**M** 6th Grade/12U Review

***The AAU Season is long done and MBAs First48 has finally finished. So we sat down and analyzed who we felt were the top players in the class and who we thought were the sleepers.***

**TOP 5. TOP 5. TOP 5.**

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| **Rank** | **Player** | **Pos.** | **School** | **AAU Affiliation** |
| 1 | Cooper Haynes | F | Elmore Park | Memphis Wildcats |
| 2 | Khylan Payne | C | Lester Prep | Memphis United |
| 3 | Julius “King” Thedford | G/F | Bellevue | Team Heat |
| 4 | Braxton Jumper | G | Lowrance | Memphis Basketball Association |
| 5 | Marlon McShane | G | Power Center | Memphis United |
| 5 | Billy Richmond III | G | Northpoint | Memphis Basketball Association |

**1. Cooper Haynes.** At this moment and time Cooper is clearly the most dominant force that 6th grade has to offer. He’s a big physical specimen that NOONE can hold. There isn’t a kid in the class that can hold him. He is too big, too strong, and too skilled. The scary thing is he’s transitioning from the post to the wing where his size and strength will be even harder to deal with.

**2. Khylan Payne.** If you asked me what kid in the city at any age had the best chance of “making it”, this kid would be my answer. A 6’1 11 year-old that can score it from midrange on in, rebounds with the best of them, will block anything within a mile radius, and runs like a deer. Payne is the only true big in the class. Truth be told he is one of the only true bigs in the city PERIOD.

**3. Julius “King” Thedford.** A BEAST! Once an undersized big, now he’s a BIG guard. And a bucket getting big guard at that. King is a high motor kid that gives it 100% on both ends of the court. His size and athleticism afford him the luxury of being able to play ANY position on the floor. Did we mention he GETS BUCKETS? Well he does.

**4. Braxton Jumper.** Braxton has always been mentioned amongst the top kids in the class. But this summer and fall he really separated himself from the pack, and HE GREW! And his game grew with him. He’s no longer just a 3 point shooter. When it comes to scoring he gets it how he wants. He finishes well at the rim, even through contact, and he’s strong enough to adjust his shot in the air and still score it. Simply put, HE’S A GROWN MAN.

**5. Tie 5.** **Marlon McShane**. COLD! He been cold and he still got it. The handles of a globetrotter, the heart of a lion, and a mean floater that he has been perfecting for years now. Nicknamed “Killa”, this lil bucket getter will give you double figures on a bad night! He simply has a knack for scoring. He can score inside, outside, midrange, or ALL OF THE ABOVE. Look for him to give 7th and 8th graders hell as he takes his talents to middle school.

**5. Tie 5. Billy Richmond.** Billy brings SO MUCH energy to the game. An athletic guard that commits fully on defense Billy is definitely a game changer. But he is far more than a lock down defender. Fathom this; an unselfish scorer! Billy sees the floor well and doesn’t mind finding and giving the ball up to the open man. But he has an incredible slashing ability and finishes well at the rim.

HONORABLE MENTION

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Player** | **Pos.** | **School** | **AAU Affiliation** |
| Christian Gilliland | G | Northpoint | N/A |
| Tyler Wilson | G | Ridgeway | Memphis Wildcats |

**1.Christian Gilliland.** When it comes to attacking the baselineand finishing, Christian may be the best in the class. Able to score with either hand, he’s basically automatic at the rim. When he’s in his zone he’s capable of scoring in bunches. His length makes him a problem for smaller opponents allowing him to cause fits on both ends of the court.

**2.Tyler Wilson.** An absolute BEAST! Tyler is the biggest, strongest, most physical and athletic kid in the class. He’s a rebounding machine, a defensive specialist, a capable scorer, and the scary thing is he’s just getting started!

SLEEPERS

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Player** | **Pos.** | **School** | **AAU Affiliation** |
| Sam Franklin | G | Bellevue | Memphis Dragons |
| KJ Smith | G | Power Center | Memphis United |
| Jackson  Patterson | G | Northpoint | Memphis Basketball Association |

***Truth be told there are no true sleepers in the class. Everybody knows everybody. Nobody came out of the woodworks and shocked the world.***

**1. Sam Franklin.** Sam could be considered by some as a sleeper. He wasn’t really on the scene much, so even though he is definitely an elite talent he may be a fresh face to some. He’s one of few pure PGs in the class. A well-rounded ball player, that handles and passes well, but can get a bucket when he needs to. Look for him to become a household name sooner than later.

**2. KJ Smith**. Hard to consider Smith a sleeper either. But his heart, work ethic, and effort gives us the impression that he is soon to be one of the better players in the class. A born defender, he showed flashes of offensive greatness this Fall during First48. Out of 50 or so kids he was one of the Top 16 scorers.

**3. Jackson Patterson**. Probably the least known of this trio, Jack is a lights-out 3 point shooter who’s sweet stroke alone could make his name ring bells. The kid can flat out shoot it! Expect to hear more about him in the near future.