



Las Vegas Sun

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Tarkanian Classic gives local teams quality games vs. visiting opponents



[Steve Marcus](#)

Scouts watch from tables against the back wall of the gym during a game between Clark High School and national powerhouse Mater Dei High School (Santa Ana, Calif.) during the Tarkanian Classic at Bishop Gorman High School Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013.

Thu, Dec 15, 2016 (2 a.m.)

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Las Vegas Sun's Ray Brewer, Jesse Granger and Case Keefer wonder if Bishop Gorman can keep up its run of basketball state championships in what looks like a season loaded with strong opposition.

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The Jerry Tarkanian Classic high school basketball tournament continues to attract some of the nation's top teams and players.

The event, now in its fifth season, was partially created so host Bishop Gorman could get games against respected out-of-state programs without traveling. Now, other Las Vegas-area teams are also getting a crack at the notable schools. It begins today.

At 7:40 p.m. Saturday, Centennial faces Sierra Canyon of California — the nation's No. 1-ranked team. Last season, Centennial missed a shot at the buzzer in the Sunset Regional championship game against Gorman, meaning getting quality reps against a team of Gorman's caliber in December will help the Bulldogs in the postseason.

Double-digit other local teams — such as Desert Pines, Clark, Coronado, Agassi Prep and Faith Lutheran — are in this year's field. The event will be scouted by the likes of Kansas' Bill Self and Oregon's Dana Altman.

“It's great for our kids and school to play a school considered the best in the nation,” Centennial coach Noah Hartsock said. “It's great exposure for us and gets us ready to compete the rest of the year.”

Organizers expect a packed gym to watch a who's who of top college recruits, including Centennial's Troy Brown Jr., who last month signed with Oregon.

The group is highlighted by brothers LaMelo and LiAngelo Ball of Chino Hills (Calif.). Their older brother, UCLA's Lonzo Ball, is one of the nation's best college players. Chino Hills plays Clark of Las Vegas at 2:40 p.m. Friday, meaning another local team will get a marquee game.

Shareef O'Neal (Shaq's son) of Crossroads in Southern California is another player to watch. Crossroads is coached by Chad Beeten, who led Clark to three Nevada state championships through last season.

Other notable players include: Brandon McCoy of Cathedral Catholic (Calif.), a top-10 recruit for the class of 2017 who has UNLV in his final five; Marvin Bagley, the top player for the class of 2018, with Sierra Canyon; and Spencer Freedman of Mater Dei.

The tournament is at various local gyms. On Monday, some of the action shifts to the Orleans Arena.

Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$6 for students and children. [For more information, visit the tournament’s website.](#)

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