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Boys BB: All-State Best of Best 2018

By [Ronnie Flores](#) | Published: April 26, 2018

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Two of those landing on first team All-State for 2017-18 season were Dale Currie of NorCal Open Division champion Sheldon of Sacramento and David Singleton of 2017 CIF Open Division champion Bishop Montgomery of Torrance. Photos: Elk Grove Citizen / egcitizen.com & bmhs-la.org.

Mr. Basketball State Player of the Year Onyeka Okongwu of Chino Hills and NorCal Player of the Year James Akinjo of Salesian are headliners for the 40th annual Cal-Hi Sports all-state boys basketball teams. This post includes writeups of all 10 on the first team. The Big O is the only

junior to be this high. Both CIF Open Division state finalists are represented as well.

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2018 CAL-HI SPORTS ALL-STATE ELITE BOYS BASKETBALL TEAMS

FIRST TEAM OVERALL

G - James Akinjo (Salesian, Richmond) 6-0 Sr.

The quick and tough guard is our unofficial Mr. Basketball runner-up to Onyeka Okongwu and would be our NorCal Player of the Year. Akinjo, who was named Player of the Year by the San Francisco Chronicle and the Bay Area News Group, is Salesian's first NorCal POY since Desmond Simmons in 2010. Akinjo finished his Salesian career with 1,597 points (No. 5 on the all-time school list) and averaged 20.7 points, 5.2 assists, 3.1 rebounds and 2.0 steals for a team ranked No. 1 in the state for many weeks. Even more than his stats, Akinjo led with his intensity, defensive ability and clutch play-making. An improved jump shot made him one of the best point guards in the nation and he's headed to Georgetown.

F - Riley Battin (Oak Park) 6-9 Sr.

He moves up from the second team after being named the Ventura County Star Player of the Year for the second time in his terrific high school career. Battin was a model of consistency and one of the most highly-honored players over the past

four seasons and finished 2017-18 with averages of 25.7 points and 12.4 rebounds for a 21-7 team that finished No. 24 in the state after averaging 24.7 points and 12.3 rebounds as a junior. In four seasons, Battin was Coastal Canyon League MVP four times, earned all-Ventura County honors three times and broke the county scoring record (2,343 points) of 1988 first teamer Don McLean of Simi Valley. Riley actually smashed the mark with 2,971 points while also grabbing 1,528 rebounds and never averaging lower than 10.5 rpg a season. The Utah recruit wasn't just stats, as his play effected winning. Oak Park never lost a league game in his time, never lost to a Ventura County team and even in the game vs. Long Beach Poly that ended the Eagles' season, Battin shined with 43 points and 15 assists.



Jules Bernard was a state player of the year for his division last season. Photo: Ronnie Flores.

G – Jules Bernard (Windward, Los Angeles) 6-7 Sr.

Another repeat Elite Team selection, Bernard moves up from the third team after having another terrific season for the Wildcats. His individual numbers for a 17-11 club went up from his junior campaign when he was named D3 State Player of the Year. The left-handed wing averaged 26.4 points and 14.2 rebounds after averaging 25.3 points and 13.7 rebounds in 2016-17. Bernard is not only a gifted scorer, he's also a hellacious rebounder who had 29 in a game versus Santa Monica. Headed to UCLA, Bernard will conclude his high school career playing in the Ballislife All-American Game May 5 at Cerritos College.

G - Dale Currie (Sheldon, Sacramento) 6-1 Sr.

After playing a supporting role on a Husky team that advanced to the NorCal Open championship game in 2016-17, Currie forces his way to the first team this season because of local consensus and being the top player for the best team in Northern California. A relatively easy choice as Sac Bee Player of the Year, Currie stepped up his game as a senior to average 15.1 points, 6.2 rebounds, 4.2 assists and 2.1 steals. More than his numbers, Currie was an emotional leader and did the little things to help the NorCal Open champs win games. According to the Sac Bee, he also led Sheldon in steals (2.1), deflections, charges and 3-pointers.

F - Kessler Edwards (Etiwanda) 6-7 Sr.

He joins older brother Kameron (2015) as an Elite Team selection for the Eagles.



Pepperdine recruit Kessler Edwards had a tremendous season in helping Etiwanda secure the No. 2 seed in the CIFSS Open Division playoffs. Photo: SoCalSidelines.com.

The brothers actually paired up on a team that advanced to the SoCal Open Division semifinals and this year Kessler led one that went one game further, losing to eventual CIF Open champ Sierra Canyon in the SoCal final. Kameron was a third team selection, but Edwards is a fairly simple choice for first team after leading Etiwanda to a 30-4 mark while going unbeaten in the rugged Baseline League (Chino Hills, Damien). The Pepperdine-bound Edwards was named league MVP over Mr. Basketball choice Onyeka Okongwu and earned a slew of local honors. Named to the L.A. Times' 10-man All-Star team and twice all-area by the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, Edwards averaged 21.3 points and 7.3 rebounds, including a 27-point, 14-rebound performance in his last game versus Sierra Canyon.

