 19 points a game during the regular season to take the individual scoring title in the strong Saginaw Valley League,” said the *Detroit Times*, including him on their Dream Team. “Was Pontiac’s second leading rebounder,” wrote the *Free Press* when naming him Class A first team All-State. “He could score from any spot on the floor.” Played college ball at Western Michigan University.

Jim Ludwig, Sault Ste Marie, 6-foot-5½, 185 – “Rewrote virtually all of Sault Ste. Marie High’s individual scoring records,” wrote George Maskin in the *Times*. “A four-year veteran on the Blue Devils, he tossed in more than 1,100 points...During the recent season he collected over 450 points (373 in regular season play) and had a superlative shooting mark of 46 percent. Jim also headed the Soo in rebounds.”

Art Oliver, Muskegon Heights, 6-foot-0, 162 – Clever, sharpshooting guard. Leading scorer for the Tigers, totaling 318 points over 18 games, and 21.5 points per game over the last half of the season before the Heights fell to Grand Rapids Central in regional play. A first team All-State selection by both the *Free Press* and *Times*.

Art Reid, Hamtramck, 6-foot-2, 186 – “A superior rebounder and jumper, (and tireless worker), averaged 22 points a game for Hamtramck,” said Hal Schram in the *Free Press*. “Deadly from the corners as well as in front of the basket,” added the *Times*, he scored 364 points including 44 of 67 from the free throw line.

Jim Tilmon, Grand Rapids Central, 5-foot-9, 170 – “Tilmon is the best around here since Don Eaddy,” chronicled Eugene Gailmeier of the *Grand Rapids Herald*. “Although basically a guard, Tilmon rotated so swiftly from one position to another it was impossible to tell at times what job he actually held,” said the *Times*. Led the city league in scoring. His 27 points in the regional final snapped Muskegon Heights’ string of 17 tournament wins and helped place Central in the state quarterfinals for only the third time in postseason history.

1969 RETRO MR. BASKETBALL

ERNIE JOHNSON, GRAND RAPIDS OTTAWA HILLS, 6-FOOT-7, 190 – Played on back-to-back state champion teams at Ottawa Hills in 1968 and 1969. According to the Associated Press, who named Johnson to their Class A All-State squad, he “averaged 22 points and taps in numerous errant shots. It is hard to stop his push shot. He shoots 60 percent from the floor and on defense blocks many shots. Johnson also grabbed 13 rebounds a game.” Besides earning Dream Team honors from the *Detroit News*, Johnson was named to the state championship All-Tournament team.

1969 FINALISTS

Ken Brady, Flint Central, 6-foot-9, 220 – Best big man to come out of Flint in many years. “Despite his 220 pounds, Brady gets up and down a basketball court with the agility and speed of a dashman. (Coach Clif) Turner insists he is often more valuable for his defensive play than his point production,” said Hal Schram in a mid-season article. Set a new city scoring mark with 521 points in 21 games, while helping Central win the Valley conference title. United Press International ‘Player of the Year’ in Michigan.

Tom Marsh, Detroit Northern, 6-foot-1, 168 – “Possibly the best player in either the Detroit Catholic or public school league” said the Associated Press, Marsh “became Northern’s first player to top 1,000 points in three varsity seasons. He averaged 27 points a game and was a fine outside shooter.”

Tim Megge, Orchard Lake St, Mary, 6-foot-2, 175 – Averaged 25.4 points a game, including a school record 56 points in one game, preceded by a 51-point game. Hit 46 field goal attempts and 72 percent of his foul shots according to UPI. In 81 games during his four-year varsity career, Megge scored 1,612 points.

Bob Rhodin, Ypsilanti – 6-foot-3½, 170 – “Led Ypsilanti to a 22-1 record and a No. 1 rating in the final AP poll. Scored 360 points during the year for a 19 point average and was the team’s top rebounder, grabbing 227,” said the AP. “Coach Dick Ouellette calls him ‘the best all-around player I’ve ever had.’ Rhodin has tremendous hustle and is a great defensive ballplayer.”

Cal Tatum Muskegon, 6-foot-1, 170 – “For his size, I’ve never seen an athlete who is so proficient in so many phases of the game,” said then-Muskegon coach Mike Murphy. A guard, Tatum averaged 22.4 points, 10 rebounds, five assists and four steals per game in his senior year to earn first team all-state honors. He graduated as the Big Reds’ all-time leading scorer with 1,250 career points, and an average of 22.7 points per game as a senior.

1979 RETRO MR. BASKETBALL

JAY SMITH, MIO AuSABLE, 6-FOOT-5, 192 – Set a single season scoring mark as a junior with 912 points then topped it as a senior, scoring 952 points, averaging 35.3 points across 26 games. Finished his four year prep career with 2,841 points – still a state record in Michigan.

