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By: Jason Hickman

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Melrose, Milton headline City of Palms Classic field

The City of Palms Classic may have a new sponsor (State Farm), but the event is continuing its tradition of being the top in-season high school basketball tournament in America.

Organizer Donnie Wilkie seems to top himself every year with a bigger, better field, and did so again with Tuesday's announcement of the first 15 teams headed to Fort Myers, Fla., in December.

Headlining the field will be 2010-11 preseason No. 1 candidates Melrose of Memphis, Tenn., and Milton of Alpharetta, Ga. Both are coming off of state championship seasons in their respective states and return virtually all of their key talents.

Other teams in the event that will contend for a preseason ranking include Bishop Gorman of Las Vegas, North Carolina's Christ School, Chicago's Whitney Young and Winter Park of Florida.

Individually, the City of Palms always brings the stars out and will feature 10 of MaxPreps.com's top 100 rising seniors. Winter Park's Austin Rivers leads the way at No. 2. Milton's trio of Julian Royal (No. 13), Shannon Scott (No. 25) and Dai-Jon Parker (No. 65), the Melrose duo of Adonis Thomas (No. 6) and Chris Jones (No. 27), the Christ School duo of Marshall Plumlee (No. 81) and Tony Kimbro Jr. (No. 96) Whitney Young's Samuel Thompson (No. 60) and Dwyer's Jacoby Brissett (No. 78) gives the Classic a deep pool of elite prospects.

Top 100 2012 prospects include Rosco Allen and Shabazz Muhammad of Bishop Gorman, Christ the King's Omar Calhoun, Riverside Academy's Ricardo Gathers, Dr. Krop's Tyrone Haughton, Whitney Young's Jermaine Morgan and Milton's Evan Nolte.

A 16th team is expected to be added to the field at a later date.

Last season's City of Palms Classic title went to Paterson Catholic of New Jersey. The Cougars won't have an opportunity to defend their title since financial problems forced the school to close its doors permanently.

City of Palms Classic

Dec. 17-22, 2010 – Bishop Verot High School / Fort Myers, Fla.

Florida teams: Dr. Krop (Miami, Fla.), Dwyer (Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.), Fort Myers (Fort Myers, Fla.), Monsignor Pace (Miami, Fla.), North Port (North Port, Fla.), Orlando Christian Prep (Orlando, Fla.), Winter Park (Winter Park, Fla.)

Out-of-state teams: Bishop Gorman (Las Vegas, Nev.), Christ the King (Middle Village, N.Y.), Christ School (Arden, N.C.), Mater Dei (Santa Ana, Calif.), Melrose (Memphis, Tenn.), Milton (Alpharetta, Ga.), Riverside (Reserve, La.), Whitney Young (Chicago, Ill.)

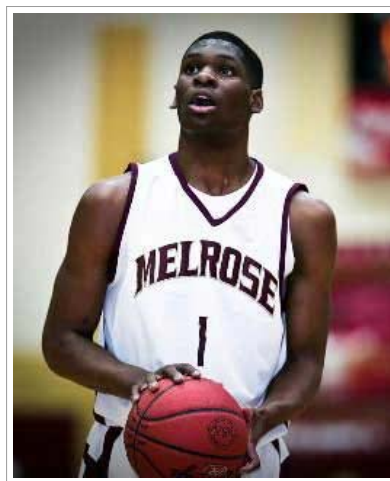


Photo by Jerald Holiday
Adonis Thomas, Melrose

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