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## Monarchs close the 23rd Nike X with strong effort

Written on February 4, 2018 by [Frank Burlison](#)

SANTA ANA, Ca. – The host Mater Dei High Monarchs turned in perhaps their most impressive performance of the season Saturday night in the finale of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Nike Extravaganza in front of approximately 2,200 in the Meruelo Athletic Center.

Coach **Gary McKnight's** club – rounding into form for the Feb. 16 start of the CIF Southern Section Open Division playoffs – pulled away in the fourth quarter to knock off **Onyeka Okongwu**-led Chino Hills, 81-63, in the last of the nine games played in the building Saturday.

The Monarchs improved to 18-6 with their seventh consecutive victory, pulling away in the fourth quarter after leading by four points at intermission and eight after three quarters.

The program's three elite seniors – point guard **Spencer Freedman** (20 points and three steals), forward **Harrison Butler** (PICTURED/21 points, 10 rebounds, four assists and five steals in what may have been his best-ever game as a high school player) and 6-foot-8 **Michael Wang** (19 points, five rebounds and six assists) – turned in exceptional performances.

The Monarchs shot 53 percent from the field and committed just five turnovers while executing their half-court offense near-flawlessly against the Huskies (15-10).

Chino Hills was minus a key component in junior point guard **Phaquon Davis**, who suffered a hyper-extended knee in his team's Baseline League victory against Upland Friday night.

But the Huskies, behind 6-9 elite junior Okongwu (10 points, seven rebounds and three blocked shots), were within four points – 37-33 – of the hosts at intermission.

Okongwu was whistled for his third personal foul a minute before intermission and, just a minute and 10 seconds into the third quarter, was called for going over an opponent's back in pursuit of a rebounds.

He never was hit with his fifth – and disqualifying – foul but that precarious status forced him to become considerably more passive, as a defender and rebounder.

Butler was superb in the second half, with 15 points, three rebounds, two assists and a blocked shot.

Okongwu went to be the bench with the other Chino Hills starters with about a minute to go in regulation and finished with 20 points, 11 rebounds and three blocked shots.

### 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**

He was credited with six turnovers, in large part because of the solid job the Mater Dei defense did in swarming him when he caught a pass or otherwise got his hands on the ball.

Among the other nine games played Saturday, Southern Section Open Division candidates Santa Margarita (61-35 over Corona Centennial), Sierra Canyon (toppling Long Beach Poly, 80-60), Oak Park (71-48 over Colony) and St. John Bosco (68-31 against Los Alamitos, in the opening 8:30 a.m. clash Saturday) overwhelmed opponents.

Despite losing outstanding junior forward **Jake Kyman** to a sprained left ankle in the second quarter), Santa Margarita (18-6) was able to overwhelm Centennial (15-10), with junior forward **Max Agbonkpolo** leading the way with 26 points while senior **Jordan Guest** (11 points and 10 rebounds) and sophomore **Ryan Evans** (13 points) also scored in double figures for the Eagles.

The Huskies hit only 13 of 51 shots from the floor, missing 16 of 18 attempts from behind the arc.

Juniors **Kenyon Martin Jr.** (29 points and 20 rebounds) and **Cassius Stanley** (23 and 10) combined for 52 points and 30 rebounds for Sierra Canyon, which improved to 19-3.

University of Utah-bound forward **Riley Battin** went for 26 points, 20 rebounds, five assists and two blocked shots for Oak Park (19-6), which held Colony to 30 percent shooting from the floor.

The Eagles also got 17 points apiece from brothers **Wes** (a senior headed to Dartmouth) and **Clark Slajchert** (a sophomore).

Other highlights from Saturday:

**Las Vegas Bishop Gorman 55, L.A. Fairfax 48:** The preeminent powerhouse in Nevada fell behind the Lions, 17-5, but then systematically pulled away from the Lions to improve to 21-4 while L.A. City power Fairfax fell to 18-8.

University of Washington-bound forward **Jamal Bey** led the Gaels with 17 points while standout guards **Jamal Hartwell** and **Ethan Anderson** scored 15 and 13, respectively, for the Lions.

**Westchester 64, Capistrano Valley 64:** The Comets got a tap-in by **Zellie Hudson** of a missed **Jeremiah Turley** with less than a second to go for the win over the Cougars in a clash of L.A. City and Southern Section programs.

The officials directed the scoreboard operator to put .8 of a second on the clock following Hudson's bucket.

After timeouts by Capistrano Valley Coach **Brian Mulligan** and then his Westchester counterpart **Ed Azzam** before the Cougars' inbound pass was intercepted by Hudson to end things.

Westchester (24-5), in contention with Western League rival Fairfax for the top seed in the L.A. City Open playoff bracket, was led by junior guard **Jordan Brinson** (24 points and six rebounds), Hudson (13 points and nine rebounds) and senior post **Kaelen Allen** (10 points, 11 rebounds and two blocked shots).

The Cougars (21-6) got 19 points from **Dawson Baker** and 18 more from **Nik Lipovic**.

**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](#).

St. John Bosco 68, Los Alamitos 31: The Braves stepped out of Trinity League play and improved their overall record to 19-6 as Coach **Matt Dunn** went to his bench early and often.

Four SJB juniors scored in double figures, led by **Joshua Adoh's** 15 points (12 of those via four of his team's 10 buckets from behind the arc).

Senior post **Jacob Eyman** led the Griffins (9-16) with 11 points and 11 rebounds.

**Orange Lutheran 61, Villa Park 52:** Juniors **Isaiah Pope** (18), **Cade Potter** (17) and **Trey Anderson** (10) combined for 45 points as the Lancers – one of the six Trinity League programs involved in the event – improved to 11-15.

**Chicago Whitney Young 74, San Diego St. Augustine 58:** The Dolphins got 17 points apiece from college-bound seniors **Javon Freeman** (Valparaiso) and **Xavier Castaneda** (South Florida), and 15 more from elite sophomore guard **Tyler Beard**, who threw down some of the most impressive dunks in the event.

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