1979 FINALISTS

Tim Andree, Birmingham Brother Rice, 6-foot-10, 230 – The “best big man in the state,” wrote Hal Schram in the *Free Press*. Averaged 23 points and 17 rebounds per game and was named Second team Parade All-American.

James Koger, Saginaw, 6-foot-4, 190 – a 1,000-plus career scorer who averaged 19.7 points 11 rebounds and shot 47 percent from the floor” said the AP. “He ran the Saginaw offense,” added the *Free Press* in their first-team All-State write-up. “When he wasn’t in the lineup, Saginaw was a very ordinary team.”

Melvin McLaughlin, Grand Rapids Creston, 6-foot-1, 170 – Considered the state’s top “pure shooter,” McLaughlin scored 1,577 points, a 25.4 average, in his three-year career at Creston. Exceeded the 35-point mark in a game on four occasions as a senior.

Evaristo Perez, Orchard Lake St. Mary, 6-foot-8, 210 – Despite being in the US less than two years, the Dominican Republic native averaged 22 points and 15 rebounds while hitting 57 percent of his shots. ‘He’s a real competitor and a leader on the flow,’” St. Mary coach Bob Shoemaker told the *Free Press*. “We do a lot of things on the court, and he picked them up right away.”

Derek Perry, River Rouge, 6-foot-6, 210 – Coach Lofton Greene told Hal Schram that Perry was “probably the finest offensive player he has ever coached.” Averaged over 28 points per game and “an incredible field-goal shooting percentage of 64 percent” entering the postseason.

Erich Santifer, Ann Arbor Huron, 6-foot-5, 165. “He has been the most valuable player in the rugged South Central Conference two years in a row,” said the *Lansing State Journal* at tournament time. “He prefers to work inside, but can also produce from long range as well.” Santifer held a 22.3 points per game average headed into the tournament regional final against Lansing Eastern, then scored 36 points against the Quakers in the contest, in which Huron was eliminated. “He’s probably the finest player we saw all season,” said Lansing Eastern coach Paul Cook. Later excelled at Syracuse.

MICHIGAN'S MR. BASKETBALL AWARD

(College Attended Shown in Parenthesis)

Players from **1981-Present** were honored as part of the current BCAM/Detroit Free Press Hal Schram Mr. Basketball award. Players from **1920-1980** were selected as part of BCAM's decade-long "Retro" Mr. Basketball project, launched in 2010 and completed in 2019.

2019 Romeo Weems, New Haven (DePaul)
2018 Foster Loyer, Clarkston (Michigan State)
2017 Isaiah Livers, Kalamazoo Central (Michigan)
2016 Cassius Winston, University of Detroit Jesuit (Michigan State)
2015 Deyonta Davis, Muskegon (Michigan State)
2014 DeShawn Thrower, Muskegon (Stony Brook / Ferris State)
2013 Monte Morris, Flint Beecher (Iowa State)
2012 Matt Costello, Bay City Western (Michigan State)
2011 Dwaun Anderson, Suttons Bay (Wagner)
2010 Keith Appling, Detroit Pershing (Michigan State)

2009 Derrick Nix, Detroit Pershing (Michigan State)
2008 Brad Redford, Frankenmuth (Xavier)
2007 Corperryale Harris Detroit Redford (Michigan)
2006 David Kool, Grand Rapids South Christian (Western Michigan)
2005 Wilson Chandler, Benton Harbor (DePaul)
2004 Drew Neitzel, Wyoming Park (Michigan State)
2003 Dion Harris, Detroit Redford ((Michigan)
2002 Paul Davis, Rochester (Michigan State)
2001 Kelvin Torbert, Flint Northwestern (Michigan State)
2000 Marcus Taylor, Lansing Waverly (Michigan State)

1999 Jason Richardson, Saginaw Arthur Hill (Michigan State)
1998 Dane Fife, Clarkston (Indiana)
1997 Shane Battier, Detroit Country Day (Duke)
1996 Winfred Walton, Detroit Pershing (Fresno State)
1995 Robert Traylor, Detroit Murray-Wright ((Michigan)
1994 Willie Mitchell, Detroit Pershing (Michigan / UAB)
1993 Jon Garavaglia, Southgate Aquinas (Michigan State)
1992 Kenyon Murray, Battle Creek Central (Iowa)
1991 Chris Webber, Detroit Country Day ((Michigan)
1990 Anthony Miller, Benton Harbor (Michigan State)

