

[Coach Storm's Final EMass Top 25](#)

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Somerville MA (Games played through the end of the regular season) – What a year for EMass girls hoops...State Champs in D1 goes to Central Catholic...D2 to Notre Dame Academy of Hingham...D3 to the Big Blue of Swampscott....and D4 to a suddenly hot Millis club. Great job girls as you did EMass proud!

When I do my final Top 25 rankings I like to compare this list with what I thought might happen in pre-season. It's kind of a check to see if I had any clue what I might be talking about in high school hoops. With all the "Cusps" listed and even 2 where I totally missed mentioning the team leaves me wondering if I did this year. But then again, I think it was just that type of year. We had some pretty good parity with a lot of equally talented teams and that's why we had no unbeaten clubs. I also tracked and included teams with way more losses than the teams I had listed the prior year. I think next year will be even more confusing with some Top 25 teams losing a lot of talent. I guess that means I need your help so send me e-mails if you think your club will be strong next year or was a young team that came on at the end and expect to keep it rolling next December.

I want to thank Doug Lindland for his help with our website this year. Doug does great work and if you need website services, feel free to e-mail him at doug@easternhoopleague.com or check out his site at www.easternbasketball.org

I hope you enjoyed the rankings I've compiled for the 2008 – 2009 season and always feel to e-mail me at coachstorm5@comcast.net with any comments. The last edition will be out soon and will be my annual Cream-of-the-Crop Club where I "try" and list the Top 150 or so players in our part of the state. If you have your league all star teams or a player who had a very good season and want me to consider them, also feel free to e-mail me with the information. Thanks for reading this year and soon it will be off to watch some AAU ball.

Final Top 25 Rankings

Now Pre-Season

#1.	#1.	Central Catholic (D1 N) – 22 – 3 State champs! What a year...and...they also won the Comcast Tourney beating Feehan and Pentucket...beat Lowell 3 times...okay they couldn't beat Andover but that's for next year. Speaking of next winter... let's see now you have the best player in the state back in Katie Z...plus a top notch point guard in Gabie Polce...and future star forward Melissa Miller...Sue Downer is smiling in 2009 and will be again in 2010...LOL. Props to quality seniors Gia O'Connor, Ashley Evangelista, Kelley Mikus, and Katie Quinlan for going out on top.
#2.	#4.	Lowell (D1 N) – 20 – 3 Talk about frustrating...team's 3 losses were to #1 team and state champ, Central Catholic...though they did beat them once...Also the team won the Xmas Tourney at Methuen, the Roche Brothers Tourney beating Acton and AC, beat Andover twice and also beat Swampscott. Coach Crowley might cry over losing 4 superb seniors in Kara Rogers, the Wilsons, Brianna and Whitney, and Maggie Wallace but the memories they created will make him smile as this group won more games in their 4 years than any graduating class in Lowell history...quite a feat! 6' 2" Tess Cigliano returns as does starter Molly Desmond.
#3.	#13.	Swampscott (D3 N) – 23 - 2 Another state champ! Boy did they do it in convincing fashion wiping out previously unbeaten (25 and 0) Quaboag by 34 points. Only losses were by 2 to LE and by 4 to Lowell...but they also beat an outstanding Pentucket team twice in addition to being state champs! Super seniors Allie Beaulieu, Tara Nimkar and Marissa Gambale go out on top and will be impossible to replace. The Big Blue does return 2 good starters in Kara Gilbert and Tara Gallagher so Coach Hughes will have a good foundation to build next years' version. Congrats on a superb season!
#4.	#2.	Pentucket (D3 N) – 22 – 3 Phenomenal year but frustrated as 2 of their losses were to #3 Swampscott and the other to #1 Central Catholic by only 3 points...plus they beat D2 state champ NDA on the road. They graduate some serious talent up front in Kirsten Daamen and Andrea Attenasio so the look will change from a combo inside outside offense to more of an outside only one. The cupboard is hardly bare as Coach McNamara returns excellent point guard Erin McNamara, scorer Ashley Viselli, and combo guard Holly Jakobsons. Now if someone like 6' Vanessa Cahill can step up on the inside...hmmm
#5.	#20.	Notre Dame of Hingham (D2 S) – 21 – 5 The 3 rd team to do EMass proud winning the D2 state championship! Okay...it wasn't pretty but that title lasts forever and is well deserved. No team went through a more competitive bracket to get there as D2 South was absolutely loaded...then to beat a terrific AC team at the Garden...what a great job. Coach Barrett also set up a tough schedule that got his team ready as they beat Brockton twice, split with Andover, lost to Pentucket by 5 and beat Somerville twice. It all paid off with the ultimate prize! They do lose all 5 starters to graduation...Babson bound Jessica Arruda, Kelsey Reilly, Nellie Kennedy, Sam Witham, and the intimidating inside presence of 6' 1" Margaret Riordan. So Barrett has his work cut out next year but Kara Stefaniak got serious time at guard and so did 6' 1" Michaela Cataldo so he has a few pieces in place. Congrats again to another EMass state titlist!

