

**BASKETBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
2004-2005 MR BASKETBALL VOTE TOTALS**

<u>NAME - SCHOOL</u>	<u># VOTES / 5 PTS</u>	<u># / 3 PTS</u>	<u>1 PT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
WILSON CHANDLER - Benton Harbor	(143) 715	(49) 147	28	890
MIKE BRAMOS - Grosse Pointe North	(44) 220	(30) 90	31	341
ZANE GAY - Olivet	(28) 140	(47) 141	44	325
KEITH MacKENZIE - Warren deLaSalle	(25) 125	(48) 144	31	300
BRANDON WOLFE - Detroit Redford	(15) 75	(39) 117	44	236
ZACH GIBSON - Grand Blanc	(19) 95	(32) 96	41	232
ERIK KANGAS - DeWitt	(14) 70	(29) 87	47	204
JERRIT SMITH - Romulus	(12) 60	(29) 87	28	175



Photo illustration by JULIAN H. GONZALEZ/Detroit Free Press

Harbor senior Wilson Chandler emerged as the best boys basketball player in the state this season. The 6-foot-7 Chandler, who signed with DePaul, averaged 22 points and 12 rebounds this season.

Benton Harbor's Chandler wins award in landslide

By MICK McCABE
FREE PRESS SPORTS WRITER

Wilson Chandler's first experience with organized basketball was not a memorable one.

"I always played basketball, but I didn't play on a regular team until I was in the sixth grade," Chandler recalled. "I wasn't very good. I was OK, but it wasn't like I was the best player in the city."

Six years later, not only is Chandler the best player in Benton Harbor, he is the best high school player in Michigan.

Chandler is the 25th 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 Free Press. The award is named for Hal Schram, who covered high school athletics for the Free Press for more than 40 years.

Capable of playing either forward spot, the 6-foot-7 Chandler won in a landslide. He was named first on 143 of the 308 ballots, second 49 times and third 28 times as he totaled 890 points. Michael Bramos of Grosse Pointe North was second with 341 points and Olivet's Zane Gay was third at 325.

In his acceptance speech, Chandler, who signed with DePaul, said he was honored to receive the award, but would gladly trade it for a

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POINT TAKEN

Top vote-getters for the Mr. Basketball award:

PLAYER/SCHOOL	PTS
Wilson Chandler, Benton Harbor.....	890
Michael Bramos, Grosse Pointe North.....	341
Zane Gay, Olivet.....	325
Keith MacKenzie, Warren De La Salle.....	300
Brandon Wolfe, Detroit Redford.....	236
Zack Gibson, Grand Blanc.....	232
Erik Kangas, DeWitt.....	204
Jerret Smith, Romulus.....	175

Points awarded on 5-3-1 basis

AWARD | Chandler's season sensational

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state championship.

This season, Chandler averaged 22 points and 12 rebounds in leading Benton Harbor to an unbeaten season until it was upset Friday by Holt in a Class A regional championship game.

"I never thought I'd win this award," Chandler said. "After we lost on Friday I told myself I wouldn't win it."

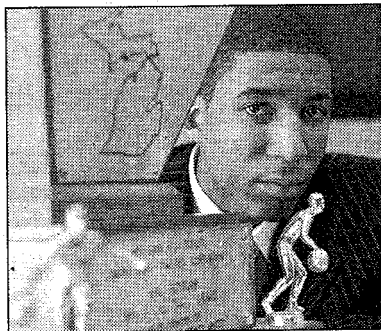
Chandler staked his claim to this award long before the regional final.

He had a sensational senior season, dominating opponents and hitting a remarkable 68 percent of his shots.

Chandler marveled at the list of former winners and said the first one he remembered was Detroit Pershing's Willie Mitchell in 1994. Chandler was in the first grade that year.

"I don't remember him for winning the award," Chandler said. "I remember him being on the team that beat Benton Harbor in the finals in '92 and '93."

Youngsters will remember Chandler as an all-around player who made a significant improvement from his junior to senior seasons.



KIRTHMON F. DOZIER/Detroit Free Press

Wilson Chandler gets the Mr. Basketball trophy, but says he'd gladly trade it for a state title.

"I was in the gym a lot over the summer," Chandler said. "I worked on my outside shooting and my ball-handling. I also went on a nutritional diet. Before that, I couldn't make it up and down the court without getting winded."

This season, players got winded trying to defend Chandler.

Chandler spent his freshman season on the junior varsity team, but made the varsity as a sophomore.

"As a sophomore he was like a lot of kids, kind of goofy at times," said Benton Harbor coach Ramsey Nichols, a Mr. Basketball finalist in 1989. "But he showed flashes. Even as a freshman, you could see he

could be good, but I didn't imagine he would be Mr. Basketball."

In the last couple of years, Chandler sprouted four inches, but maintained his perimeter skills.

"By the end of his junior year he was really starting to play well," Ramsey said. "In the summer he really started to blossom. And this couldn't happen to a nicer kid. He's kind of quiet, but he's really a prankster."

A year ago Chandler didn't even consider himself a candidate for Mr. Basketball.

"Last year there were a lot of guys in front of me," he said. "There was Eric Devendorf and Chris Douglas-Roberts, so I didn't even think about this."

Devendorf transferred from Bay City Central to Oak Hill (Va.) Academy for his senior season, and Douglas-Roberts left Detroit Cass Tech for Detroit Northwestern and missed more than half the season. He was not put on the Mr. Basketball ballot.

Chandler seized the opportunity. "This means a lot to me," he said. "It means I can have a big career ahead of me. It means I have a lot of responsibility in the future."

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