

Eagles Win State in Class 2

Eagles Sweep New Salem Baptist Girls and Boys in Joplin

Liberty Christian couldn't have written a better script for the state tournament this past weekend, as both the girls and boys teams claimed state titles over conference rival, New Salem Baptist from Marble Hill.

The girls winning state for the first time ever, defeated a valiant two-time defending champion in New Salem, who was going for it's third consecutive MCSAA Class 2 State Championship. The title game was close throughout as both teams took turns with the lead through the first three quarters, before Meagan Voss turned the game around early in the fourth quarter with back to back steals that she converted into baskets, as the Eagles took a three point lead they would never relinquish in their 51-41 victory.

Erin Pietzman, who was named 2nd team all-state, lead the Eagles effort with 19 points, and Meagan Voss, named 1st team all-state, added 12. Kara Vineyard owned the boards throughout the game and scored most of her 8 points in the critical fourth quarter and Cherysse Gildehaus, playing with her shooting hand in a splint, played an inspirational game for the Eagles as she added 8 points and played her usual hard nosed game by diving on the floor for lose balls several times. Erica Sansone and Emmi Fererro rounded out the scoring for the Eagles as they each scored a basket. The Eagles end their championship season with a record of 18-5, and three tournament championships, The Great Midwest, SLMCAA Conference and the MCSAA State Championship.

Liberty Christian Academy Girls

Meagan Voss
Courtney Gildehaus
Cherysse Gildehaus
Erica Sansone
Emmi Fererro
Kara Vineyard
Erin Pietzman
Bethany Kassebaum

Coach: Matt Voss
Assistant: Kim Meyer

Liberty Christian's boys followed up the girls championship with one of their own in a hard fought 53-43 win over New Salem. Once again the game was close throughout, as Liberty Christian broke a 15-15 tie early in the second quarter and managed to hang on for their sixth state title since 1998 (the other five were at Warrenton Christian). The Eagles lead by just two at the half, 28-26, and by only four entering the fourth quarter, 41-37, before the Eagles senior leadership took over in the final period, as seniors Jesse Goodfellow and Brian Nestel took control of the game. Goodfellow ran the offense flawlessly in the final quarter as Nestel scored a game high 32 points and had 10

rebounds. Robbie Boaz hit three of four clutch free throws late in the fourth quarter as the Eagles were spreading the court, and then sealed off the championship season with a breakaway slam dunk for the 53-43 win.

Coach Butch Clark gave praise to his entire squad after the game. “The kids did a great job all season long and this was truly a team effort. All eleven kids contributed and had their moments throughout the season.” Clark went on to add, “Brian (Nestel) and Luke (Wishman) just owned the boards here this weekend, like they have most of the season, and our guards were terrific also as Jesse (Goodfellow), Mic (Fox), Robbie (Boaz) and Brad (Kassebaum) did a great job of getting Brian the ball today.” “Our bench play was the best I have ever had in my eight seasons as a coach. Adam (Meyer) and Jake (Keller) did a good job of filling in at the post, as did Dustyn (Miller), Josh (Telfer), Brad (Kassebaum), and Zach Hill at the guard spots. These guys allowed us to run and press all year long, and were very unselfish in their roles,” added Clark.

The Eagles finish the season at 25-9 and placed second at the Christian Academy Holiday Classic and the SLMCAA Conference Tournament, as well as winning the Bethel Christian Classic to open the season and MCSAA State Tournament to end it.

Brian Nestel was a SLMCAA Conference and MCSAA first team all-state selection, while teammates Jesse Goodfellow was selected to the SLMCAA Conference first team and MCSAA second team and Robbie Boaz was second team SLMCAA and MCSAA.

Liberty Christian Academy Boys

Adam Meyer

Zach Hill

Jake Keller

Mic Fox

Josh Telfer

Jesse Goodfellow

Brad Kassebaum

Robbie Boaz

Dustyn Miller

Luke Wishman

Brian Nestel

Joel Meyer

Coach: Butch Clark

Team Mgr.: Daniel Barrios