#6. Cusp	Andover (D1 N) – 18 – 5 – Big surprise to me the season this club had after graduating 11 kids...some great wins as they beat 2 state champions in Central Catholic (twice) and also NDA, the D2 champs. When your only losses are to NH power Pinkerton, 3 times to #2 Lowell, and to NDA on the road, you know you were this close to being the top dog. Natalie Gomez is simply the real deal and Nicole Boudreau will graduate in 3 more years as possibly the best outside shooter EMass has ever seen. Trust me...no more “Cusp” for this team...they will be ranked very high next year as just about everyone returns.
#7. #10.	Arlington Catholic (D2 N) – 23 - 3 Boy did this group truly come together this winter where they made the Garden for the 1 st time ever. When your only losses are to Westford by 3, #2 Lowell by 3, and to D2 state champ NDA, you know it was a great run. Winning the Catholic title, beating Needham and Somerville twice each and #10 reading are all reasons to smile when you look back. Cougar chemistry was terrific led by 2 great seniors in Kelsey Roberson (Bentley) and Merri Soper (Bryant), both 1,000 point scorers, who will be sorely missed. The torch will be passed down to juniors Cara Paladino and Lindsey Roche, quality kids themselves, who learned their lessons well from the seniors so this tradition will live on next year as well.
#8. Tie #7.	Walpole (D2 S) -- 18 – 6 The Rebels truly challenged themselves this year and it paid off with a great state tourney run. Beating Feehan and Wellesley on the road then a talented W-H group before barely losing to state champ NDA by 3 are all magical memories. It will be sad for Coach Stacey Bilodeau to see this senior class graduate as they were outstanding...Lauren Baryski, Michaela Cosby, and captains Sarah Roof and Sydni Salvatore will be remembered for quite a while in Walpole hoop lore. Sparkplug Brooke Waite and starter Molly Grimes do return though.
#8. Tie #6.	Wellesley (D2 S) – 21 – 1 What a 2 year run...state champs last year and your only loss this winter was in an epic battle with bitter rival Walpole in the state tourney. These kids play the game the way it should be played...they play hard, play smart, defend and hit the open person. The Raiders lose daunting defender Ann McGraw plus so much up front in Corley Stone and warrior Jesse Miller it is scary for Coach Cieri to even think about...but then she smiles realizing that her stellar backcourt mates Blake Dietrick and Mary Louise Dixon are back again and she knows many more wins are on the horizon.
#10. #3.	Reading – (D2 N) -- 21 – 3 Great season winning the Middlesex League outright and beating Melrose twice plus Stoneham to do it then winning 3 in the state tourney before bowing out by 6 to AC. I wonder if Coach Kim Penney wonders what might have been if senior shooter Cat Carey hadn't missed the last 7 or so games with mono??? Now they lose not only Carey but all-time great and 1,000 point scorer Jackie Lyons (UNH), Ali Stager, Julia Rafferty, and Maria Pandolfo (BC for softball) and they all will be so hard to replace. 6' Carlene Kluge stepped in as a starter for Carey and did well. Strong frosh Melissa Dalpozzo also got some good experience this year so those are the 2 pieces Penney has to build on going forward.
#11. #11.	Oliver Ames (D2 S) – 20 – 2 OA had a super go this winter losing only to B-R by 1 and state champ NDA by 5 in the tourney. Club won the hock title and the Walpole tourney in February. They lose quality seniors like Alex Chase and the Vatalaro sisters but return Lauren Battista, one of the best ever to play at the school. Jackie Bliss and Tessa Dern are also back so look for a lot of wins from OA again next winter.

