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## Hawks are top seed at Meramec

By Nate Latsch

**SPECIAL TO THE POST-DISPATCH**

12/24/2008

The seeding meeting for the Meramec Holiday Festival Basketball Tournament took place a few weeks ago, and Hazelwood Central hasn't lost since earning the No. 1 seed.

"I guess guys just voted us that way because of our win-loss record," Hawks coach Josh Martin said, "but there are a lot of good teams in the field."

The No. 3 team in the Post-Dispatch large-school rankings, Hazelwood Central is 7-0 going into the tournament, which is played at Meramec Community College in Kirkwood. It kicks off with four first-round games Friday, then four more Saturday.

The Hawks, who won the Vianney Tournament earlier this season, have been led by senior guards Bryce Foster and 6-foot-7 Connell Crossland and sophomore point guard Curtis Churchman, the younger brother of former Vashon and St. Louis University guard Dwayne Polk.



February 23, 2008--McCluer North's Bobby Peebles fouls Hazelwood Central's Bryce Foster. (Sarah Conard)

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Central last won Meramec in 2003, with a team led by former Missouri forward Kalen Grimes, Missouri-St. Louis guard Aaron Jackson and forward Alex Tyus, who is now playing at the University of Florida.

McCluer (6-1) drew the No. 2 seed, with Lafayette (5-3) third, Webster Groves (3-1) fourth, Parkway West (5-1) fifth and St. Charles West (6-1) sixth.

A tournament bracket for Meramec and all other area events will be published in Friday's Post-Dispatch.

### **COLLINSVILLE HOLIDAY CLASSIC**

The 16-team Collinsville Holiday Classic kicks off with eight first-round games Saturday.

The No. 1 seed, Walton High of Marietta (Ga.), plays Chatham Glenwood at 6:30 p.m. and brings some firepower to the Metro East area.

The Raiders are led by Georgia Tech signee Glen Rice Jr., a 6-4 guard and the son of the former NBA standout, and point guard Ryan Harrow, who has signed with North Carolina State.

### **HILLSBORO IS GOING STRONG**

The Hillsboro Hawks are undefeated at 6-0, the team's best start since the 2002-03 squad won the first eight games of that season.

Senior guard Kevin Kramer is averaging 16 points a game, while senior guard Zack Winchester is at 12.3 points per contest.

Coach Chris O'Connell is 42-18 since taking over before the 2006-07 season. The Hawks went 18-9 in each of his first two years.

The Hawks are the No. 1 seed for the 53rd annual Bob Sechrest Jr. Park Hills Central Christmas Tournament, which begins Friday.

### **HEARTLAND HOOPFEST RECAP**

Four area teams competed in the Heartland Hoopfest in Perryville on Saturday.

Whitfield had four players score in double figures, led by Maurice Burns and Zack Ellis, but lost to Jackson 58-51. Gateway Tech got 14 points apiece from Kaleb Turner and Henry Williams in its 57-46 win over Charleston. Chaminade got 26 points from Bradley Beal and 22 from Brandon Lockhart and beat Green County (Ark.) 71-64. In the final

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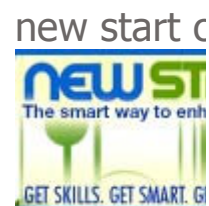
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game of the day, Maplewood lost to Memphis Mitchell 59-57 despite a game-high 25 points from Bryton Hobbs.

### AROUND THE AREA

Trinity captured its second straight Cougar Classic on Saturday with a 63-44 victory over North Tech at Lutheran-St. Charles. Junior guard Marquise Hill was named the tournament MVP. After a 2-2 start, Trinity improved to 7-2 on the season. ... East St. Louis has claimed an early lead in the Southwestern Conference after Friday's 53-47 victory over Belleville West – the Flyers' sixth straight victory after a 2-3 start. ... Edwardsville coach Mike Waldo is closing in on his 500th victory. Waldo's record stands at 499-200. The Tigers (3-2) next play Canton in the Charleston Holiday tournament on Saturday at 1:45 p.m.

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