

MR. BASKETBALL

PAUL DAVIS

Rochester's Paul Davis is Mr. Basketball

Paul Davis is the 22nd recipient of the Hal Schram Mr. Basketball Award given annually to the state's top senior by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan in conjunction with the Detroit Free Press.

The award is the most prestigious a high school athlete can win in Michigan, and Davis won by a landslide in voting by association members. Davis received 126 of the 249 1st Place votes, three times as many as runner-up Anthony Roberson of Saginaw.

Davis, the fourth straight Michigan State signee to be named Mr. Basketball, compiled 760 points. Roberson, who signed with Florida, was second with 382 points. Pontiac Northern's Lester Abram, who signed with Michigan, was third with 269.

Earlier this season, Bob Gibbons of All Star Sports Publications named Davis the top senior in the country.

Although his senior season was cut short when he suffered a fractured right ankle in Rochester's 16th game, Davis averaged 29.7 points, 13.8 rebounds and 3.5 blocked shots.

Although Davis began thinking about the Mr. Basketball award his freshman season, his coach, Hal Commerson, thought two years earlier that the youngster might have a chance at it.

Kathie Davis, Paul's mother, is an MSU grad, and she could tell the award meant the world to her son. "Paul's very quiet, and he doesn't share his feelings with his family," she said. "But he knows what this represents, and it told him he's taken his play to the level it needed to be."

Before Monday's news conference, he spent several minutes admiring the Mr. Basketball trophy and was quite taken with the names of some of the previous winners -- Richardson, Shane Battier, Chris Webber, Marcus Taylor, Terry Mills, Glen Rice and Sam Vincent.

"Seeing my name with all those others and the careers they've had, it's pretty cool," said Davis, who is a finalist for the Naismith Award as the national player of the year and was named to play in the McDonald's All-America game. "Everybody likes the icing on the cake, and this is the icing. This tops everything off. This is *the award.*"

(article contributed by Mick McCabe, Detroit Free Press)