#12.	#8.	Westford (D2 N1) 20 – 3 – Heck of a start to the coaching career of Russ Coward...win the DCL...win 20 games..and your 2 of your losses are to #6 Andover and #7 AC in the states by 2...you know you've had a heck of a year. They do graduate 3 starters in Kira Ross, Jen Normandie, and Melissa Stanvick plus hardnosed sub Emily Babon but still return 9 juniors including star Asia Ewing and 6' Erica Wright so I would expect a fairly high ranking next pre-season.
#13.	Cusp	Lynn English (D1 N) – 20 – 4 Best season in school history is all you need to say here. Losing Jeanette Anderson is huge as she is one of their all-time top players but the cupboard is hardly bare with the likes of Jenicia Duggins and the Hogans back for more action next winter...
#14.	Cusp	Brockton (D1 S) – 19 – 6 Boxers got to the Garden again and gave Central all they could handle for the 1 st half but fouls and Central flying all over the court in a devastating 3 rd quarter blitz that ended their year. They lose Sabree Rodriguez and Beatrice Atkinson but 6' 2" Morgan Thatcher returns so Coach Dibiasse has a large building block in place for next year.
#15.	#5.	Bishop Feehan (D2 S) – 15 – 6 Just loved what they did this year after losing superstar Amy Lepley so early in the year...they could have folded the tent but somehow dug deep and made this a season to remember. Multitalented Jenna Roncarati's senior leadership was the main reason...boy did she step up her game scoring almost 20 a game with double digit boards each night...imagine if this girl played AAU bball how good she could have been?...Call me selfish here but somehow I hope she can find a way to play college hoops at Providence and not just soccer....
#16.	Cusp	Bridgewater-Raynham (D1 S) -- 17 - 5 Quality seniors win and B-R had 9 of them who will be sorely missed including the Marotta sisters and Kellie O'Neill. Best season in recent memory for this program and Coach Nickie Orlando is more than up to the task of keeping this momentum going in the future.
#17.	Missed	Medfield (D2 S) – 21 – 2 Fabulous season for this senior (6 played regularly) dominated club led by Jenn McBrien and Marissa Pendergast. They will be greatly missed and it could be a rebuilding job here next year.
#18.	#15.	Whitman Hanson (D2 S) – 22 – 3 Good season may be an understatement as they won 22 games. Emily Trapp graduates as perhaps their best player ever at the school. Ali Hardeman was a stud running mate to Trapp and these two will be next to impossible to replace. Beating New Bedford was a choice win and winning 2 state tourney games before bowing out to hot Walpole were the highlights.
#19.	#17.	Coyle Cassidy (D3 S) – 17 – 4 – Super season and one of their best ever led by scintillating soph Brenna Gonsalves and seniors Allie Pavao and Jackie Enos. 7 seniors graduate so Coach O'Brien will have his hands full building a supporting cast for Gonsalves...but that's next year so let the smiles continue for a while with the memories of a job well done in '08-'09.
#20.	Cusp	Cohasset (D4 S) -- 22 – 2 What a 2 year run! Probably would have been back-to-back state titles if a super hot and eventual state titlist Millis hadn't beaten them by 2 late in the state tourney. One Lehr sister leaves and will be tough to replace but the younger one is back and should be better than this year so this dream run could continue next winter.
#21.	Missed	Foxborough (D2 S) – 17 – 4 – Really good regular season shouldn't be dimmed by frustrating 1 st round loss in the state's...what really hurts is the loss of seniors Samantha Briggs, Rehema Strouble, and Michelle Cameron. Club does return tri-captain Kristen Hoffman at the point and Rachel Jamieson so the well is not dry at all.

