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Suggestion: Buy your SS Open semifinal tickets NOW!

Written on February 22, 2017 by [Frank Burlison](#)

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LAGUNA NIGUEL, Ca. – In essence, it's "one-stop shopping" for those wanting to see the four best high school basketball teams in California in a three-hour or so stretch of one night and in one building.

The CIF Southern Section's administrative decision of a few weeks ago to book the section's Open Division championship semifinals USC's Galen Center – with its seating capacity of 10,800 – proved astute Tuesday night when the division's top four seeds each won their respective second-round games.

The victories set up a Friday night 7 o'clock game between top seed Chatsworth Sierra Canyon (27-1) and No. 4 Torrance Bishop Montgomery (25-2), followed by clash between No. 2 Chino Hills (29-1) and No. 3 Santa Ana Mater Dei (30-1) at approximately 8:30.

According to the Southern Section, as of early Wednesday afternoon approximately 3,500 tickets had already been sold.

Advance purchase tickets for adults (\$15) can be purchased on-line at www.galentix.com.

Student tickets (must show valid ID) and children (ages 5 to 13) are \$10, with children younger than 5 admitted free. Those tickets can only be purchased on Friday at the Galen Center box office (3400 Figueroa at the corner of Jefferson and Figueroa).

On-site parking is \$12.

Each of the aforementioned programs reached the Southern Section's Open Division semifinals a year ago, with Sierra Canyon upending Bishop Montgomery (78-69, at Simi Valley High) and Chino Hills smashing Mater Dei (102-54, at Ayala High in Chino Hills).

Eight days later Chino Hills rolled past Sierra Canyon (105-83) in the Honda Center in the championship game then powered its way to four more wins and a state title to finish 35-0 as the **Lonzo Ball**-propelled squad proved to be one of the most dominant teams in California history.

Ball has led UCLA to a 24-3 record en route to his being one of the first few players selected in the June 22 NBA Draft.

But many of the same on-court "faces" of the four programs remain the same a year later.

Chino Hills returned four starters in Ball's brothers, senior **LiAngelo** and sophomore **LaMelo**, as well as 6-foot-5 mega-athlete **Eli Scott** and 6-9 **Onyeka Okongwu** – the best

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](#).

“big” sophomore in the western portion of the USA.

ishop Montgomery returned each of its five starters, led by 6-5 **Ethan Thompson**, a strong candidate for State Player of the Year.

Sierra Canyon welcomed back four starters, including three-time all-CIF forward **Cody Riley**.

Me

Spencer Freedman – the best junior point guard in California and first-team all-Open Division as a sophomore – was the only returning “full-time” starter for Mater Dei Coach **Gary McKnight**.

But now-seniors **Justice Sueing**, **Matt Weyand** and **Miles Brookins**, as well as current juniors **Harrison Butler** and **Michael Wang**, also started at times or often played “starters’ minutes” for Mater Dei a year ago.

Among the newcomers for the respective programs, the most notable are **Steph Gilling**, who took over as Chino Hills’ head coach last spring when **Steve Baik** became the head guy at L.A. Fairfax, and two players.

And it’s those two juniors who have created so much buzz about these semifinal “power” showdowns.

Six-nine **Marvin Bagley III**, who was ineligible after he transferred to Sierra Canyon in early January of last year, has made his impact on the Trailblazers this season as befitting a player considered one of the two best prospects (along with **Zion Williamson** of South Carolina) in the national Class of 2018.

And, since transferring to Mater Dei (from Kansas City) and making his debut in a Monarchs’ uniform on Jan. 20, 7-2 **Bol Bol** (the son of the late NBA player, **Manute Bol**) has played in 10 games while averaging 17.8 points, 8.5 rebounds and 3.1 blocked shots per game.

Bol wasn’t with the program when the Monarchs fell to Chino Hills, 84-73, in the Dec. 20 championship game of the National Division of the Tarkanian Classic at Bishop Gorman High in Las Vegas.

Of course, the championship game of the Southern Section’s Open Division (scheduled for March 4 in the Honda Center in Anaheim) will not mean that these four squads have seen the last of each other.

They almost assuredly will be the top four seeds – the order as a result of what happens on Friday night and March 4 – in the Southern portion of the Open Division when the state playoffs begin on the second week of March.

So that means that the ultimate winner on the night of March 4 is likely going to have to knock off some combination of two of the other three current SS semifinalists just to represent the South in the state championship game – quite the task, indeed.

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