



PUBLISHED MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2013 AT 12:54 PM / UPDATED AT 6:54 AM



The state-champion Omaha Central boys basketball team, including senior Akoy Agau, center, were honored at the Capitol on Monday. Gov. Dave Heineman, left, said, "This year I think you were by far the most dominant team I've ever seen in Nebraska history."

Governor Celebrates Basketball

By Joe Duggan
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

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LINCOLN — The Omaha Central High School boys basketball team is still doing some of its best work in Lincoln.

The Eagles impressed audiences Monday at the State Capitol nearly as much as they did at the state tournament, where they have won four straight Class A championships. Gov. Dave Heineman, an avid sports fan who witnessed Central's last two title victories in person, didn't bother with qualifiers while proclaiming March 18 in the team's honor.

"This year I think you were by far the most dominant team I've ever seen in Nebraska history," he said.

In addition to winning four in a row, the Eagles have won seven out of the last eight state titles. Three other boys teams have won four straight championships. Before Omaha Central, Lincoln Northeast, also in Class A, was the last team to accomplish the feat between 1995 and 1998.

The governor said Monday marked the first time he has proclaimed an official day in

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honor of a high school team. As they walked through the capitol halls, senators and staff members congratulated them and asked for pictures.

“We’re extremely proud of the recognition,” Coach Eric Behrens said. “It’s a day that myself and our coaches and our players will remember for the rest of our lives.”

Team captain Akoy Agau, who will play for the University of Louisville next season, thanked the governor and said he and his teammates were blessed to have cut the nets in Lincoln so many times. And he warned the fans not to count out his soon-to-be alma mater next year, despite the loss of seven seniors.

“I think we’ll reload and hopefully do it again,” he said.

He also mentioned he was happy about Louisville’s No. 1 seed in the NCAA tournament. Nonetheless, he said it would be fun if he and his fellow Eagles could have a crack at the Cardinals.

“Anytime, anywhere,” he said, when asked if he was issuing a challenge to the college team. After the laughter subsided, he added, “I hope they’re not watching this.”

Looking up the 6-foot-9 Agau, the 5-foot-8 governor gained a better appreciation for how the team has made its run.

“You played above the rim,” Heineman said. “That’s not the kind of place I normally played when I played basketball.”

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