#22. Missed	Carver (D3 S) – 19 – 5 – Coach Pina does a super job with this group and they had a heck of a go this year before losing to the hot Archie’s in the states. 2 wins in the tournament plus finally beating D1 New Bedford will make him and his kids smile when they re-live the memories of this year...and center Mari Meserve and classmate Ashley Fruzzetti will be back for their senior season, a nice base to build on.
#23. #25.	Somerville (D1 N) – 16 – 6 Coach Harris graduates 11 including classy and hard working Michelle Hagerty, 3 point shooter Kayla Vallery, board demon Francesca Delambert plus Jill Liberatore, a key starting guard who tore her ACL fairly early in the year and sparkplug Jennie Valessio who missed many games with a bad ankle sprain. He does return dynamic guard Kelsey Garrity and 6’ 3” Keisha Jean-Louis so he has an outside/inside game coming back. Highlanders lost 2 to state champ NDA (1 in OT), 2 to AC, 1 to Andover and they beat LE twice and Marshfield so an excellent year against a tough schedule.
#24. Tie Cusp	Bourne (D3 S) – 20 – 3 A nice state tourney run ends what is perhaps one of the best seasons ever at Bourne. Losing 6’ 2” Courtney Donovan will hurt a lot as she will be missed greatly...but the program should be able to build off the excitement this 20 win season gave their fans.
#24. Tie Cusp	Needham (D1 S) – 17 – 7 Excellent state tourney run getting to the D1 South finals before losing to Brockton by 5. Merrimack bound Katie Ganser and 3 other starters will be sorely missed but her sis, Christine, does return so Coach Benzan has a really good one coming back.
#25. Tie #16.	Cardinal Spellman (D3 S) – 16 - 8 Growing pains early on for Pat Lamb’s club but his kids matured and had a nice tourney run before losing to the Archie’s. Reilly Poirier is now gone and she has been the heart and soul of this team for 4 years and is the kind of kid who is almost impossible to replace. I think the example she set will shine bright for those who return so her impact will be felt going forward.
#25. Tie #12.	Melrose (D2 N) – 16 - 5 Losing 5 games in 1 season is probably considered a “down year” in Melrose but 4 were by a total of 10 points. They started 5 juniors and with the likes of Mamayek, Hanscom, Brickley and company returning, I don’t think they lose 5 next winter...might even be a Top 5 team.

“On the Cusp”

Archbishop Williams (D3 S) – 15 – 12 – Coach Bancroft gambled on another tough schedule and his kids suffered some lumps but grew exponentially in the process to finish in amazing fashion...and Driscoll and crew have just about everyone back and no more growing pains come next year...hmmm.

Marshfield (D1 S) 17 – 7 – Season ended slowly so one must look at the big picture here as they did win 17 games. Nicole Beresford had another brilliant year as a soph scoring over 20 a game and has over 900 points in 2 years of high school...6’ frosh Erin Doherty has a big upside also so there is a lot to be happy about for the future.

Acton Boxborough (D1 N) -- 15 – 7 This is the story of what could have been...loss of Dorey before the season started then injuries to Katie Awiszus (season ending) and fellow co-captain Lauren O’Brien in big game against Westford really hurt...these kids never quit though and with Elizabeth Belanger back for 3 more seasons, Coach Gallant has something to smile about.

Stoneham (D3 N) 19 – 4 – Babson grad Angela Billings led Stoneham to one of their best seasons ever this winter. Beating Reading, Melrose, and Lexington twice would have been unthinkable a few years ago but that’s how far this program has come. They lose the tough inside presence of Gina Sicuso who was superb in this her senior year. Returning shooter Cassie Liston and promising guard Arianna Tucelli is a real good sign combined with the great experiences this team will recall from this winter.

