

CM girls basketball ranked first in state among Class 3A teams

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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BETHALTO – It's been a banner season for Civic Memorial's girls basketball team this season.

The undefeated Eagles, though, have achieved something that may well be a first in CM's history – a No. 1 state ranking.

This week's Illinois Associated Press state basketball rankings have CM ranked atop Class 3A, ahead of Morton, Chicago Marshall and equal-fourth Highland and Mattoon.

CM isn't the only area team ranked in the AP polls this week; Edwardsville's girls are fourth in the Class 4A poll, Breese Mater Dei is ninth in the Class 2A poll and Hardin-Calhoun sits at fourth in the Class 1A poll with Lebanon ranked first. On the boys' side, Edwardsville is ranked third in Class 4A with Belleville Althoff ninth and East St. Louis just outside the Top 10 and Marquette Catholic is No. 8 in the Class 2A poll.

“It's a great honor,” said Eagle coach Jonathan Denney. “We're glad to be getting some notice statewide, but the thing that counts comes a couple of months from now (when the Class 3A state tournament takes place at Normal's Redbird Arena).

“It's a feather in our cap to be ranked No. 1, no doubt. But it also puts a target on our back; every night, teams are going to be bringing their best game at us and we have to be ready for it. The main thing we want to do is to keep getting better every day.”

Denney is happy that the Eagles are ranked atop the teams in Class 3A; they opened the season as the state's No. 2 team in the AP poll. “It is a great honor for the program,” Denney said, “but it's something we don't get caught up in. Our focus right now is our upcoming games against Mascoutah (Thursday night) in the (Mississippi Valley Conference) and against Highland (Saturday morning to kick off the Highland Optimist Shootout).”

The Eagles will also be involved in the Jan. 14 Great Rivers Shootout in Alton.