

MONTE MORRIS OF FLINT BEECHER NAMED MR. BASKETBALL

*By Mick McCabe – Detroit Free Press
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Monte Morris is well-versed in the history of the Hal Schram Mr. Basketball Award, but he was overwhelmed when he saw the trophy for the first time.

"I Googled the trophy," he said, "but I had no idea it was that big."

Morris remembers Flint Northwestern's Kelvin Torbert winning the 2001 award.

"I actually watched him in high school," Morris said. "He was an amazing player. I went to a couple of his games, and he was a high flier and everything."

Morris was in kindergarten at the time.

A bit more recently, Morris has vivid memories of Frankenmuth's Brad Redford taking home the 2008 award.

"I was in the seventh grade when he won it," Morris said. "I saw him at a team camp, because when I was in the seventh and eighth grade, I was always on coach (Mike) Williams' bench, watching them play. He could shoot from anywhere. He reminded me of Jimmer Fredette."

After seeing some of the former Mr. Basketball winners, Morris, a senior at Flint Beecher, has come to this conclusion: "They don't hand them out to just anybody."

No, they don't, and today, the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan, in conjunction with the Free Press, handed the 33rd Mr. Basketball Award to Morris.

A 6-foot-1 guard who signed with Iowa State, Morris captured the most prestigious award a high school athlete in Michigan can receive in one of the closest three-man races in the history of the award, named for the former Free Press sports writer who covered high school athletics for more than 40 years.

Morris accumulated 2,130 points. Harper Woods Chandler Park's Derrick Walton Jr. was second with 2,086. James Young of Rochester was third (2,030).

There were 962 votes cast, 261 more than last year, and Walton, who signed with Michigan, got one more first-place vote (253) than Morris. But Morris had three more second-place votes and 40 more third-place votes.

Morris was surprised by the result, especially with the highly ranked Young signing with Kentucky and

Walton going to U-M.

"I played against James, and I played on a (AAU) team with Derrick," he said. "And just knowing they're great players and anyone on the list could have won it ... it would have been much-deserved.

"I was very shocked that I won, but I do know that I put in the work, day in and day out."

Morris averaged more than 23 points this season and has led Beecher in scoring, assists and steals for four seasons.

Williams said Morris' value to the Bucs cannot be measured on a stat sheet.

"He's that kid if you're picking up teams," he said. "He's the first pick no matter if there's a 7-footer there because they know he's going to get everybody the basketball. His dream game is scoring four points and dishing out 20-30 assists, and that's what makes him special."

But make no mistake: When the game is on the line, Morris is not afraid to take over and do whatever is necessary to win.

Morris has played in the state semifinals in each of his first three years and last season carried Beecher to the state championship, which may have gone a long way in securing his claim to the Mr. Basketball Award in the eyes of coaches who vote.

Though he was familiar with Torbert and Redford, Morris did not make it a goal to be Mr. Basketball.

"I didn't really know about the award like I could just win it," he said. "My mind-set wasn't on it my freshman year. When I was a sophomore, people said I had a chance to win it if I could continue to develop."

He developed into Mr. Basketball.

Voting results

Here are the voting results of the 33rd annual Hal Schram Mr. Basketball award, given by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan, in conjunction with the Detroit Free Press. Only BCAM members are permitted to vote. Points are awarded on a 5-3-1 basis:

1. Monte Morris, Flint Beecher, 2,130 points
2. Derrick Walton Jr., Chandler Park, 2,086 points
3. James Young, Rochester, 2,030 points
4. Kahlil Felder, Detroit Pershing, 1,251 points
5. Dontel Highsmith, Dowagiac, 1,161 points

Past winners

Here are the 32 former winners of the Hal Schram Mr. Basketball award:

- 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 (Manny) Harris, Detroit Redford (Michigan)
- 2006 David Kool, Grand Rapids South Christian (Western Michigan)
- 2005 Wilson Chandler, Benton Harbor (De Paul)
- 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, Birmingham Detroit Country Day (Duke)
- 1996 Winfred Walton, Detroit Pershing (Syracuse, 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, Birmingham 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)