

CM Head Girls Basketball Coach Mike Arbuthnot Makes History

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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BETHALTO – The Civic Memorial girls basketball coach Mike Arbuthnot finished this season with a fourth-place finish at state, a feat definitely to be proud of.

He's done so in only his second year at CM. Last season he managed a 16-1 record with the lone loss coming to Edwardsville, a very good ball club as Arb would say.

That was a shortened season due to COVID-19 that led to the cancelation of any sort of postseason.

This year was the first time he could really make a splash in the playoffs, and he sure did.

His club opened the season on a 13-game winning streak and had a 27-4 record heading into Regionals. Those four losses being Whitfield, Breese Central, Quincy Notre Dame (who are playing in the class 2A State Championship) and of course Edwardsville.

Once you get to Regionals though, none of that really matters anymore. He coached his girls to five-straight victories to get to state including two absolute barn-burners against East St. Louis and Mattoon in overtime where he had some terrific play calling.

He led his girls to the school's first-ever girls basketball state appearance. While his team didn't perform on the biggest level and ended up taking home fourth, it's still better than nothing.

Nobody wants to come up and go 0-2 at state but it's still better than not making it at all.

Before coming to CM, Arbuthnot had a 371-258 record coaching girls basketball at Roxana, Highland and Triad over the course of 23 seasons. The regional win over East St. Louis was his 400th win in his career.

After the win, Eagle Nation greeted him with posters congratulating him on the achievement and he had a lot of his family there after the game to celebrate with. It was surely a night he won't forget.

He didn't get the result he wanted at state but was still very grateful for his team saying they are "no doubt about it" one of the best teams he's had the privilege of coaching.

"I just couldn't be any prouder being their coach," he said. "It was a fun ride. We beat a lot of really good teams to get here, and it was a heck of a ball game in that third-place game."

He ended his 2021-22 season with a 55-41 loss against the Morton High School Potters. Something Arb still wasn't unhappy about.

"I'm not a coach that says, 'Hey we have to go to state this year,' I'm one of these coaches that believes the process will take care of itself."

Getting to state is no easy task and Arbuthnot says that he's just going to take it one game at a time next season.

"Now that we're here and the kids have seen it, I'm sure it's going to give them an incentive, but I guarantee it that next year it's not one of those state or bust scenarios. We're going to go through the season and we're going to get better just like we did this season."