G - Spencer Freedman (Mater Dei, Santa Ana) 6-1 Sr.

This savvy play-maker moves up from the second team and was actually a Mr. Basketball finalist

because of his bevy of local honors. After leading Mater Dei to the prestigious CIFSS Open Division crown, Freedman was named CIFSS Open Division Player of the Year. He was also named all-Orange County and is the first player ever chosen three-time MVP of the talent-laden Trinity League, which is quite an accomplishment considering the all-state players produced from that league the past decade. The Orange County Register Player of the Year, Freedman averaged 17 points, five assists and canned 80 3-point shots as one of the state's best outside shooters. Bound for Harvard, stats don't do complete justice on Freedman's impact. Opposing coaches rave about his intangibles and elite players love playing with him because of his unselfish nature.

C - Onyeka Okongwu (Chino Hills) 6-9 Jr.

Our Cal-Hi Sports Mr. Basketball State Player of the Year choice in a close call over Salesian's James Akinjo is the second state player of the year in three years from Chino Hills, following the Los Angeles Lakers' Lonzo Ball. Okongwu actually showed signs of becoming a Mr. Basketball-type talent as a freshman when he helped Chino Hills capture the mythical national crown. This year he took that big step up in offensive production, averaging 28 points, 14 rebounds and four blocks per game. Okongwu's production also impacts winning, as he put forth big playoff

performances in leading the Huskies to CIFSS and state D1 crowns while still being the consummate team player. He was also the L.A. Times Player of the Year and the John Wooden Award honoree for CIFSS Open and D1 schools.

G - David Singleton (Bishop Montgomery, Torrance) 6-4 Sr.

With Marvin Bagley (Sierra Canyon) moving on to college early, Jordan Brown (Woodcreek) moving on to a non-CIF prep program and Taeshon Cherry not finishing the season with Foothills Christian, Singleton is the only repeat first team selection. He's also the only three-time elite team selection on this year's team after making third team as a sophomore when he was named South Bay Daily Breeze Player of the Year. Singleton also helped Bishop Montgomery win the CIFSS Open crown as a frosh and another one last year when the Knights captured the CIF Open Division state title. Singleton was named to the L.A. Times all-star team, made the all-CIFSS Open Division team for the second consecutive season and again was the top player by the Daily Breeze after averaging 23.8 points, 5.8 rebounds and 3.9 assists for a team that finished 28-2 and ranked No. 2 in the state. For his career, the UCLA-bound shooting guard netted 2,042 points (No. 3 in program history) and went over the 30-point mark a school record 10 times while never losing a game in the tough Del Rey League.

G - Duane Washington Jr. (Sierra Canyon, Chatsworth) 6-3 Sr.

The CIF Open Division champ will always have more than one person on our elite team and the Trailblazers had four deserving starters receive serious consideration. At the end of the day, Washington was a leader, go-to offensive player and Sierra Canyon's most consistent performer. In fall league contests, it was evident he could put up big-time numbers, but coach Andre Chevalier asked his players (and Washington in particular) to sacrifice individual numbers for team success. It resulted in the Trailblazers rebounding from a close loss to Mater Dei of Santa Ana in the CIFSS Open title game to win the coveted state crown. Washington ended his season with averages of 15.5 points, 4.5 rebounds and 3.8 assists while hitting many clutch shots, including in overtime on two different occasions to help knock off Bishop Montgomery. Although Washington may have sacrificed



Brandon Williams of Encino Crespi already has been chosen as the L.A. Daily News Player of the Year. Photo: OregonLive.com.

numbers, he's not sacrificing honors, as he made the all-CIFSS Open Division team and earned all-area honors by the L.A. Daily News and the L.A. Times. Bound for Ohio State, he'll also play in the Ballislife All-American Game on May 5.

G - Brandon Williams (Crespi, Encino) 6-2 Sr.

He came back with a vengeance after missing his junior campaign with an ACL injury, leading Crespi to a berth in the CIFSS Open Division playoffs with a 27-5 mark and a No. 15 ranking after finishing 2016-17 with a 10-17 record. Despite missing last season, Williams leaves Crespi as a two-time CIF state champ and as the school's No. 2 scorer (1,570 points) behind 2016 first team selection De'Anthony Melton. Similar to his former teammate, Williams was a Mr. Basketball finalist and L.A. Daily News Player of the Year in addition to making the L.A. Times all-star squad. Williams set single-season school records for points (765), scoring average (24.7) and points in a game (52 versus Alemany) while setting seven overall school records. In his last game for Crespi, Williams netted 43 points against eventual D1 state champ Chino Hills and averaged 15.4 ppg over 102 career games.

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