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MATER DEI, VISTA, HESPERIA PICK UP CLASSIC AT DAMIEN TITLES

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by Devin Ugland

by Frank Burlison

LA VERNE, Ca. – The Mater Dei High Monarchs turned in a near-impeccable second half Friday night to knock off the host school's squad, 82-63, in the Gold Division championship game of the first-ever Classic at Damien tournament.

Junior point guard **Spencer Freedman** was the division's Most Valuable Player and was joined on the 18-player all-tournament team by three Mater Dei teammates, seniors **Justice Sueing** and **Matt Weyand**, and junior **Harrison Butler**.





Mater Dei point guard Spencer Freedman looks to dish to a teammate Friday night in the Monarchs win over Damien

in the Classic at Damien Gold Division Championship.

Capturing the two other division championships in the 48-team event were Vista in the Silver (60-52 over Woodland Hills Taft) and Hesperia in the Bronze (38-33 over La Canada).

The host Spartans (which suffered their first loss 15 wins, including bracket victories over Hayward Moreau Catholic, Long Beach Poly and Eastvale Roosevelt) jumped out to a 6-zip advantage via consecutive 3s by senior guard **Ezekiel Alley**.

But the Monarchs (16-1), after a few early turnovers, were able to pretty much get any shot they wanted either against the Damien zone, or when the Spartans went to their man-to-man and full-court pressure.

Elijah McCullough hit a 3 at the buzzer to get the Spartans to within 36-31 at intermission in front of the capacity crowd watching the programs coached by the two winningest coaches in California history (**Gary McKnight** of Mater Dei and **Mike LeDuc** of Damien).





Damien guard Ezekiel Alley shoots over Mater Dei forward Reagan Lundeen Friday night in the Classic at Damien Gold Division Championship game.

But the Monarchs scored the first 11 points of the third quarter and eventually hit 10 of 13 shots from the field to take a 55-38 score into the fourth quarter.

Six Monarchs scored in double figures (led by Butler's 14 points) and a seventh, reserve center **Miles Brookins**, added eight.

All-tournament choices **Alley** (21) and **Cameron Shelton** (18) combined for 39 points for the Spartans.

Junior point guard **Taurus Samuels** scored 14 points with four rebounds and four assists while making multiple "critical" plays down the stretch to help Vista (12-2) pull away from top seed Taft (11-4), and capture the Silver Division championship.

Junior center **Antwan January** scored 19 points with nine rebounds and two blocked

shots for Taft.

Bronze Division Most Valuable Player **Levontay Ott** scored 12 points for Hesperia (10-4) while teammate **Jaydon Everett** – also selected to the all-tournament team – added 11 as the Scorpions edged La Canada.

Ott made the key defensive play of the contest. With his team clinging to a two-point advantage, he picked off a pass and was fouled with 19.3 seconds to go.

He sank both free throws and, after La Canada air-balled a 3-point attempt, Everett tacked on a free throw for the final scoring of the game.

A look at the other games played Friday:

GOLD

Third: Roosevelt 66, Centennial 64. Top scorers – **Matt Mitchell** (R) 28. **Jalen Clark** (C) 19.

Fifth: Birmingham 85, Long Beach Poly 81 (OT). Top scorers – **Zafir Williams** (LBP) 33. **Deschon Winston** (B) 26.

Seventh: Etiwanda 46, St. John Bosco 40. Top scorers – **Miles Oliver** (E) 18. **Makani Whiteside** (SJB) 20.

Consolation: Alemany 75, Santa Monica 63. Top scorers – **D.J. McDonald** (A) 25. **De'sean Allen-Eikens** (SM) 17.

11th : Oak Park 63, Rancho Christian 58. Top scorers – **Wes Slajchert** (OP) 24. **Solomon Davis** (RC) 27.

13th: Las Vegas Centennial 79, Hayward Moreau Catholic 55. Top scorers – **Troy Brown** (C) 27. **Kyree Walker** (MC) 25.

15th: Crespi def. Lynwood, forfeit.

SILVER

Third: Dominguez 72, Los Altos 66. Top scorers – **Wayne Arnold** (D) 25. **Jarod Lucas** (LA) 22.

Fifth: Windward 70, Leuzinger 57. Top scorers – **Damani Washington** (L) 33. **Jules**

Bernard (W) 26.

Seventh: Claremont 70, Rancho Cucamonga 64. Top scorer – **Kyle Scalamini** (C) 19.

Consolation: Colony 48, Rancho Verde 46. Top scorers – **Alex Ochoa** (C) 14. **Jaxen Turner** (RV) 17.

11th: Palmdale Highland 76, Long Beach Jordan 56. Top scorers – **Justin Miller** (H) 32. **Cocoa Chatman** (LBJ) 16.

13th: San Luis Obispo Mission Prep 56, L.A. Price 38. Top scorer – **Jackson Willhite** (MP) 18.

15th : Playa del Rey St. Bernard 50, Palmdale Knight 48. Top scorer – **Malcolm Bray** (SB) 12.

BRONZE

Third: La Salle 69, Diamond Bar 66. Top scorers – **Darius Henderson** (LS) 20. **Myles Corey** (DB) 25.

Fifth: West Covina 69, Kaiser 66. Top scorers – **Nick Hart** (WC) 49 (yes! FORTY-NINE). **Dylan Harris** (K) 26.

Seventh: La Sierra 46, San Dimas 40. Top scorers – **Jerod Elliott** (LS) 18. **Ronny Rafeh** (SD) 16.

Consolation: Silverado 56, Victorville Victor Valley 39. Top scorers – **Jalen Hartwell** (S) 14. **Eimaj Jones** and **Paul Reddic** (VV) 9 each.

11th: Valencia Trinity Classical 56, Alta Loma 51. Top scorers – **Tyler Lee** (TC) 18. **Justin Neaves** (AL) 12.

13th: Verrado (AZ) 61, Pomona 50. Top scorers – **Jacob De La Torre** (V) 18. **Omar Perez** (P) 15.

15th: Rialto 77, El Rancho 65. Top scorers – **Derrion Thomas** (R) 33. **Noah Losoya** (ER) 28.

