**2023**

**The class boasts elite talent at nearly every position, with point guards like Jaye Nash, Andre Watson, and Marcus Crawford, combo guards like Mr. Joshua Holloway and EJ Smith, shooters like Curtis Givens Jr. and Regale Moore, forwards like Braylen Ragland and grade exception Kristian Spencer, and bigs like Jayden Forrest, Rashad Williams, Javar Daniel, and R’Chaun King.**

**Last year there was no clear favorite in the class of 2023. The frontrunners were the Wildcats, Team Payne Wareagles, and the DreamChasers, with teams like the Assassins and the Heat always giving the top dogs a run for their money. The season culminated with a disappointing showing at the AAU Nationals by Memphis as a whole with the exception of the Dream Chasers winning the Classic Bracket therefore giving them the #25 spot in the country.**

**8. Blueprint**

Coach Quay’s Blueprint squad actually boasts a couple of the classes top players; Jamarion “Woody” Harvey and Marcus Crawford. Harvey is a big guard who plays hard. He’s strong powerful slasher who attacks the rim with determination. He’s also an excellent rebounder for a guard. His cohort Marcus Crawford just may be the city’s best kept secret. He’s a pure PG who sees the floor just as good as anyone else and plays the game so effortless and with so much poise.

Harvey and Crawford have a decent supporting cast with the likes of Josh Ingram a long big who will be their veteran post player. Ingram will be depended upon for rebounding and shot blocking as well as points in the paint.

Ace Anthony is another unique piece that Coach Quay seems to know how to use better than anyone else. Anthony has got to be the peskiest most relentless defender in the class. He’s definitely capable of causing the opposing teams best ball-handler fits.

These four paired with a couple more pieces definitely gives Blueprint the makings of a competitive squad.

**7. Memphis Heat**

**6. Team No Name**

**5. Tennessee Assassins**

Two years in and the Assassins are still in the conversation. There are two big reasons the Assassins are able to compete with the top teams in the class; Andre Watson and Javar Daniel.

Andre Watson is a stud. Underrated last year, but everybody knows his name this year. He’s a cat quick point guard capable of breaking the press by himself, finding his open teammates, and knocking down the long ball. He will lead the team.

Javar Daniel is one of the top bigs in the class. He’s a long shot blocking machine that will crash the boards but now has added an outside shot to his game. His outside shooting ability will open up a lot of other scoring options.

Another important piece for the Assassins will be Eric Allen. Allen is wiry kid with a knack for scoring. He has a nice stroke and is very consistent from midrange and long range.

MJ Moore is yet another piece that adds to the Assassins strength. Moore is a relentless pest on defense, capable of forcing turnovers in bunches and singlehandedly shifting the momentum of a game.

Not sure if it’s permanent or temporary, but we also saw former Wildcats Jamison Smith and Jackson Hammond running with the Assassins this past weekend at Jammin’ for Jerseys in Little Rock. If these two are permanent fixtures on the Assassins roster that adds solid guard play in two kids capable of running the point. This will take the ball-handling load off of Andre Watson.

Look for these four along with a few more to keep the Assassins amongst the top squads in town.

**Tie 3. Memphis Wildcats**

With a fiery new Coach in Frank Allen at the helm, and returning their core, plus a couple new additions the Memphis Wildcats are ready for whatever.

EJ Smith will be the key. He’s long, he can handle it, he can shoot, he can penetrate, he can defend, and he’s confident. That’s the recipe for a star. In the backcourt his tag team partner will be Ting Key. Ting has emerged as more than just a solid PG but a decent scorer as well. And though the Wildcats won’t necessarily need him to score his buckets will definitely be welcomed.

Jailen Hardaway is back and he is still the same the solid contributor he’s always been. He’s a consistent rebounder and a consistent scorer. We see a lot of double doubles in his future.

New addition Braylen Ragland was a huge catch! Ragland was surely the hottest free agent on the market and his size mixed with his skills makes him a threat at several positions. Ragland can from anywhere on the floor. Him alone will allow the Wildcats to spread the floor and open up scoring opportunities for his teammates.

