

HPHS winds up on top of poll

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By KEVIN F. HAYES

Courant Staff Writer

The state tournament did plenty to shake up *The Courant's* final boys basketball coaches poll as two teams fell out and eight others changed position.

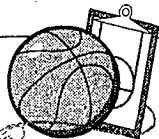
Not surprisingly, the one constant was Hartford Public. The Owls were the unanimous No. 1 selection in the final five regular season polls. And an 83-68 victory over Danbury Saturday in the CIAC Class LL championship game solidified the Owls perch.

Hartford Public finished 27-0, winning the school's first state title since 1962.

Coach Stan Piorkowski said the reality of the championship is still sinking in.

"As a coach, I felt more of a sigh of

State high school coaches' poll



1. Hartford Public
2. Danbury
3. St. Joseph - Trumbull
4. Aquinas - New Britain
5. Windsor

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relief because of the expectation level," he said. "My players are extremely happy, but I don't think the impact or enormity of it all has hit them yet. I think each week for the rest of their lives they will begin to appreciate it even more."

The team is hoping to plan a celebration next week. Students have exams this week, so Piorkowski said the players have had little time to dwell on the past weekend.

"I just hope they are not too distracted," Piorkowski said. "They don't have a lot of time to spend celebrating this week. My wife brought in some pizza Friday before the game to kind of celebrate where we were. But we hope to do something more next week."

Throughout the season, Piorkowski ignored the polls. But after Saturday, he said his team was ready to accept its rightful place.

"No. 1 now is significant because we won the state championship. Up until then, it was all people's opinions," Piorkowski said.

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Unbeaten Owls rule the basketball roost

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"There is only one way to become No. 1 and that's by winning a state title. We will accept that mantle of No. 1 now because we earned it on the court."

Public also was recognized nationally, finishing No. 25 in the final high school poll compiled by high school sports expert Doug Huff. The Owls were behind Franklin Learning-Philadelphia, St. Anthony-New Jersey and Simon Gratz-Philadelphia in the Northeast Region.

Danbury (22-5) moved up in the poll from No. 7 to No. 2. Danbury came on strong in the state tournament, defeating perennial powers Harding-Bridgeport and top-seeded Fairfield on the way to the championship game.

It is the Hatters' highest ranking since 1991, when they lost to Weaver-Hartford in the championship game.

Danbury also finished second in the final poll after winning the Class LL title in 1989. Bassick-Bridgeport, led by Harper Williams, was No. 1 in the final poll that season.

Two-time defending Class L champion St. Joseph-Trumbull finished third, followed by Class M champion St. Thomas Aquinas-New Britain.

The Saints were not ranked in the final regular season poll, but moved up after an impressive tournament that included victories over Middletown, top-seeded Prince Tech-Hartford and E.O. Smith-Storrs in the final.

Xavier-Middletown also moved into the poll at No. 6, after advancing to the semifinals of the Class LL tournament, where the Falcons lost to Hartford Public.

New Britain (No. 8 in the regular season) and Trinity Catholic-Stamford (No. 10) fell out of the rankings.

Coaches poll

Boys basketball

Final / The Hartford Courant

Records and first-place votes in parentheses. Points tabulated on a 30-28-26-24-22-20-18-16-14-12-11-10-9-8-7 basis:

School	Pts.
1. Hartford Public (27-0) (10)	300
2. Danbury (22-5)	262
3. St. Joseph-Trumbull (21-5)	252
4. Aquinas-New Britain (24-4)	212
5. Windsor (23-2)	208
6. Xavier (18-7)	194
7. Fairfield (23-2)	179
8. Notre Dame-West Haven	147
9. Wilby-Waterbury (20-2)	124
10. Harding-Bridgeport (18-4)	90

Also receiving votes: Bullard Havens-Bridgeport (19-5), 76; Kennedy-Waterbury (17-6), 73; New Milford (20-5), 68; Manchester (21-4), 65; Trinity Catholic-Stamford (24-3), 62; Marianapolis Prep-Thompson (26-1), 58; E.O. Smith-Storrs (23-4), 53; New Britain (20-3), 22; Hillhouse-New Haven (14-7), 19; Gilbert-Winsted (25-1), 14; Prince Tech-Hartford (21-3), 14; Sacred Heart-Waterbury (13-9), 14; New London (21-4), 14; Hall-West Hartford (17-6), 10; Holy Cross-Waterbury (13-9), 10; Hamden (15-7), 9; Guilford (20-4), 8; Masuk-Monroe (18-5), 7.

Coaches voting: John Reiser, Rockville; Dwight Tolliver, Weaver-Hartford; Vito Montelli, St. Joseph-Trumbull; Reggie O'Brien, Wilby-Waterbury; Bill Cardarelli, St. Thomas Aquinas-New Britain; Manuel Gomes, Thomaston, Mark Snyder, Prince Tech-Hartford; Walt Richard, Danbury, Gary Kinel, Griswold; Jim Wolf, Hillhouse-New Haven.

National respect

■ The top 10 Northeast Regional high school basketball teams as selected by scholastic sports expert Doug Huff and a national panel of 35 prep sports writers:

1. Philadelphia, Simon Gratz ..	31-0
2. Jer. City, N.J., St. Anthony .	28-1
3. Phil., Franklin Learning.....	20-1
4. Hartford Public.....	27-0
5. Bronx, N.Y., St. Raymond's	21-6
6. Phil., Roman Catholic	27-4
7. Bronx, N.Y., Walton	24-1
8. Cape May, N.J., Mid. Town.	30-3
9. Medford, N.J., Shawnee.....	27-2
10. Hempstead, N.Y.....	23-1