New Bedford (D1 S) – 16 – 6 Started out 9 and 0 but then the schedule got tougher and most were on the road. I didn’t see these guys this year but heard that Alyssa Roach can really shoot it and I believe she’s back next year.

Bishop Fenwick (D2 N) – 16 – 7 Many highs in this solid season before losing to Reading at the end... losses were to mostly high quality teams so no shame in that...losing quality seniors in Bruni, DeCarlo, Dullea etc; will hurt but with star soph Amy Pelletier back there is a rock to rebuild on.

Millis (D4 S) 19 – 6 – Terrific stretch run gets them the D4 state title...hats off to Molly Breen (28 in the title game), Amy Ingraham and company on a superb season.

New Mission (D4 N) – 19 – 3 Winning City title always makes their year and adding 2 wins in the states is a nice memory...just couldn’t stop Georgetown and Taryn O’Connell at the end though. All but one player back next year including dynamic duo of Mieshia Reynolds and Niesha Kelley.

Fontbonne (D1 S) – 13 – 8 Wins over Needham, Marshfield, the Archie’s, and NDA should be enough to offset the disappointment of a 1 point loss to Weymouth in the states. Loss of Kara Nagle hurts but with dynamic Alexis Peters and 3 other starters back things could be very good down Milton way next winter.

St. Mary’s of Lynn (D3 N) – 18 – 7 Dramatic improvement here going from 9 wins last year to 18 this season. Club also had highs by winning their own February Tourney, beating Spellman twice, the Archie’s, and then 2 games in the states before bowing out to powerhouse Pentucket. They graduate their backcourt of Amy Bozarjian and Alison McCarthy but have excellent returnees in 6’ 2” Tory Faieta, 5’ 10” Cassi Amenta, and scorer Bria Tiro at guard. I think their progression of wins will continue next year.

Masconomet (D2 N) – 16 – 6 Seniors Jamie White and Krissy DiBenedetto had a great 4 year run here and will be sorely missed but Coach Romeo’s club was very young overall and still won 16 games so that has to be a good sign for the future. Junior Carly Kiernan was a CAL all star and frosh Brooke Stewart has excellent potential.

Dighton Rehoboth – (D2 S) -- 16 – 6 The loss of perhaps the best player ever at D-R in Mary Nwachukwa will be devastating but the memories of a really good year should ease the pain.

