



St. Mary's Eighth-Grade Basketball Girls Have Season They Will Never Forget With 21 Wins

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - St. Mary's Catholic eighth-grade girls had a basketball season that will likely never be forgotten, capturing 21 wins with only one loss.

The St. Mary's eighth-grade girls' season ended in the SIJHSAA regional championship with a 40-20 loss to All Saints Academy in Breese. St. Mary's head girls coach Bryan Bechtold said frankly, it was "an amazing season."

"I have coached both boys and girls and this is definitely the most fun, craziest, and most successful team I have ever coached," he said.

"The girls started playing in third grade and have had incredible success this year."

The team members are Reese Bechtold, Mia Lopez, Bella Johnson, Emma Hough, Morgan Rister, Ava Hernandez, Izzi Hough, Ellen Anderson, Lilly Hannigan, Alex Stephan, and Grace Fischer.

Mia Lopez said winning the Oktoberfest Tournament was one of the highlights for her through the season until the team's post-season success. She said it helped to know everyone and how the individual team members play together.

Grace Fischer said winning the conference was one of the highlights for her on the season.

Coach Bechtold said St. Mary's has really ramped up its athletic program and Athletic Director Abbie Hough has done "a fantastic job."

Hough said she couldn't be more proud of the girls for what they accomplished this past year. She is also looking forward to help the girls develop in both basketball and other sports as they leave St. Mary's and move on to high school. Two of Hough's daughters played on the team.

The girls acknowledged they almost all play multiple sports. Nearly all of them said they will continue their basketball careers in high school.

The girls thanked the school, their coach, and fan support for being there with them all season long and agreed the 2022-2023 eighth-grade season is one they will never forget.