

Young CM Squad “Taking Baby Steps In the Right Direction” For 2023 Season

by Nathan Tucker, Sports Reporter
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BETHALTO - It was a rough football season in 2022 for the Eagles of Civic Memorial in Bethalto. A 1-8 campaign, their only win came in the season opener against Marquette.

But around practice this week, you could feel the excitement for the upcoming football season.

“It never gets old,” said CM football head coach Rick Reinhart at an Eagles practice this week.

“This is my 48th season, and I look forward to practice every morning and I stay up late at night if it doesn’t go the way I want.”

Reinhart has bled Eagle purple and gold as much as anyone over his tenure on the sidelines for CM. Last season was far from ideal, but Reinhart doesn’t dwell on it.

“Anyone who’s been around as long as I have knows you can’t live in the past,” said Reinhart.

“We’re starting at ground zero, (CM’s coaching staff instilled) new guidelines to tighten up the ship a little bit, we’re holding the kids more accountable.”

Part of that accountability for those hoping to don the purple and gold of CM this football season started with summer workouts. Reinhart was optimistic with what he saw before anyone put on any pads.

“Our summer workouts were probably the best they’ve been since 2019,” said Reinhart. “Kids are working hard, I think we’re taking baby steps in the right direction.”



Rome wasn't built in a day, and Reinhart knows there's some rebuilding to do at CM. The Eagles look to shape their young and hungry team throughout the fall.

"We're going to be young, and with that youth comes frustration, but also excitement," said Reinhart. "I'm looking forward to the season of working with these young guys, to see what they can do."

Not just a solo effort, CM's coaching staff has grown in numbers this season as they look to steady the ship in Bethalto. Head wrestling coach Jeremy Christesen will be working with the linebacker group, and long-time CM football followers will remember former QB Matt Brueckner, who joined the Eagles staff for this season.

Brueckner was a three-year starter at QB for CM in the 90s and led the Eagles to three straight Mississippi Valley Conference titles. Coach Reinhart spoke highly of Brueckner's addition to the coaching staff.

"This is the winningest quarterback to ever play here," Reinhart correctly stated. "Only guy who's ever won three conference championships in a row (as a QB). He brings a discipline and no-nonsense attitude that all of us have bought into that I think is really going to pay dividends."

Another big change from 2022 is Reinhart's presence in practice, right there in the huddle with his team calling plays. Last season, Reinhart was limited in how involved he could truly be, hampered by having to spend the season on the sidelines using a walker or crutches.

"Personally, I'm excited to be back on my feet and not using a walker or crutches," said Reinhart. "I was on those for a year, and now I get to come back out here and do what I love. It's a huge plus. I feel blessed to be out here, I get to work around my ex-players, great coaches, and great kids."

The Eagles kick off their 2023 crusade in Alton on August 25, facing Marquette at Public School Stadium.

