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Pangos Spring Extravaganza: A look at the underclassmen

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CERRITOS, Calif. - Sunday's Pangos Spring Extravaganza event was dominated by class of 2014 and 2015 talent with the likes of five-star junior **Stanley Johnson** and four-star sophomore **Chimezie Metu**.

But while Johnson and Metu were dominating on the main court, a few class of 2016 players and even one class of 2017 prospect were busy making a name for themselves with the spotlight shining in a different direction.

One of the the 2016 players who stood out was 15U Pangos Elite big man Jayce Johnson. Johnson had a solid freshman campaign for Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei this past season, and showed signs of improvement at Cerritos College on Sunday.



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While rising junior Chimezie Metu was one of the soon-to-be upperclassman standouts, there were a number of other talented young recruits at the Pangos Spring Extravaganza.

Johnson showed flashes of improvement offensively on a couple of occasions with a nice right-handed hook shot while absorbing contact. There were times, however, when Johnson seemed overpowered by his opponent, and that's where he needs to make his biggest strides moving forward. He has one go-to move which is that right-handed hook, but if he can work on a drop-step, and a counter move, he could become an offensive force sooner rather than later.

Johnson is still very young, and the fact that he can defend the basket effectively is something to noted. He is extremely long, and is a capable shot blocker with good timing. What Johnson needs to improve on most defensively is lateral quickness with the rising popularity of the stretch-four and point-forward players.

For a freshman, Johnson is on the right path, and is in the right position to become a high-major recruit. There is nothing but upside and potential for this class of 2016 prospect.

Other class of 2016 players:

Bailey Stout, PG, Mater Dei - If there's one thing to be said about Stout, he has a great demeanor and approach to the game. He is a point guard that exudes nothing but confidence, but in a way that makes you think: This guy has "IT."

Stout started the season on varsity at Mater Dei with Johnson, seeing limited minutes early in the season. GOAZCATS.com first noticed the 6-foot-1 lead guard at the Jim Harris Memorial Tournament of Champions at Ocean View High in early December and even then he showed signs of a high basketball IQ.

As Trinity League play approached, Stout was dropped down to the junior varsity squad where he was able to dominate and refine his game. While he was clearly the best player on the JV, he still made sure to get his teammates involved which proved even further that Stout is the epitome of a pass-first floor general.

Stout's patience and ball handling are something to behold for a young player. He seems to always make the correct pass, and never ever dribbles during a possession. His passing is also wise beyond its years.

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the correct pass, and never over-undoes during a possession. His passing is also wise beyond its years. Stout looks to move the ball up the floor via the pass on the break, and can penetrate and dish to the open shooter, or hand it off to a big when help side rotates to cut off the drive.

While being unselfish is not a negative, Stout is sometimes unselfish to a fault. He has good form on his shot, but looks to get others involved more often than getting himself involved. He needs to start getting himself more looks on the offensive end.

Justin Moore, PG, San Diego (Calif.) Mission Bay - Moore, like Stout, is a stellar 2016 point guard prospect with a great feel for the game. He has good height at 6-feet-2, but his frame is extremely wiry at 155 pounds.

Despite his slight build, Moore has no fear as a scorer and playmaker. On Sunday, Moore displayed his offensive repertoire with a number of smooth jumpers and savvy drives and finishes at the rim. The freshman also showed a great handle and good blow-by speed.

Moore has a knack for finding the ball, whether it be taking control offensively, or jumping the passing lanes on defense for a quick bucket on the other end. While playing on the main court with the San Diego All-Stars, Moore's lack of strength was visible a number of times, but that is something that is easily fixed with some time in the weight room.

Spencer Freedman, PG, Willows (class of 2017) - There has been a lot of talk and hype surrounding this eighth grader, and if Sunday was any indication to how good this kid is and could be, he lives up to the hype.

Freedman is a 5-foot-10 lefty with a deadly shot. He showed that multiple times while playing with the 15U Pangos Elite on Sunday. Freedman already has deep and dead-eye 3-point range with consistency to boot. He is deceptively fast off the dribble, as well, leaving defenders in the dust with a lightning quick right-to-left crossover.

Freedman spends most of his time on the perimeter, but can maneuver his way into the paint for the dish or finish. He has no deficiency in the realm of confidence, which is necessary for him to compete at the level he is playing at.

He has just scratched the surface of his potential, and his father, Bryan, said that they have not decided where 14-year-old will begin his prep career, but that they are looking at Pacific Palisades (Calif.) Palisades High or Los Angeles (Calif.) Brentwood School as possible destinations.



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