

# Colbey Ross powers No. 2 Eaglecrest boys basketball over No. 6 Denver East

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Eaglecrest's Colbey Ross had 38 points against Denver East on Monday. [More photos.](#) (Matt Mathewes/MVPSportsPics.com)

AURORA — The [CHSAANow.com No. 6-ranked](#) Denver East took to the road Monday night, hoping to play spoiler to undefeated and No. 2-ranked Eaglecrest in a Class 5A heavyweight matchup.

Unfortunately for the Angels, they came tumbling from the heavens at the talons of the Raptors. Although they started slow, Eaglecrest (15-0 overall) eventually regained control as their star guard, Colbey Ross, exploded for 38 points in what would result in a 69-56 Raptor victory.

"We played a half of a basketball game," Denver East coach Rudy Carey said. "We let one man get loose and have his way with us. They're a very good team, very well coached. But they're not 15 points better than us."

When asked if the Raptors have the requisite talent to aid Ross in a 5A title run, the junior standout remained confident in his squad.

"We definitely have the talent," Ross said. "But I still have to carry them. I think I still need to improve on my leadership and that's the main thing."

Ross wasn't having the best of nights to start things off as East came out with an unmatched intensity from the tip, quickly forcing upwards of six turnovers alone in the first quarter. Eaglecrest coach John Olander, after the game, praised the great start Denver East (10-5) got off to.

"They're a team that comes out really hard in that first period with a lot of energy, a lot of athleticism," Olander said. "We knew that if we could just hang in there, that eventually we'd hope that our depth would be the difference."

The 2-3 zone the Angels employed early on was suffocating as the Raptors had no effective ball movement, leading to the Eaglecrest having to take the tough perimeter jumpers Denver East was daring them to make.

"We needed to get a little more movement against their zone," Olander said. "They're too long, too athletic to just be standing around. We weren't getting too much ball movement, we were easy to guard." It also didn't help that the flow of the game was constantly disrupted by the referees in the opening period, citing delay of game warnings, bench warnings, and two technical fouls. Turnovers ultimately continued to plague the Raptors in the second quarter, but luckily for them East wasn't taking full advantage and cashing in buckets.

The tide of the game turned with about three and a half minutes to go in the second, as Ross took over the game. To close out the half, Eaglecrest mounted a 12-2 scoring run to go up 30-29.

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All 12 points in the run being scored by Ross on a couple of 3-pointers, a transition pullup, and two trips to the charity stripe. And when it rains, it pours.

Ross opened the second half with a long-distance 3-pointer. He and his team never looked back from there. A 10-0 run from Eaglecrest seemed to push the game out of reach, but Denver East managed to make it interesting in the fourth quarter as they had a mini 7-4 scoring run of their own to cut the deficit to four.

And once again, Ross came to the rescue as he scored 14 of his team's 22 fourth quarter points. He went to the free throw line six times in the final period, knocking down 8-12 to seal the win.

After his final attempt (and make) at the free throw line, Ross was serenaded with chants of "M-V-P, M-V-P, M-V-P," from his rowdy Raptor fan section.

"Luckily for us, he hasn't been scoring that much," Olander said. "He's had a couple games with 10, 11, and he's had some big games and you know we found a way to win and I think that's what is special about this team. We don't have to have Colbey score. We've had those games where he hasn't scored and we've had guys step up and I think that's what's been so fun about this team."

At 15-0, Olander still sees room for improvement down the stretch.

"We gotta keep improving, we really do," he said. "Our goal is to try and win our league. We gotta continue to roll in league and win games."

Olander and his squad will have a chance to accomplish that goal with four Centennial opponents to close the season, one of those being the currently ranked No. 3 Overland Trailblazers.