



# **CM Athletic Director Todd Hannaford Helps Create Positive Environment For Eagles**

by Brandon Harris  
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BETHALTO – A former assistant coach, assistant principal, and Bethalto community member, Todd Hannaford, took over the athletic director role for Civic Memorial in the summer of 2018. Since then, Eagles athletics has flourished and has a bright future ahead for their athletic programs.

Golf, soccer, football, cross-country, and volleyball all enjoyed strong 2021 seasons. The CM girls basketball team and wrestling squad are off to strong starts in 2021-2022. When asking Hannaford how the school has enjoyed the athletics accomplishments, he said, “It makes a great environment at the school. Everyone is excited - they are excited about the success. You want your programs to work hard and succeed. It is a long process, you see teams starting to get ready in August, and it’s exciting when it comes to fruition with success on the field.”

The main highlight of the 2021 season is the Civic Memorial football team winning their first playoff game in 16 years, but Hannaford was quick to mention the success of all sports. “It’s great to make it to the second round of playoffs in football. We also had a young lady who I believe finished 19th in the state for cross-country, a male runner finish in the top 40, soccer won their regional, our volleyball went to the regional championship, a male golfer make it to sectionals, so yeah, we are proud of our programs!”

Hannaford helps the kids get the opportunity to compete, the athletes put their bodies on the line for their school, but one of the most vital parts of the Eagle’s success is their coaching staff. “The coaches, they work so hard with these kids. I can’t thank them enough,” said Hannaford. “I don’t need to take any more credit than these coaches deserve. They are the ones out there day in and day out, they know their skill, they know their craft, they engage, know how to relate to the kids, and push the kids.”

While the kids and the coaches are on the frontline, as the Athletic Director, Hannaford still has an undeniable helping hand in Civic Memorial’s sports overall. When asked what impact the young AD has on Eagle’s athletics, Hannaford said, “I try to put my stamp on it. I want to have a positive culture, character-based culture, and win the right way. I am thankful that I get to share what I think or maybe my beliefs. But my coaches, a lot of them have been doing it longer than I have, and they know how to build that culture.”

“If you put yourself in a position to compete, good things are going to happen. Playing in a smaller bedroom community, especially MVC (Mississippi Valley Conference), day in and day out, we put kids in a position to compete and succeed; and then they do it the right way. You may not always win, but good things are going to happen.”

As for the future of Eagle's athletics, many athletes will get the chance to carry on their traditions in brand new facilities. Hannaford is especially excited for 2022 athletics because, "Right now, we are in a big facilities upgrade. We are getting a new track and new turf. Along with that, we want to maintain our numbers. We want to continue to improve our strength and conditioning program - especially for kids in the off-season because that is where it starts. Someone is always preparing and to compete at a high level we need to do the same thing."

Eagle Nation includes students, teachers, coaches, family, friends, and its community members. Hannaford believes it is the legacies handed down that keep Civic Memorial's traditions alive. "I have been at Civic Memorial – Bethalto for most of my educational career. The community is great. They get involved, come out to all the games, and support the kids and the program. Civic Memorial has a great tradition that goes back to way before I was here. I think the kids want to carry that on & that's why they call it Eagle Nation. The kids' buy-in and want to be a part of that tradition."

As an employee for any high school or university, one consistent theme for faculty and coaches is kids leaving after four years while the teachers and coaches stay behind. Ultimately, it is up to the teachers and coaches of Civic Memorial to set the culture for the kids, but it is the kids who carry on the culture of Eagle Nation once their time is up.

"Every year, we have an awards night. One thing I like to do is thank the parents and the seniors. 2021 is my fourth year at Civic Memorial as the AD. I saw this group of senior athletes come in as young freshmen and now they are big, they are strong, and their skills have advanced. This group of seniors will go and the juniors will step up. I tell the kids leaving us, go on and be good fathers, be good mothers, be good community members, and make Eagle Nation proud."