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## Mater Dei prevails against strong Ron Massey field

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

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LYNWOOD, Ca. – The third annual, two-day Ron Massey Memorial Fall Hoops Classic will eventually be looked upon as quite the primer for the 2016-17 boys Southern California basketball season.

Twenty-seven teams, including one from outside the SoCal confines (Las Vegas Bishop Gorman), participated in the event that began Saturday afternoon and wrapped up Sunday evening with the championship game of an eight-team tournament.

That field included seven squads that almost assuredly will be part of the 16-squad CIF Southern Section's Open Division playoff field at the end of upcoming regular season, as well as Nevada- and regional power Bishop Gorman.

And Coach **Gary McKnight's** Santa Ana Mater Dei Monarchs were the last team standing – and posing for the championship picture that tournament officials quickly posted on the Internet – after knocking off Torrance Bishop Montgomery, 62-55.

Senior forward **Justice Sueing** led the way with 25 points while junior point guard **Spencer Freedman** added five points and team highs in rebounds (eight) and assists (five).

Sophomore point guard **Gianni Hunt** scored 19 of his team-high 22 points after intermission for the Knights while senior guard **Ethan Thompson** added 16 points.

Noteworthy, though, was that Bishop Montgomery reached the championship game minus two starters – each an all-Southern Section last season – in San Diego State-bound forward **Jordan Schakel** (recovering from a summer knee procedure) and junior guard **David Singleton** (a hairline fracture in his right foot was discovered early Sunday morning).

Schakel didn't play all weekend but Singleton had 26 points in the team's opening-round win over Eastvale Roosevelt (73-64) Saturday night before the Sunday morning trip to the ER to check on the sore foot.

Each is expected to be fine, physically, long before the start of the regular season.

### 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](#).

Thompson scored 13 points and junior forward **Fletcher Tynen** added 12 in the Knight's 48-44 win over Bishop Gorman earlier Sunday afternoon while **Charles O'Bannon Jr.** and **Christian Popoola Jr.** scored 14 and 11 points, respectively for the Gaels.

Bishop Montgomery – which could have the deepest roster of quality players in California this season – got strong efforts from sophomore forward **Will Crawford** and junior **Cyrus Johnson** (the son of the 1977 John R. Wooden Award-winning **Marques Johnson**, who played for UCLA and also was an NBA all-star before turning to a career in broadcasting).

Mater Dei had double-digit deficits in the first half of its games with Crespi on Saturday evening and Corona Centennial Sunday morning before pulling away for 68-52 and 67-57 victories.

Besides those turned in by Sueing and Freedman, the Monarchs also got strong efforts over the weekend from 6-4 junior **Harrison Butler** (21 points vs. Crespi; two spectacular “And 1” dunks vs. Centennial; nine points vs. Bishop Montgomery) and 6-3 freshman **Aidan Prukop** (three 3s vs. Bishop Montgomery).

In third-place game, Bishop Gorman trailed of the first half before knocking off Centennial, 77-68, as 6-7 junior **Jarvis Thomas** did a lot of rim-crunching while scoring a game-high 21 points.

Six-nine, UCLA-bound senior **Jalen Hill** scored 20 for Centennial, including some forceful finishes of his own.

Six-five **Charles O'Bannon**, one of the best “big guards/wings” in the national Class of 2017, didn't play in the third-place game as Bishop Gorman Coach **Grant Rice** used that tilt as an opportunity to give a lot of playing time to reserves and newcomers.

Encino Crespi picked up a couple of down-to-the-wire victories Sunday over Long Beach Poly and Eastvale Roosevelt to finish fifth in the tournament.

Junior guard **Taj Regans** got a steal and turned it into a 3-ponter with five seconds to go in the Celtics' 49-47 victory in the fifth-place semifinal with the Jackrabbits. Regans led all scorers with 18 points.

And, despite trailing by four points with about 40 seconds to go, Crespi got a layup by **Kyle Dosa** for the win against Roosevelt.

Earlier on Sunday Roosevelt saw a well-into-double-figures advantage get whipped out by Santa Margarita.

But 6-6 **Matt Mitchell** (who didn't play Saturday night because he was on a recruiting visit) scored on a five-footer with 1.4 seconds to go for a 75-73 win.

Mitchell – one of the better “uncommitted” college prospects in the SoCal Class of 2017 – scored 24 points while teammate **Jemarl Baker** (he's committed to Cal) added 19 points.

Sophomore forward **Jake Kyman** had a big Sunday for Santa Margarita, scoring 24 points against Roosevelt and 20 in the 60-42 win over Long Beach Poly for seventh place.

An “NBA-flavored” matchup took place in the “showcase” game in which Santa Monica Crossroads knocked off Beverly Hills, 44-31.

Six-nine junior **Sharrief O'Neal** scored 15 points the winner and 6-6 senior **Ronald Artest III** had 14 for Beverly Hills.

I'll let you figure out who their respective fathers are.

My “unofficial” all-Ron Massey Memorial Fall Hoops Classic selections:

(note: Only players from the eight-team tournament were considered, and among those each must have played in all three of his team's games)

Most Outstanding Player: **Justice Sueing** (6-6 Mater Dei/Sr.)

All-Tourney (alphabetical): **Jemarl Baker** (6-4 Roosevelt/Sr.); **Jamal Bey** (6-6 Bishop Gorman/Jr.); **Harrison Butler** (6-4 Mater Dei/Jr.); **Spencer Freedman** (6-0 Mater Dei/Jr.); **Jalen Hill** (6-9 Centennial/Sr.); **Gianni Hunt** (6-1 Bishop Montgomery/So.); **Jake Kyman** (6-7 Santa Margarita/So.); **Christian Popoola Jr.** (6-4 Bishop Gorman/Sr.); **Taj Regans** (5-8 Crespi/Jr.) and **Ethan Thompson** (6-4 Bishop Montgomery/Sr.).

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