



You are here:Home

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PANGOS ALL-AMERICAN CAMP: Alkins, Heron bag Co-Most Outstanding Players at high-level, prestigious event

Written by [Christopher Lawlor](#) | font size ●● | [Print](#) | [Email](#)

CARSON, Calif. – The intangibles often get overlooked during the recruiting process but if you ask Mario Kegler there's more that needs to be reviewed than what occurs on the court.

Kegler, a rising wing senior at national powerhouse Arlington Country Day (Jacksonville, Fla.), has demonstrated that loyalty—mostly in the face of adversity—is a character trait that coaches crave and frankly need to sustain a healthy program.

When ACD hit a rough patch last January, several players transferred but Kegler's unwavering desire to remain in Florida was a testament to his faithfulness to a program and ailing coach Rex Morgan.

Kegler, who previously attended Callaway (Jackson, Miss.), transferred in the fall of 2014 for his junior season knowing the national reputation that Morgan had forged beginning in the 1990s. Morgan, an NBA sharpshooter and starter on Jacksonville University's Final Four team in 1970, knew Kegler's game would blossom in an up-tempo style and benefit from a step up in competition.

"Rex [Morgan] is a great coach who pushes you to your limit and brings out the competitiveness in you everyday in practice," Kegler said. "As for loyalty, that's something that always struck me as finishing what you start.

"I didn't consider leaving just things were down. Our team was a family and you stick with it. Things will get better."

Recruiting is picking up for Kegler, who plays for the Mississippi Basketball Association (MBA) this summer. So far Mississippi State, Arizona State, Connecticut, Maryland, Michigan State, Baylor and Oklahoma State are atop his list but he won't whittle it down until late summer. As a junior, he averaged 23 points, 8 rebounds and 5 assists.

"Mario is a versatile player. He's committed to the team and played wherever we needed him last season. In college, he's best suited as a wing forward (or 3)," ACD assistant Jeff Merritt said.

The most intriguing addition to his suitor's list is Mississippi State, where former UCLA coach Ben Howland took over this spring.

"We've spoke three or four times," Kegler acknowledged.

That would be a recruiting coups for the Bulldogs, who need to make inroads with elite instate prospects like Kegler, who is a serious candidate for the 2016 McDonald's All-American Game.

Last weekend, he took the first steps of getting noticed for prestigious senior all-star game along with others.

Kegler was one of more than 120 prep stars to invited to the Pangos All-American Camp held on the campus of Cal State-Dominquez Hills, which

concluded Sunday after a three-day run.

Kegler was also selected to the Top 30 Cream of the Crop (All-Star) Game. Also representing ACD was 6-10 rising sophomore Kenneth Nwuba (from Nigeria), who displayed raw skills but would make a great pick-and-roll big.

Top 30

Here are the players at the Pangos All-American Camp who competed in the Top 30 all-star game (Players are listed by height, graduation year, school and location):

Bryce Aiken, 5-9, 2016, The Patrick School (Elizabeth, N.J.): A smallish point guard who can push the pace.

Isaiah Washington, 6-0, 2017, St. Raymond (Bronx, N.Y.): This backcourt dervish is one part slasher and another floor general.

*Trae Young, 6-2, 2017, Norman (Okla.): Many courtside analysts felt he was a Top-3 player at the camp. When other guards were hounding him close, he was unflappable and saw the entire court setting up his teammates.

Myles Powell, 6-2, 2016, Trenton Catholic(Hamilton Square, N.J.): The wing guard proved he is an elite player with a brilliant scoring display. More high majors should come calling.

*Rawle Alkins, 6-5, 2-16, Christ the King (Middle Village, N.Y.): New York's top rising senior is clearly a serious McDonald's All-American candidate. He do it all at both ends of the floor but his physical stature is quite impressive.

Galen Alexander, 6-6, 2017, Breau Bridge (La.): His ball handling is improved and so is his scoring. This super wing is emerging as a top-notch rising junior. Word is Alexander really has put in the extra time and it shows.

Sam Cunliffe, 6-7, 2016, Rainier Beach (Seattle): He's a big-time, wiry wing who can drop the three-ball with consistency but has shifty moves that allow him to change direction and accelerate in blink of an eye. Gonzaga really covets Cunliffe's signature on a NLI.