<p>Salem (D1 N) – 15 – 6 Nice job by CAL Coach-of-the Year John Fortunato with an excellent record behind 3 league all stars in Ashley White, Amanda Wilkins, and Erica Mendez.</p>
<p>Ipswich (D3 N) – 15 – 6 Will be losing one of their all-time greats as Maine bound Amber Smith graduates...her 43 point scoring outburst and the 15 wins the team had were shining lights on a very good season.</p>
<p>Weymouth (D1 S) – 13 – 7 Started 5 and 1 but then the schedule got super tough...losses were to very high quality teams...Walpole, Wellesley, B-R in the states, Needham, and North Quincy...but reason to smile as they were one of the few to beat state champ NDA, Needham and Fontbonne in the states...good year but losing BSL Divisional MVP Sarah Collins to Babson will be a big, big loss.</p>
<p>Duxbury (D2 S) – 13 – 7 Good year ended on kind of a downer with 3 losses but against top quality teams in W-H, Fenwick and D-R but a big high had to be the win over D1 New Bedford so hopefully that will be what these girls recall from their solid season.</p>
<p>Mansfield (D2 S) – 14 – 8 Streaky club...start by winning 7 straight...lose 4...win 3 and lose 3...win 4 including your own February tourney then a tough loss in OT to W-H in the states...solid season overall for Coach Redding's troops.</p>
<p>North Quincy (D1 S) – 15 - 6 Great beginning starting out 9 and 1 before things slowed down...scoring 89 in double OT win over tough Duxbury was an amazing feat...losing Siobhan Carnell and her scoring over 20 a game will be very difficult to replace also.</p>
<p>Lincoln-Sudbury (D2 N) – 13 – 9 Young team that got better as the year wore on...9 losses by an average of like 6 points per game and lost 3 by 1 point...that won't happen next year...shooter Liz Newman will be the senior leader and Coach Feldman is smiling thinking of what could be next year as many sophs and frosh return.</p>
<p>Newton South (D1 S) 15 – 8 – Young team developed really well under new Coach Sam Doner...winning 2 games in the states is great experience to build on as well. With talented sophs Sophie Bikofsky and Kendall Burton returning me thinks this is a team to watch next year and one that could give Westford a run for their money in the DCL.</p>
<p>Durfee (D1 S) 12 – 8 – Brutal bad luck to end the season losing McDonald with a broken hand and also their last 3 games...but with Kate back healthy next year and the star inside presence of 6' 1" Lauren Fiola also back, it gives this team a great base to build on for next year...hopefully they can stay healthy and add some depth and then look out.</p>
<p>North Andover (D2 N) 15 – 7 – Good season here but losing 1,000 point scorer Nicole Zahoruiko will truly hurt... 4 starters do return including juniors Katie Moroney, Nikki Karalis, and Jackie Sullivan plus frosh Julia Titone...plus Nicole Z's soph sis, Erika should get some real good run also...so Coach Breen has some building blocks.</p>
<p>Sharon (D2 S) – 13 – 8 Injuries hurt late but club still had a solid season including winning their own February Tourney before losing to tough Medfield in the state tourney. Williams bound Grace Rehnquist will be a huge loss as she graduates as a 1,000 point scorer and hit the magic number by scoring 35 with 7 three's against Attleboro.</p>
<p>Tewksbury (D2 N) – 13 – 8 They lose Caitlin DeFrancisco who had a terrific 4 year run here and like 7 other seniors but do return star guard Danielle DePierro for her senior season and she's a good one...tough to play in the MVC as they lose to Central, Andover, Lowell, twice each to Methuen and Fenwick and then tough Masco in the states.</p>
<p>Hopkinton (D2 S) – 14 – 7 Best wins had to be the 2 over D4 state champ Millis as the Hillies had a solid year.</p>
<p>Concord Carlisle (D2 N) – 14 – 7 Upset win over previously undefeated Westford is a great memory from a solid season.</p>
<p>Manchester Essex (D4 N) 16 – 6 – Tough 3 point loss to Matignon in the state's was disappointing but the Hornets have had a great 2 year run so one must look at the big picture here.</p>
<p>Brighton (D2 N) – 16 – 3 Losses to New Mission and Fenwick by 17 to end the season had to be disappointing but still great memories overall this winter.</p>

Weston (D3 N) – 14 – 8 They lose all-time leading scorer Becca Kimball to graduation so no joy for the Wildcats but nice win over Wilmington in the states gave them all a smile...but then powerful Swampscott ended their year.

Gloucester (D2 N) – 12 – 9 Team did truly have a yo-yo year as longest winning streak was 3 games. Any team with Hannah Cain as the point coming back as a junior next year has something to really build on though...

Tribute...

She stood only 4' 7" and "said" she played on the girls hoop team for Somerville High back in 1938. She loved people and was loved by all...she made everyone laugh and she laughed with everyone... She was not a star on the basketball court but was a superstar in life. She was so good in fact that one of my 5' 8" twin daughters wrote her college essay on her. It is one of my favorite lines of all time...my daughter wrote about "Granny"...that even though I am a foot taller than her physically, I will always look up to her." She had a very good and long life lasting almost to her 90th birthday and enjoying all of it until the last year or so when the arthritis caused her constant pain. We lost "Granny" last week and she will be greatly missed. It is kind of a tradition for guys to NOT like their mother-in-laws but I was lucky...I had one you could love...and I did.

Gotta' run folks!...Remember...**"No ability without eligibility!"...and..."The ball stops bouncing for everyone at some point but a college degree lasts forever!"**