

Minnesota Prep Academy Welcomes Back Former Star Player as He Takes on the Golden Gophers on November 3

After starring at Minnesota Prep Academy, D.J. Jefferson has landed as a main contributor to Gardner-Webb Men's Basketball Program

ST PAUL , MN, UNITED STATES, October 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Minnesota Prep Academy](#), (MPA) one of the nation's premier prep development basketball programs announced today it is welcoming one of its own back to town, when former MPA Lion D.J. Jefferson visits Minneapolis with his Gardner-Webb team that plays the Minnesota Golden Gophers at 7 p.m. on Monday, November 3 at Williams Arena.



MPA

Jefferson, who is slated to start at guard for the Runnin' Bulldogs is a redshirt junior following stops at The University of Tennessee and Longwood University. Jefferson, Texas native, came to MPA to sharpen his game and increase his exposure as a college recruit.

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Donnell Bratton Co-Founder

“I have never seen a player like D.J. at this level before,” said MPA founder and Coach Donnell Bratton. “Once he got to Minnesota, he started to open people’s eyes. He went from getting zero attention to having scouts watch him daily. He just plays different.”

Minnesota Preparatory Academy is becoming a global destination for some of the best high school-age players in the world. This year’s international roster features prep

players from Belgium, France, South Sudan, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the Virgin Islands.

This season the Academy welcomes a new head basketball coach, Quincy Caldwell, a former college basketball player and highly regarded basketball mind. Coach Caldwell's "Q" "personal training business helped develop two first round NBA draft choices from Minnesota; Jalen Suggs, (5th overall to Orlando in 2021) and NBA Champion Chet Holmgren (2nd overall to Oklahoma in 2002.)

With the landscape of college and professional basketball changing, programs like Minnesota Prep Academy are vital to providing playing options to players who have potential but haven't been discovered by college and professional programs. The key is to grant players added opportunities to meet their dreams and goals of playing college and professional basketball. Since its inception, the Academy has helped 106 student athletes receive college basketball scholarships. This year alone, 24 former Academy athletes will be playing college basketball at college programs like Auburn, Gardner-Webb, Memphis, and Kansas State, just to name a few.

"It is very gratifying to see an athlete develop his game in our program and have it led to opportunities to play with and against big time college programs," said Bratton. "When it comes to our program, we laid the foundation and D.J. built the house."

The entire MPA team will attend the game on November 3 as both a way to honor Jefferson and to show current players playing Division One Basketball is possible.

"It's like a member of our family is coming home," said Bratton. "He wants to talk to our kids while he is here and inspire them to do great things, like he is doing at Gardner-Webb."

About Minnesota Prep Academy:

Donnell Bratton is the master architect of the Minnesota Prep Academy program. Donnell helped develop a unique athletic and academic program for student -athletes striving to play basketball at the next level. Since this program's inception Minnesota Prep has helped to earn 106 players with college basketball scholarships. On NCAA college basketball rosters alone in 2025-26 Minnesota Prep Academy will be rooting for an astonishing 24 players – in programs like Auburn- Alabama State – Gardner Webb-Kansas State - Pacific -Memphis – Monmouth University .For more information please visit Minnesota Preparatory Academy or email info@minnprepacademy.org telephone 612.552.2939

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