Mario Kegler, 6-7, 2016, Arlington Country Day (Jacksonville, Fla.): The Mississippi native has an all-around game but will wind up on the wing at the next level.

Omari Spellman, 6-8, 2016, MacDuffie School (Granby, Mass.): The Villanova commit can protect the rim and score in bunches from the post. He has a physical presence in the middle. Spellman had the dunk of the camp on Saturday night when he posterized a big from Los Angeles.

Billy Preston, 6-9, 2019, Prime Prep (Dallas): One of the most athletic bigs from the junior class.

M.J. Cage, 6-9, 2016, Mater Dei (Santa Ana, Calif.): Yes, he is the son of the former NBA player, Michael Cage, and is athletic and a strong 4.

De'Ron Davis, 6-9, 2016, Overland (Aurora, Colo.): The Pac-12 and Big 12 are all over this power forward. Davis is a matchup problem with skills around the basket. His passing skills are solid for a big and can handle it on the perimeter.

Barrett Benson, 6-10, 2016, Hinsdale South (Darien, Ill.): His recent physical maturity is noticeable. Benson is a true 5 with good hands and strength in the post. Colleges are lining up for him.

Nate Morris, 6-10, 2-16, Lancaster (Dallas, Texas): He can contest shots on defense and has solid post up moves.

*Mohammed Bamba, 6-10, Westtown School (West Chester, Pa.): Several high-majors are sniffing around but Villanova might be the most interested in the local product. He's a center who has improved greatly from last summer and was named an MVP in the all-star camp game.

Shamorie Ponds, 6-1, 2-16, Jefferson (Brooklyn, N.Y.): Ponds has nearly 20 offers and that's because his range beyond the arc seems NBA-like. He's a left-handed combo guard who has a good feel directing the offense and not afraid to hoist the big shot.

Spencer Freedman, 6-1, 2018, Santa Monica (Calif.): He'll be a sophomore but Freeman had a coming out party last weekend against some of the nation's elite guards. The lefty can shoot it with consistency from three-point range and is deceptively quick.

Lamar Peters, 6-1, 2016, Landry-Walker (New Orleans): The Louisiana point guard is gaining traction nationally but he's getting the most interest from Mississippi State and recently hired coach Ben Howland. The lefty is in charge on the floor and makes intelligent decisions. He also possesses slippery moves and hips that swivel to shake defenders.

Tyree Crump, 6-2, 2016, Bainbridge (Ga.): The George recruit is a combo guard with exceptional offensive skills.

*Ethan Thompson, 6-4, 2017, Bishop Montgomery (Torrance, Calif.): Possesses a nice stroke from three-point range and plus-ball-handling skills.

*Mustapha Heron, 6-5, 2016, Sacred Heart (Waterbury Conn.): One of two top players at the camp. He recently de-committed from Pittsburgh and is back showcasing his high-major skills. The 2-guard is athletic, durable and top-notch defender. He's a McDonald's All-American was co-Most Outstanding Player at Pangos. Moving forward, St. John's may become a key player in his recruiting process.

Terrance Ferguson, 6-6, Prime Prep (Dallas): This guy is a high-flyer with an arsenal of dunks. Excels in transition, attacks the rim and is a deep threat shooter.

Cameron McGriff, 6-6, 2016, South Grand Prairie (Grand Prairie TX): At 6-7, McGriff is likely 2 or 3 at the next level. His athleticism is palpable and so is his ability to knock down shots and defend inside. He has offers from Oklahoma, Creighton, Arkansas and Houston but SMU and Virginia Tech are closing in.

T.J. Leaf, 6-9, 2016, Foothills Christian (El Cajon Calif.): The Arizona-bound power forward was a favorite at camp. Simply put he did it all and it's easy to see that he is a coach's son. Leaf has long arms that are his biggest allies on defense. He's an inside-outside player with exceptional offensive skills.

P.J. Washington, 6-7, 2017, Findlay Prep (Henderson Nev.): The tall Texan has a wingspan of 7-1. Since transferring to Findlay, he's improved his face-up game, defense, handle and lateral quickness. His star is rising.

Vance Jackson, 6-8, 2016, St. John Bosco (Bellflower, Calif.): He's an intelligent player with good court sense and makes good decisions. He's also a three-point threat on all possessions.

