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Top O.C. players to watch in the boys basketball playoffs

February 14, 2016 3:11 PM

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By STEVE FRYER
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OCVarsity lists Orange County's top players to watch in the CIF-SS boys basketball playoffs.

TOP PLAYERS

(listed alphabetically)

Evan Battey, Villa Park: Upon first glance at this 6-foot-7, 235-pound junior, one might think "football player" when first seeing Battey. Once he starts playing, there is no doubt he is a heck of a basketball player. Surprising quick and nimble with an accurate outside shot, Battey is averaging 25 points a game.

MJ Cage, Mater Dei: The 6-foot-10 senior perhaps has played his best over the past two weeks. Cage, who signed with Oregon, strung together three standout efforts against in Mater Dei wins over Santa Margarita, Shadow Mountain of Phoenix and Foothills Christian of El Cajon.

Isaac Douglass, Yorba Linda: A couple of leagues have sure-thing league players of the year. Douglass is going to be North Hills League player of the year. Douglass, a 6-4 senior who signed with Hope International University, is a terrific all-around scorer. He is averaging 18 points and eight rebounds a game.

Spencer Freedman, Mater Dei: The Monarchs have had several outstanding point guards over the years. Few of them have been as multi-skilled as Freedman. A 6-foot-1 sophomore guard, is a fine shooter who especially shines when it comes to busting a press or leading a fastbreak.

Sebastian Much, JSerra: Much is much better than he was two years ago at St. Margaret's. Now a junior, Much played his sophomore year at Archbishop Mitty of San Jose which he helped reach the CIF State finals. He is averaging 18 points a game for the Lions.

Kezie Okpala, Esperanza: He is sort of the Kevin Durant of county basketball – lean, long and offensively lethal from any spot on the court. He will make the open 3-pointer. Cover him out there and Okpala, a 6-foot-6 junior, can dribble-drive to the basket like a 5-11 guard.

Kaden Rasheed, Santa Margarita: He is the Eagles best and most-consistent outside shooter. Rasheed, a junior guard, is averaging 15 points a game. Santa Margarita's offense can flex the muscle if Rasheed makes some early 3-pointers.

Joseph Riley, Orange Lutheran: One of the county's more-improved players from last season to this season, Riley runs the Lutheran offense like a good point guard should. He has become a reliable 3-point shooter, too. Riley could be erratic last year, but has become a steady player this year.

Trey Smith, Saddleback Valley Christian: Scorers figure out a way to their points. Smith is a scorer who finds

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a way. A 6-2 junior guard, Smith has a fine outside jump shot and is quick to the basket. He is among county scoring leaders at 26 points a game.

Eyassu Worku, Los Alamitos: He is a leading candidate for Orange County player of the year. Worku, a 6-2 senior who signed with UC Irvine, is averaging 25 points, 7 rebounds and five assists a game.

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