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GOLD DIVISION SEMIFINALISTS DOMINATE CROSSOVER WEDNESDAY

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by Frank Burlison

LA VERNE, Ca. – Three of the four Gold Division championship semifinalists in the first Classic at Damien Tournament won “crossover” – against teams outside of their tourney divisions – Wednesday at Damien High.

The event hosts Damien Spartans improved to 14-0 by toppling Pasadena La Salle (which is in a Bronze Division semifinal Thursday), 79-55, behind 19 points apiece from senior **Justin Hemsley** and junior **Elijah McCullough**.

The Spartans play Eastvale Roosevelt (which didn’t play a crossover – or “cross-bracket” – game) in the first Gold semifinal at 7 o’clock Thursday night.

Top-seed Santa Ana Mater Dei improved to 14-1 with its 100-68 decision over Palmdale Knight.

The Monarchs were more than a bit sluggish – especially on the defensive end – and was in front just 44-42 at intermission.

But they ramp things up considerably, at both ends of the floor, and quickly pumped their lead into double figures and led by 20 going into the fourth quarter before Coach **Gary McKnight** began going deeper into his bench than he has had the opportunity to in a few weeks.

Junior guard **Spencer Freedman** was one of five Mater Dei players to score in double figures, leading the way with 20 points (all but two of those via six 3-pointers).

Corona Centennial (which faces the Monarchs at 8:30 in the second of those semifinals) had a struggle with Claremont (Silver Division) – a la Mater Dei in the prior game – before cruising in the second half for an 84-64 win to improve to 12-2 as senior **Gio Nelson** scored 24 points and freshman **Jaylen** Clark added 18.

Woodland Hills Taft, the No. 1 seed in the Silver Division, cruised past Pico Rivera El Rancho (Bronze Division), 79-33, as center **Antwan January** led the way with 20 points. The Toreadors play Compton Dominguez in a semifinal at 5:30 Thursday.

In other crossover results:

*Etiwanda 55, La Canada 54. **Dylan Gaines**' tip-in at buzzer enabled the Eagles to avert an upset.

*Bellflower St. John Bosco 89, West Covina 64. **Makani Whiteside** (SJB) 24 and **J.J. Watson** (SJB) 16. **Nick Hart** and **Darian Nickols** (WC), both 16.

*Temecula Rancho Christian 61, Fontana Kaiser 58. **Isaiah Mobley** (RC) 17. **Kenneth Smith** (K) 19.

*San Dimas 56, Playa del Rey St. Bernard 44. **Donnell Leffridge** IV (SD) 17. **Mook Harris** (SB) 16.

*Ontario Colony 84, Rialto 52. **Sedric Altman** and **Siah Mack** (C), both 16. **Derrion Thomas** and **Tim Key** (R), both 15.

*Palmdale Highland 70, Buckeye (AZ) Verrado 48: **Deshay Gipson** (H) 25, **Justin Douglas** (H) 16. **Shaun Wahlstrom** and **Jackson Morton** (V), both 13.

*San Luis Obispo Mission Prep 67, Alta Loma 46. **Vince Ricigliano** (MP) 14.

*Rancho Cucamonga 75, Victorville Victory Valley 36.

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