Ira Lee, 6-8, 2017, Sierra Canyon School (Chatsworth, Calif.): One the West Coast's top post players, the rising junior was explosive in an up-tempo game and defended well in the post. He attacks the offensive glass and a knack for blocking shots with instinctive timing.

Xavier Tillman, 6-8, 2017, Forest Hills Central (Grand Rapids Mich.): A selfless, energetic player with a high basketball IQ, Tillman is fielding multiple offers. He has great bloodline, mom played at Michigan. The power forward is active in the post and is one of the hardest working players at the camp.

Javin Montgomery-DeLaurier, 6-9, 2016, St. Anne-Belfield (Charlottesville, Va.): His game has really exploded and that was exactly an apt way to describe his game at camp. The rising senior post is a double-double regular with exceptional grades. Everyone is on him including the Ivies.

Taurean Thompson, 6-10, 2016, St. Anthony (Jersey City, N.J.): The New York resident is one of the nation's most improved players. He runs the floor well, defends the post and has an exceptional mid-range shot but is three go-to post moves from becoming the nation's top center. Xavier, Rutgers, SMU, Rice, Richmond, Saint Joseph's, Temple and Arizona State are most interested in Thompson, an honors student.

Top 60 Cream of the Crop Game

The next 30 players from camp also participated in an all-star game:

Alani Moore, 5-9, 2016, Montrose Christian (Rockville Md.); Jamir Harris, 6-2, 2017, The Patrick School (Elizabeth, N.J.); Leland Green, 6-3, 2016, Redondo Union (Redondo Beach Calif.); Christian Popoola Jr., 6-4, 2017, Lone Peak (Highland, Utah); Malik Crowfield, 6-4, 2016, Riverside Academy (Reserve, La.); Eric Hester, 6-4, 2016, Oldsmar (Fla.) Christian; Keith Williams, 6-4, 2017, Bishop Loughlin (Brooklyn N.Y.); Javonnatie Jackson, 6-6, 2016, Compton (Calif.); Curtis Hollis, 6-6, 2016, Mansfield (Texas) Summit; Chuba Ohams, 6-7, 2016, Wadleigh School (Bronx, N.Y.); Tim Harrison, 6-8, 2016; Parker (San Diego); Mamadi Diakite, 6-9, 2016, Blue Ridge School (Dyke, Va.); Theo John, 6-9, 2016, Champlin Park (Brooklyn Park, Minn.); Bol Bol, 6-10, 2018, Bishop Miege (Roeland Park, Kan.); Trevor Stanback, 6-10, 2016, Maranatha (Pasadena, Calif.); Brandon McCoy, 6-10, Morse (San Diego Calif.).

Wolfgang Novogratz, 6-2, 2016, Harvard-Westlake (North Hollywood Calif.); James Scott, 6-3, 2016, Pope John XIII (Sparta N.J.); Renathan Ona-Embo, 6-3, 2017, Balboa Prep (San Diego); Skylar Mays, 6-4, 2016, Southern Lab (Baton Rouge La.); Top 60 MVP Cassius Stanley, 6-4, 2019, Sierra Canyon School (Chatsworth, Calif.); Victor Bailey, 6-4, 2017, McNeil (Austin, Texas); Mitchell Ballock, 6-4, 2017, Eudora, Kan.; Walter Whyte, 6-5, 2017, St. Luke's (New Canaan Conn.); De'Riante Jenkins, 6-6, 2016, West Oaks Academy (Orlando, Fla.); Andre Rafus, 6-8, 2017, St. Benedict's (Newark N.J.); Oliver Powell, 6-8, 2016, Rowlett (Texas); O'Shae Brissett, 6-8, 2017, Findlay Prep (Henderson Nev.); Ike Anigbogu, 6-9, 2-16, Corona (Calif.) Centennial; Harrison Henderson, 6-10, 2016, South Grand Prairie (Grand Prairie, Texas); Henry Welsh, 6-10, 2016, Loyola (Los Angeles); Solomon Ruddell, 7-0, 2017, The Hill School (Pottstown, Pa.).

*** Denotes a player who garnered camp honors**



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Christopher Lawlor is a Senior Writer for Blue Media and compiles the Blue Star Go-To 25 national boys and girls high school basketball rankings during the season. Lawlor, an award-winning writer, is a voting committee member and advisor for several national high school events, including the McDonald's All-American Games. He previously wrote for USA

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