

Boys basketball rankings: Four of five defending champions head preseason polls

DAN MOHRMANN NOVEMBER 21, 2016, 11:09 AM

For the most part, the defending state champions come into the 2016-17 basketball season as the big dogs in the yard. Pueblo West, Colorado Springs Christian, Sanford and Fleming all took the top spot in their respective CHSAA Now.com preseason basketball polls. The only defending champion to not hold the top spot is Overland, which did not make the top 10 in the Class 5A rankings. The top spot in that class goes to Eaglecrest, [which finished runner-up](#) last season. [Colbey Ross](#) will be back for his senior season and will look to lead the Raptors to another state title. Rock Canyon (No. 2), Denver East (No. 3), ThunderRidge (No. 4) all got first-place votes to start the season.



(Matt Mathewes/MVPSportsPics.com)

In 4A, the two teams that ended last season all top will start this season in the same position. Pueblo West holds the top spot in 4A with Valor Christian nipping at the heels of the Cyclones at No. 2. Pueblo West [came away with a 70-51 win](#) over the Eagles to take the state championship. David Simental returns for his senior season at Pueblo West and is looking to turn heads as he did in last year's state tournament. He'd also like to win a second-straight title for the Cyclones. Colorado Springs Christian takes the No. 1 spot in 3A after [winning its second-straight championship](#). The Lions lose big man Sam Howard, but guard Justin Engesser does return for his senior year. After [winning its third-straight title last year](#), Sanford comes into the season as the No. 1 team in 2A and is just one win away from history. If the Indians win their season opener, they will set the record for most consecutive wins in state history. They currently sit tied with Ridgway, who won 73 straight games from 1993-96. After missing out on the 2015 state title by a point, Fleming rebounded [to capture last year's 1A championship](#) and will start the season at No. 1 as a result. The boys basketball regular season begins Nov. 30. The rankings, voted upon by coaches and select media members, are the official polls of the Association. During the regular season, they are released each Monday.