1989 Michael Talley, Detroit Cooley (Michigan)
1988 Matt Steigenga, Grand Rapids South Christian (Michigan State)
1987 Mark Macon, Saginaw Buena Vista (Temple)
1986 Terry Mills, Romulus (Michigan)
1985 Glen Rice, Flint Northwestern (Michigan)
1984 Demetreus Gore, Detroit Chadsey (Pittsburgh)
1983 Antoine Joubert, Detroit Southwestern (Michigan)
1982 Robert Henderson, Lansing Eastern (Michigan)
1981 Sam Vincent, Lansing Eastern (Michigan State)
1980 Tim McCormick, Clarkston (Michigan)

1979 Jay Smith, Mio-AuSable (Bowling Green/Saginaw Valley)
1978 Trent Tucker, Flint Northwestern (Minnesota)
1977 Earvin "Magic" Johnson, Lansing Everett (Michigan State)
1976 Stuart House, Detroit Denby (Washington State)
1975 Bruce Flowers, Berkley (Notre Dame)
1974 Tony Smith, Saginaw (Nevada-Las Vegas)
1973 Tom LaGarde, Detroit Catholic Central (North Carolina)
1972 Larry Fogle, Detroit Cooley (Southern Louisiana, Canisius)
1971 Michael "Campy" Russell, Pontiac Central (Michigan)
1970 Rick Drewitz, Garden City West (Kentucky)

1969 Ernie Johnson, Grand Rapids Ottawa Hills (Michigan)
1968 Ralph Simpson, Detroit Pershing (Michigan State)
1967 Spencer Haywood, Detroit Pershing (University of Detroit)
1966 Rudy Tomjanovich, Hamtramck (Michigan)
1965 L.C. Bowen, Benton Harbor (Bradley)
1964 Willie Betts, River Rouge (Bradley)
1963 Craig Dill, Saginaw Arthur Hill (Michigan)
1962 Ernie Thompson, Saginaw (Bradley)
1961 Reggie Harding, Detroit Eastern
1960 Peter Gent, Bangor (Michigan State)

1959 David Gaines, Detroit Northeastern (LeMonye, now LeMoyné-Owens)
1958 Chet Walker, Benton Harbor (Bradley)
1957 Ed Burton (Michigan State)
1956 Mel Peterson, Stephenson (Wheaton)
1955 M.C. Burton, Jr., Muskegon Heights (Michigan)
1954 Pete Tillotson, Ludington (Michigan)
1953 Ron Kramer, East Detroit (Michigan)
1952 Frank Tanana, Sr., Detroit St. Andrew, (Cal State-Fullerton – baseball)
1951 Webster Kirksey, Saginaw (Eastern Michigan)
1950 Charlie Primas, Detroit Miller (Wayne State)

1949 Ken Burrell, Hamtramck (Lawrence Tech)
1948 Art McColgan, Saginaw SS Peter & Paul (Villanova)
1947 Sammy Gee, Detroit Miller
1946 Jack Forestieri, Benton Harbor (Notre Dame)
1945 Bob Swanson, Lansing Sexton (Michigan)
1944 Dick Rifenburg, Saginaw Arthur Hill (Michigan)
1943 Don Boven, Kalamazoo Central (Western Michigan)
1942 Larry Savage, Saginaw (Northwestern)
1941 Don Osterman, Detroit St. Theresa (Villanova)
1940 Ralph Gibert, Flint Northern (Michigan)

1939 Gene Broene, Grand Rapids Christian (Calvin College)
1938 John Maartens, Kalamazoo Central
1937 Bob Osterman, Detroit St. Theresa (Notre Dame)
1936 Charles Pink, Detroit Northwestern (Michigan)
1935 John Zwier, Holland Christian
1934 Earl Brown, Jr., Benton Harbor (Notre Dame)
1933 Lincoln Dodson Truss, Flint Northern
1932 Lowell Matteson, Portage
1931 Edward Huttenga, Grand Haven (Western Michigan)
1930 John Tooker, Kalamazoo St. Augustine (Michigan)

1929 Louis Jagnow, Jackson (Carnegie Tech)
1928 Francis Doolittle, Detroit Northwestern
1927 Bill McCall, Muskegon (Dartmouth)
1926 Roger Grove, Sturgis (Michigan State)
1925 Joe Truskowski, Detroit Northeastern (Michigan)
1924 Bennie Oosterbaan, Muskegon (Michigan)
1923 Henry Schrupf, Niles (Western Michigan)
1922 Royal Cherry, Grand Rapids Union (Michigan)
1921 George Haggarty, Ypsilanti (Michigan)
1920 Harry Kipke, Lansing Central (Michigan)

"Retro" Mr Basketball selections and finalists

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