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Rockford vs. Grand Rapids Christian - Game Preview & News

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Rockford (/school/rockford-rockford/boysbasketball/)  
(4-3-0)  
**39**

LIVE!  
(/game/score/1493219/)  
12/11/2012  
7 p.m.

Grand Rapids Christian  
(/school/grand-rapids-grand-rapids-christian/boysbasketball/)  
(2-4-0)  
**48**

Grand Rapids Christian High School Grand Rapids, MI

**Rockford (Rockford) @ Grand Rapids Christian (Grand Rapids)**

Final	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Rockford	5	10	10	14	39
Grand Rapids Christian	13	13	7	15	48

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**MLive.com Game of the Week statewide poll: Which Friday night basketball game is the best matchup? (Poll Closed)**

Paw Paw at Otsego boys **28.72%** (139 votes)

Lansing Eastern at Grand Ledge boys **11.6%** (90 votes)

Bay City Central at Pinconning boys **16.53%** (80 votes)

Wyoming at Coopersville girls **16.32%** (79 votes)

Parma Western at Jackson Northwest girls **11.16%** (54 votes)

Clarkston at Southfield-Lathrup girls **9%** (42 votes)

Total Votes: **484**

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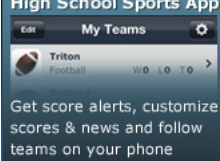
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**Column: Talented Grand Rapids Christian basketball team expected to evolve into one of the Grand Rapids area's elite squads**

Steve Kaminski | skaminsk@mlive.com, December 12, 2012 9 a.m.



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Grand Rapids Christian basketball coach Steve Majerle talks strategy during halftime of Tuesday night's 48-39 win over Rockford. - (Matthew Busch | MLive.com)

GRAND RAPIDS – No one is going to remember that the Grand Rapids Christian boys basketball team started the season 0-2 by the time the state tournament rolls around in early March.

The Eagles have plenty of returning talent from a team that advanced to the Class B state quarterfinals a year ago, so they are going to be fine.

You really can't be surprised that they have started slowly, either. They have a new coach in Steve Majerle, and the Eagles only had a handful of practices to acclimate themselves with a new system since most of them were on Christian's football team that won a state championship. Christian's

non-conference schedule is a challenging one, too.

That doesn't make what happened last week any easier to accept, though. Nine of the Eagles on the Christian basketball team who were on the football team suffered more defeats in a three-day span last week than they did during the 14-week stretch that they went 13-1 en route to winning a Division 3 state football championship last fall.

But Christian junior guard Drake Harris said after the Eagles defeated Rockford 48-39 during Tuesday night's MLive.com Grand Rapids Area Basketball game of the Week that he and his teammates haven't panicked during the early-season losses.

"The first two games, we started off a little slow," said Harris, who earned first-team all-state honors as a wide receiver. "It wasn't a great start for us, but we knew every week that we are going to get better and better. We didn't have that many practices going into the season. Coach Majerle is a great coach, and we knew once we started getting some practices in we would be OK."

**Boys Basketball**  
(/boysbasketball/stats/13-boys-basketball/)

**Stats Leaders**

**Points**

**Austin Johnson**  
(/player/austin-johnson-4/)

Spring Lake

**Free Throws Made**  
**Austin Johnson**  
 (/player/austin-johnson-4/)  
 Spring Lake

# 66

**Three-Point Shots Made**  
**Tyler Lewis**  
 (/player/tyler-lewis-4/)  
 Leroy Pine River

# 43

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**Boys Basketball**  
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The biggest improvement the Eagles showed Tuesday came from their defense. Christian allowed 146 points in losses to Catholic Central and South Christian last week combined. Catholic Central's DeMarkus Stuckey torched the Eagles for 33 points. South Christian's Zac Medendorp burned the Eagles for 20.

Tuesday was much different.

The Eagles allowed only one first-quarter field goal and jumped out to a 13-5 lead. Christian then held the Rams scoreless during the final 4:45 of the third quarter after Rockford pulled to within 26-25. Christian's defensive efforts ignited a 9-0 run, and the Eagles were never headed.

"We dedicated ourselves to playing defense," Harris said. "The first couple of games, we were getting our legs back from football. That's not an excuse, but it is a big difference in conditioning when you go from football to basketball. Just getting our legs back and tonight we were able to use our athleticism, getting around screens and coming out and executing."

Majerle said team communication was much improved, too.

"The communication on defense was tremendous. That's what was different," Majerle said. "They played hard against South Christian, but tonight, they communicated with each other, switched off screens. That's probably the most important skill in basketball - communication on the floor. They communicated on the floor defensively."

DaRohn Scott, Christian's 6-foot-8 junior center, who led the Eagles with 11 points, said it's not that Majerle has introduced an overly complicated system. However, Scott, who was a defensive end on the football team, said the Eagles do need time to adjust to each other on the court.

"The biggest thing is practicing together, playing together," Scott said. "We were coming off a state championship in football and we only had about four or five practices, so we were a little discombobulated."

"We got better playing against South, even though we lost. But we looked a lot better (against Rockford), we were faster and played more as a team. Tonight, we were a lot better, and we were in sync and were able to come out with a win."

Harris smiled when asked if he felt that the Eagles got the monkey off their back now that they got their first win.

It wasn't just the victory that was so important, though.

The Eagles are improving, and they showed Tuesday that they are not only on the right track, but in a month or two, they are going to be awfully tough to beat.

Find Steve Kaminski on **Facebook** ([http://www.facebook.com/sfkaminski?ref=tn\\_tnmn](http://www.facebook.com/sfkaminski?ref=tn_tnmn)) and **Twitter** ([https://twitter.com/Steve\\_Kaminski](https://twitter.com/Steve_Kaminski)).

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#### Boys Basketball

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- Class B State Tournament (<http://highschoolsports.mlive.com/tournament/11009>)
- Class C State Tournament (<http://highschoolsports.mlive.com/tournament/10717>)
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### High School Basketball Bulletin

By Steve Bell

- Bank Hoops' Class A team, players of the week (<http://blog.mlive.com/highschoolbasketball/2013/01/ba>)
- Bank Hoops' Class B team, players of the week (<http://blog.mlive.com/highschoolbasketball/2013/01/ba>)
- Bank Hoops' Class C team, players of the week (<http://blog.mlive.com/highschoolbasketball/2013/01/ba>)