

Deshaun Thrower of undefeated Muskegon named Mr. Basketball

By Mick McCabe 3/17/14

Near the end of Saturday's boys basketball practice, Muskegon coach Keith Guy told Deshaun Thrower that he needed to see him in his office.

He also told Thrower's father, Lloyd, that he should call his wife, Nina, and tell her that she should be there, too.

To make it better, after Thrower's mother arrived, Guy told team manager Jared Pittman to call his father, Gregory, a circuit court judge in Muskegon County.

"What did you do now?" his mother asked.

"I don't know what I did," Thrower said.

"It better not be about a girl," his mother said.

It was not about a girl.

It was about a trophy.

The Hal Schram Mr. Basketball trophy.

Thrower is the 34th recipient of the Hall 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 the former Free Press sports writer who covered high school athletics for more than 40 years.

Thrower, a 6-foot-1 guard who has signed with Stony Brook, is the first

player from Muskegon to receive the award, voted on by BCAM members.

Coaches must vote for three candidates, and votes are tabulated on a 5-3-1 basis. Thrower accumulated 1,952 points. Detroit Pershing's Justin Tillman was second, with 1,743 points, and Jalen Johnson of Ypsilanti (1,351) was third.

Thrower, who has led Muskegon to a 25-0 record heading into Tuesday night's quarterfinal against Ann Arbor Skyline at Lansing Eastern, received 280 first-place votes, 95 more than Tillman.

The members of Thrower's family were surprised when Guy told them that Deshaun is Mr. Basketball, none more than Deshaun.

"It's a great honor," he said. "Any one of the finalists could have gotten it. It makes me want to work harder. People are going to be coming at me these next three games. I have no nights off for real now. People are going to be game planning more now."

They can game plan all they want, but in Thrower, the Big Reds have a terrific point guard who has averaged 18.7 points and 6.4 assists per game this season.

Guy believes that Thrower's accomplishments this season and throughout his career helped make him an easy choice for BCAM members.

"I think it's his body of work he put in," Guy said. "To be 25-0, he's been to the Breslin (Center) twice and contributed on those teams. He's played some of the best of the best and went head up with them and had a good showing. Night in and night out, he's been the guy for our team, leading on and off the floor."

Thrower is a two-sport all-state athlete. As a quarterback and defensive back, he led Muskegon to back-to-back appearances in the Division 2 state championship game.

When thinking about all of the things Thrower does for his team, Guy found

someone comparable to his young star, someone who also was a quarterback and defensive back.

“I never coached Mateen Cleaves, but just imagining how he was, just so tough and that will to win, makes him like Mateen,” he said. “He leads by example, No. 1. He makes sure he’s doing the right things and he makes sure the other guys follow. He makes my job a lot easier.

“He just knows how to get things done.”

Thrower played his first two years at Muskegon Heights and transferred to Muskegon after Heights closed after his sophomore year.

Saturday wasn’t the first time Guy mentioned the Mr. Basketball award to Thrower.

“When I came into high school, he pulled me into his office,” Thrower said. “He set some goals that we wanted to do. We said I wanted to make all-state my senior year, be Mr. Basketball and win a state championship. He said he thought I was going to be his first Mr. Basketball.”

Guy has been a fan of Thrower since he first saw him play as a fourth-grader on the same team as Guy’s son.

“I knew he was special then,” he said. “He was athletic. He was bigger than everybody, but he was also a great kid, a great teammate. He just had a will to win then. He hated to lose. I used to see some of their practices and I saw how hard to work, and it was great to see a little kid that way.”

Muskegon is blessed to also have 6-9 junior Deyonta Davis, who has committed to Michigan State. With Thrower leading the way, they have sparked the Big Reds to a special season.

“He’s kind of mentoring Deyonta,” Guy said. “He looks up to him, and it’s good to see that Deyonta is feeding off of him, and he listens to what Deshaun has to say. When Deshaun says, ‘Let’s stay after practice,’ Deyonta does it.”

Growing up, Thrower was mentored by Quinton Miller, a neighbor who was more of a big brother. They played virtually every sport together until Miller was fatally shot Feb. 16, 2013.

Thrower thinks about Miller every day and even more so since he learned he is Mr. Basketball.

“He’d be proud,” Thrower said. “He’d say even though I’m Mr. Basketball, he could beat me. He’d try to play one-on-one to try to prove that he’s better than me. He’d be happy. He’d be bragging on me just like he was before. He was always proud of me and everything I’d do.”

Voting results of the 34th annual Hal Schram Mr. Basketball award:

1. Deshaun Thrower, Muskegon, 1,952 points
2. Justin Tillman, Detroit Pershing, 1,743 points
3. Jaylen Johnson, Ypsilanti, 1,351 points
4. Edmond Sumner, Birmingham Detroit Country Day, 1,090 points
5. Darrell Davis, Detroit Douglass, 821 points

Points are awarded on a 5-3-1 basis.

Former winners of the Hal Schram Mr. Basketball Award:

- 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 (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)