The Wildcats have always been a contender in the class of 2023 and this season will be no different.

**Tie 3. Team Payne Wareagles**

Lance Williams has taken over as head coach of Team Payne and is set to make a name for himself and remind everyone why the Wareagles is regarded as one of the top programs in the country. They return several key pieces from last year; Regale Moore a long kid that is known for his outside shooting but can do much more. Rashad Williams is back AND BETTER. Williams has obviously been in the gym and he has returned this season as more than just a shot blocker and rebounder. He can score now and he will. “Shoddy” just may be the best big in the class when it’s all said and done. Rayquan Williams is back, he’s a great ball player that will work for Team Payne on both ends.

The Wareagles have done a little recruiting too. They’ve added some size and some length and some athleticism. One nice addition was that of combo guard Jordan Frison, a pesky defender with a nice stroke. He shoots and scores well enough to play the two and handles it well enough to play the one.

Look for Team Payne to collect a lot of jewelry this Spring and Summer.

**2.Memphis Basketball Association**

A newcomer to the class, MBA is poised and ready to make a run at a national ranking. They clearly have the two most dominant players in the class in Snoody Wilkinson and recently reclassed AJ Dilworth. Wilkinson has already garnered national attention and one reputable website even said he was the best guard in the country. Dillworth is a pure scorer who can penetrate with ease and knock down the long range bomb. Fred “Mane Mane” Deere will share some of the scoring responsibilities. Deere is a shifty wing with a knack for putting the ball in the hole and an excellent free throw shooter.

Adding Hunter Stallings, a 6 ft. post presence was the key to MBA’s quest for a spot on the national charts. Stallings will play beside Kam Temple in the paint.

At the point they have nationally ranked Layden Blocker a two-way player that gets it done on both ends, including the offensive end where he can absolutely fill it up. Corleone Tuggle will share in the point guard duties. Tuggle is an excellent ball-handler who is fearless on the court, and doesn’t mind getting in it on defense.

Tweener Anthony Medlock Jr. is a solid piece that can play the three or the four. Good decision making and a consistent midrange jump shot makes Medlock a key role player in the lineup. Add the ultra aggressive Ryan Forrest a great defender with the ability to get buckets as well, and two shooters BJ Gilmore and Reid Chaun, and you see why MBA has ended in the Championship of every major tournament they’ve played in.

**1.Tennessee Dream Chasers**

A clear-cut favorite, Curtis Given’s DreamChasers have positioned themselves not just at the top of local rankings, but national rankings as well. They are currently ranked #6 in the country after an impressive showing at the John Lucas tournament and winning the Coach T Classic in STL.

The DreamChasers are good at every position in their starting lineup. Their backcourt consists of two nationally ranked guards and it starts with Josh Holloway. There’s no need to go in depth into who he is. It’s a known fact that Josh Holloway is a nationally ranked bucket getter! At the two you have Curtis Givens Jr. a knockdown shooter who seems to be adding more and more to his game.

Their size is intimidating and effective. Kristian Spencer is a strong, physical, athletic beast that causes fits for his opponents whether it be on offense or defense. Chaun King is a big that will block shots and rebound in bunches. And Jayden Forrest is powerful big with an array of low post moves and a very effective post presence.

What separates the DreamChasers from most aside the fact that they have a well put together back court is the fact that their bigs will be able to pick up any slack. The opportunity for second and third and fourth chance buckets is limitless for DC as offensive rebounds will be plentiful. And on the other end their rebounding will limit the chances of second chance points for their opponents. That will definitely come into play when they play teams that can match their guard play.

**Players to Watch (in alphabetical order)**

**AJ Dilworth. G. Memphis Basketball Association**

**Jayden Forrest. F. Tennessee DreamChasers**

**Josh Holloway. G. Tennessee DreamChasers**

**Braylen Ragland. F. Memphis Wildcats**

**EJ Smith. G. Memphis Wildcats**

**Andre Watson. G. Tennessee Assassins**

**Snoody Wilkinson. G. Memphis Basketball Association**

**Rashad Williams. C. Team Payne**