

Life

HARVARD-WESTLAKE

This year, both the girls and boys basketball teams became state champions, a first for Harvard-Westlake (the girls team won state in 2010, while the boys won in 1996, 1997, 2016, and last year). The celebration continues with an upper school assembly tomorrow in Taper Gym. Go Wolverines!

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Slam Dunk



On March 9, the Harvard-Westlake girls and boys basketball teams both walked into Golden 1 Center in Sacramento shooting for the stars...and both walked out

state champions. “It was a remarkable day for HW athletics, winning two state championships in the same sport on the same day,” says Head of Athletics Terry Barnum.

In fact, “very few schools ever achieve this feat,” adds boys basketball assistant coach Ari Engelberg ’89.



The girls team, which last won a state championship in 2010, took home the Division 2 title.

“Through all the injuries this year, the girls did not give up,” says Melissa Hearlihy, coach for the girls basketball team. “When times were tough, we just talked about the future and what it was going to take to achieve our goals. Funny side note: We tied the record for the most losses before making it to the state championship—and we were the only team to then go on to actually win it!”





Deana Thompson '25 praises the team's spirit. "Right before every game, the whole team would gather in a circle and say 'All five' to symbolize that we were all working together and needed each other on the floor [since five players are on the court at a time]," says Deana Thompson '25. "Having that in the back of our heads helped."



The boys team took home the state championship in the Open Division, defending the crown it won a year ago. Along the way, the boys also claimed the Mission League and CIF Southern Section Open Division titles, winning the trifecta of championships that they had been working toward since last spring.

“We knew the championship game would be tough,” recalls boys basketball coach Dave Rebibo. “Salesian is an incredible team, but I also knew we had been battle tested and would be ready.”

What Robert Hinton '24 remembers most from the state championship game is “warming up one last time with my guys. Going into the game with dudes I’ve been with since seventh grade felt unreal.”



Rebibo credits his team's camaraderie with much of their success. “We are a family, and

family always respects and takes care of one another,” he adds. “That expectation set the tone for our players.”

Trent Perry '24 agrees. “I am truly going to miss the brotherhood of this team and playing for this school.”

“I’m extremely proud of our coaches and players for the sacrifices they had to make to meet this goal,” says Barnum about the twin wins. “And now their names will be on the walls of Taper Gym forever.”

Photography: Darlene Bible; Eyasu Betwos for *Fresno Sports* magazine

Read more on the teams and the games:

The Chronicle

[Girls’ basketball wins Division 2 State championship](#)

The Chronicle

[Boys’ basketball wins back-to-back Open Division State championships](#)

Los Angeles Times

[Prep Rally: Harvard-Westlake is the king and queen of high school basketball](#)

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