**Class of 2024**

For years the 2024 Class was dominated by two our cities most recognizable programs; The Wareagles and The Wildcats. The two teams battled back and forth relentlessly. Some may say that the advantage was to the Wareagles. Outside of these two there was no competition. But as of late one of these teams has separated itself from the other and it’s clear, at least for now, who the Big Dog is.

Recently, aside from the Wareagles and Wildcats there are several other talented teams that have become competitive. Here we’ll take a look at our Top 10 teams in the Class of 2024.

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| **RANK** | **TEAM** |
| **1.** | MEMPHIS WILDCATS |
| **2.** | TEAM PAYNE WAREAGLES |
| **3.** | MEMPHIS UNITED |
| **4.** | HEAT/CRUSADERS |
| **5.** | M33M |
| **6.** | TRUTH MEMPHIS |
| **7.** | SAINTS |
| **8.** | TUPELO PAL ELITE |
| **9.** | MEMPHIS BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION/TROJANS |
| **10.** | MEMPHIS KINGS ELITE |
| **11.** | NO NAMES |
| **12.** | MAGIC ELITE |
| **13.** | MISS SPARTANS |

**1.Memphis Wildcats.**

The only nationally ranked team on this list it’s no wonder we have them ranked number one. This team just may be one of the most complete teams in the city in any age.

First things first it’s clear they stay in the gym and their hard work is paying off. Coach Myron Jones and his coaching staff have the recipe for success and he’s letting it be known through the play of his team.

Two things stand out about this Wildcats squad; depth and defense. They have nearly a dozen kids that could go to any other team and clock major minutes. Damion Cox, Cooper Haynes, Kody Hickerson, KJ Jones, Brandon Nicholson, Javion Stephen, Ashton Toney and Big Rod just to name a few.

And in the tradition of most Wildcats, teams their defense is smothering. They have a bunch of quick, aggressive guards that know exactly where to be on defense.

Their offense shouldn’t be downplayed either. They have a strong PG in Hickerson, but all their guards can handle it and are capable of running point. Not to mention they’ve got plenty shooters. Of Course “Lil Jay” (Javion Stephen) can shoot it, but so can Cox, Jones, and Nicholson.

Back to their depth, look at their post players. They have one of top two bigs in the city in Cooper Haynes. Haynes is a skilled post presence that really rounds out the Wildcats solidity at every position. But like we said they’re deep. The Wildcats have two more bigs that could just about start on any team in the city. And they are Tyler Wilson and Jayden Batchelor, two true athletes that hustle, rebound, and defend with the best of them. As far as 2024 goes it’s pretty cut and dry, the Memphis Wildcats are the best team in the city and state.

**2.Team Payne Wareagles**

Team Payne comes in at number two on our list. Though they don’t the depth of the Wildcats and are now lacking a dominant post presence they still have the elite pieces to compete on the big stage. Their guard play is superb. PG Armani Freeman is a pass first kind of kid that takes care of the ball and can knock down the deep ball. To go with Freeman Team Payne has Christian Gilliland, a long, wiry wing that gets buckets in bunches all over the court. Gilliland just may be the best scorer in the class. Braxton Jumper is another one of the top guards in the class. And like his name says he can shoot it. Jumper has a near perfect form and a lot of range. He’s also stretched out since last season and is now one of the bigger guards in the class. Now add Billy Richmond III, another big guard. Billy is a high motor kid that gets it done on both ends of the floor, a defender at heart with as knack for scoring.

Hugh McFarland is the enforcer of the crew, a hard-nosed three that doesn’t mind playing in the post. He’s a tone-setting kid that will do a little bit of everything from rebounding, defending, and shot blocking to scoring and ball-handling.

In the paint they will depend of Carson Boyle and Tristian for post production and off the bench shooter DJ McIntyre and Tyler Mosely will help out at the guard spots.

**3. Memphis United**

Not even a year in and United is already one of the most competitive teams in the city. And it’s no secret why; Kylon Payne is the next big thing. He’s the biggest kid in the class and he can play. Payne is a rebounding and put back machine, and a shot blocking monster that is impossible to hold in the paint.

It doesn’t take much to go with Payne to make a successful squad.

Keron Jackson was a great addition to the squad. One of the top players in the class this long and wiry shooter handles the ball well and will open up things for Payne and vice versa.

United is deep at the guard spot; Trey Goodwin will take most of the ball-handling responsibilities, Ryan Neely, Dallas Berkley, and Jackson are all guards that can handle the ball and are capable of scoring. Trey Powell is a long wing that can consistently knock down the outside shot, and KJ Smith is high motor lockdown defender that now has a knack for getting to rack and finishing.

And when you have so many guards what do you do? PRESS! And United does just that. They are an aggressive squad known for its effective, turnover forcing, full court pressure.

With Payne and so many options at the guard spot United is easily one of the top teams in the area.

**4. Team Heat/ Crusaders**

A solid group all in all, but it all begins with the King! Julius “King” Thelford is a beast! There is no kid like him in the class. He’s a hard-nosed, physical, and aggressive competitor. King is strong and athletic enough to hold his own amongst the trees. And he has good enough guard skills to take your best defender off the dribble, getting to the rack with ease. But his game doesn’t stop on the offensive end. He’s a great defender as well.

Add guard Gerald Burris and you have an instant

King plus his solid supporting cast and this squad is an instant contender.

**5.M33M Elite**

M33M has been a mainstay on the high school for a minute now but has never garnered much respect or attention when it came to the younger age groups. Times have changed. M33M’s 5th grade squad is legit and they have Marlon McShane and Keron Jackson to thank for it.

Nicknamed “Killa”, McShane is cat quick, ball handling prodigy that is hard to guard. Considered by most to be the best player in the class, McShane can score all over the court, whether it be at the rack, a solid floater, the free throw line, or long range. Team him with Keron Jackson another one of the classes top players, and a roster that includes a few shooters and all of a sudden M33M is in the conversation.