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Jesuit Gonzaga University basketball team ranked No. 1 in AP poll

by Tom Gallagher

NCR Today

Gonzaga University, a tiny Jesuit school in Spokane, Wash., is the new No. 1 in men's college basketball. This is the first time in the school's history to be the top-ranked team.

ESPN has the story here:

Gonzaga, the small Northwest school that consistently delivers big NCAA tournament wins, is on top of The Associated Press' Top 25 for the first time.

Riding the best record in Division I at 29-2, the Bulldogs took advantage of Indiana's loss to Minnesota last week and switched places with the Hoosiers, advancing from No. 2 and moving comfortably into the No. 1 spot Monday.

The Spokane, Wash., school best known for Bing Crosby's croons and John Stockton's passes received 51 first-place votes from the 65-member national media panel, 44 more than Indiana.

Gonzaga coach Mark Few, in anticipation of the Bulldogs being ranked No. 1 overall, told ESPN.com's Andy Katz that the historic ranking would be an "honor" for both the school and the city of Spokane.

"If they choose to do it, it's an honor," Few told Katz prior to the release of the poll. "[The No. 1 ranking] would not only be an honor for the program, it's an honor for Spokane.

"It's a big deal in Spokane, but it's not like [we're] carrying any more burden when [ranked] No. 2 or 3 or 5." Gonzaga becomes the 57th school to be ranked No. 1 since the AP poll began in January 1949. The

Bulldogs are the fifth school to hold the top slot this season.

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