

MSU-bound Davis gives Muskegon a Mr. Basketball repeat

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There is piece of yellow paper in the upstairs hallway in the Davis home in Muskegon, and on it is written a series of goals. Each time Deyonta Davis passes it, he stops and takes a look.

One item on the list is to become the state's Mr. Basketball.

Check.

Davis became the 35th winner of the Hal Schram Mr. Basketball award Monday, given annually by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan in conjunction with the Free Press.

Only BCAM members are permitted to vote and votes are tabulated on a 5-3-1 basis. Davis received 854 of the 1,313 first-place votes and totaled 5,223 points. Eric Davis of Saginaw Arthur Hill was second with 3,757 points and Trevor Manuel of Lansing Everett was third with 2,837 points.

"This is the greatest honor of my life," Davis said in accepting the award, named for the former Free Press sports writer who covered high school athletics for over 40 years. "I salute Eric Davis and Trevor Manuel. They are great players and will be successful at Texas and Oregon."

Manuel and Everett will be Davis and Muskegon's opposition today when the teams meet at Lansing Eastern in a Class A quarterfinal game at 7 p.m.

Davis, 6-feet-10, has signed with Michigan State and follows former teammate Deshaun Thrower as Mr. Basketball, the third time one school has had repeat winners. In 1981 Lansing Eastern's Sam Vincent was the first winner and was followed by teammate Robert Henderson. In 2009 Detroit Pershing's Derrick Nix won and the next year Keith Appling took home the award.

Thrower's victory opened Davis' eyes to the possibility of becoming Mr. Basketball.

"I want to say I heard about it my ninth grade because we were looking at who was Mr. Basketball for Michigan," Davis said of the year Bay City Western's Matt Costello was the winner. "But when I really heard about it was when Deshaun won.

"When he won it, that's what everybody was telling me, I was going to win it. I was just trying to work towards it. But I was thinking they wouldn't give it to the same school twice."

The coaches didn't agree — especially after what Davis did a year ago in helping Muskegon win the Class A state title. In the championship game, Davis hit 12 of 14 shots for 26 points. He also added 13 rebounds and blocked three shots, giving him a state record 199 shots for the season.

"His résumé speaks for itself," said Muskegon coach Keith Guy. "He's a state champion. He's lost one game in two years. He broke the state single-season shot-blocking record last year. He changed the game at both ends. He's just a winner, an

unselfish guy and he's done things the right way."

Heading into tonight's quarterfinal game, Davis is averaging 19 points, 17 rebounds and seven blocks, and is hitting 67% of his shots.



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MSU 2015 recruit Deyonta Davis a McDonald's All-American

Last season, Davis emerged as the finest shot blocker in state history — and he has turned shot blocking into an art form.

In Muskegon's second game this season, the Big Reds were playing Arthur Hill. Muskegon led by two in the closing seconds when Arthur Hill's Davis stole the ball and appeared to be going in for an uncontested lay-up to force overtime.

Muskegon's Davis was standing under the Arthur Hill basket when he saw the other Davis head down the court — and suddenly the Big Red turned into a sprinter and raced down the floor.

With only two seconds left on the clock, Davis began to lay the ball up when Muskegon's Davis came flying from behind and blocked his 10th shot of the game.

It was a signal that this Davis was still the best shot blocker in the state.

"Blocking shots has become second nature to me," said Davis, who has the special knack of blocking a shot and then keeping the ball in play.

But there are times he does send the ball into orbit.

"Sometimes I'll do it just to do it," Davis said, laughing. "It's kind of like saying: 'You're playing against Deyonta Davis.'"

Make that Mr. Basketball Deyonta Davis.