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Recognizing top sophs in SoCal shouldn't be tough

Written on May 12, 2016 by [Frank Burlison](#)

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LAGUNA NIGUEL, Ca. – If the BurlisonOnBasketball SoCal all-Class of 2018 looks familiar, it should:

Ten of the players 12 first-team selections were on the squad a year ago – when the Class of 2018 was made up of freshmen.

And there is one more thing this squad has in common with the one selected after the 2014-15 season:

There is the same player of the Year.

And **Riley Battin** was even better as a sophomore than he was a year ago, when he averaged 21.9 points and 10.5 rebounds for an Oak Park team that was beaten in the second round of the CIF Southern Section IAA playoffs.

Battin averaged 24.3 points, 14.1 rebounds and 3.1 assists per game for a team that went 28-7 while knocking off La Verne Bonita in the Southern Section 3AA championship game and then losing to Chino Hills Ayala in the semifinal of the State Southern Regional D-III playoffs.

The 12-player first team (including Battin) follows, along with the 12-player second team:

Player of the Season

Riley Battin 6-8 Oak Park

Frank Says: There will be better runners, jumpers, dunkers and shot blockers among California “biggs” next season. But none will rebound better or have as many polished offensive skills as does Battin.

The rest (alphabetically)

Meet Frank

Frank Burlison is a well-regarded basketball writer who was inducted into the U.S. Basketball Writers Association Hall of Fame in 2005. His opinions on the potential of high school and college players are widely respected and sought by college coaches and NBA scouts, personnel directors and general managers from coast to coast. Oh, yes – he can offer plenty of thoughts on movies, television and pop music. Yes, he can rank those, too. Hint: He's a big The Godfather, Larry Sanders, The Wire and The Beatles loyalist.



To learn more about Frank's scouting services, [click here](#).

Endorsements

“I've known Frank since he was a student at Long Beach State and no writer ever worked harder at studying and understanding basketball. When I was coaching I always put more stock into what he said about (high school) players than anyone I knew. As far as I'm concerned, he's the best there is at evaluating the potential of basketball players.”

Lute Olson, Hall of Fame and NCAA Championship Winning Coach

"I have known Frank for 15 years and there is no one outside of those in the Clippers' organization that I trust more than Frank when it comes to player evaluations."

Neil Olshey, Portland Trail Blazers' General Manager

“Frank Burlison has always been a proponent of my talent and, even more so, of my potential – far before it was evident to most. Even as a smaller and determined player who was being overlooked by most high-major colleges and national scouting services, Frank always served as a friendly voice who got me into the door to most events to help me prove my talents.”

Russell Westbrook, the No. 4 overall selection in the 2008 NBA Draft out of UCLA and an all-star guard for the Oklahoma City Thunder

To see what other people in basketball are saying about Frank, [click here](#).

Wayne Arnold 6-3 Compton Dominguez

Frank Says: There may be more accurate jump shooters in this class. But there isn't a player in this group that gets the same kind of elevation as Arnold does by the time he releases his shot.

Jules Bernard 6-4 Los Angeles Windward

Frank Says: The left hander is among the most versatile players in this class. Once his jump shot gains consistency, he'll be an even more difficult player to defend.

Matt Bradley 6-5 San Bernardino

Frank Says: Bradley has an impressive combination of power and perimeter skill, with the strength and pop in his legs to cram on opponents' heads or knock in mid- and deep-range jumpers.

Taeshon Cherry 6-8 San Diego St. Augustine

Frank Says: Cherry helped the Saints advance to the San Diego Section's Open Division final (where they lost to Foothills Christian) and then helped them knock off Corona Centennial and Eastvale Roosevelt before losing to Encino Crespi in the State Southern D-I semifinals.

Spencer Freedman 6-1 Santa Ana Mater Dei

Frank Says: The left-handed point guard was the co-Most Outstanding Player (with University of Oregon-bound teammate **Michael Cage Jr.**) and a first-team all-CIF Southern Section Open Division selection in his first season after playing as a freshman at Santa Monica.

Jordan Guest 6-7 Rancho Santa Margarita Santa Margarita

Frank Says: Guest showed much improvement over his freshman season – when he was still pretty good – while helping the Eagles finish third in the Trinity League and earn a spot in the Southern Section's Open Division playoff bracket.

Jeremiah Martin 6-6 San Bernardino Cajon

Frank Says: He's not yet quite the jump shooter that the other San Bernardino-based player on this list (**Matt Bradley**) is. But he's every bit – if not more – aggressive than is the Cajon standout and may be even more vertically explosive.

Miles Norris 6-8 Chula Vista Mater Dei

Frank Says: He doesn't seem to have the most assertive of personalities. Once that element comes into the play – in combination with an immense set of skills – he could evolve into the best college prospect in the SoCal class.

Wes Slajchert 6-4 Oak Park

Frank Says: The evolution from “a very good scorer who handles and passes pretty well” to “a point guard who also scores very well” was nearly complete this past season. And that was a big reason why the Eagles won a Southern Section title.

David Singleton 6-4 Torrance Bishop Montgomery

Frank Says: Singleton is not only the best “scorer” in this class but he could be the best “scorer” in Southern California next season, regardless of class standing.

Brandon Williams 6-0 Encino Crespi

Frank Says: He's been an all-Southern Section in each of his first two seasons for a program