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## Prep boys basketball: State Farm City of Palms Classic releases full field

Posted on July 9, 2010 by admin



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The 38th annual City of Palms Classic has a new title sponsor (State Farm) and one of the strongest holiday tournament fields in high school basketball history, rivaling the 2008 group that included the recent NBA Draft's No. 1 selection (John Wall), eight McDonald's All-Americans as seniors and six of USA Today's top eight preseason teams.

A whopping 10 defending state champions, led by top seeds Alpharetta Milton (Georgia 5A), Las Vegas Bishop Gorman (Nevada 4A), Middle Village Christ The King (New York Federation) and Memphis Melrose (Tennessee 3A) will stuff the star-studded, 16-team national field in 2010, along with three of Florida's current kingpins.

The tournament also adds a new wrinkle: the debut of the "Signature Series," a four-team bracket designed to accommodate "nontraditional" high school teams and those from abroad. Those exciting additions include Academy of the New Church (Pa.), High Point Westchester (N.C.), Southborough St. Mark's (Mass.) and European power Ulm Urspringschule (Germany).

All of Scout.com's top four seniors, and six of its top 10, will be in the tournament.

Likely McDonald's-bound seniors Mike Gilchrist (St. Patrick), Quincy Miller (High Point Westchester), Austin Rivers (Winter Park), James McAdoo (Norfolk Christian), Rakeem Christmas (New Church) and Adonis Thomas (Melrose) will be joined by highly touted juniors Shabazz Muhammad (Bishop Gorman), Ricardo Gathers (Riverside) and Omar Calhoun (Christ The King). Two other high-flyers, Westchester's Deuce Bello and Milton's Shaquille Johnson, could collide with Muhammad on Dec. 21 in one of the event's best slam-dunk showdowns in

years.

Here is a team-by-team preview of the 2010 Classic (updated July 8):

### **Alpharetta Milton (29-4)**

#### GEORGIA CLASS 5A CHAMPIONS

Milton could easily be the nation's preseason No. 1 team. Experienced juniors Dai-Jon Parker (19 points, 6 rebounds), Julian Royal (15 points, 5 blocks) and Ohio State commit Shannon Scott (5 assists) led the Eagles past Atlanta Westlake 56-46 in the state-title game, and are joined by junior Evan Nolte. That's four high-major recruits who are returning from a roster that had no seniors – and they will be joined by athletic 6-4 transfer Shaquille Johnson, one of Georgia's most talented juniors. Parker is considering Virginia Tech, Northwestern, Florida State & Ohio State; Royal's list includes Georgia Tech, North Carolina, UCLA, Georgetown & Northwestern). Coach David Boyd, who won his fifth state title, became the first Georgia coach to hang championship banners at four different schools. He also won at Campbell (1982), Tucker (1996) and Berkmar (2000-01), and has gone on to win state titles in all three seasons in which his teams have played in a City of Palms Classic. 2009-10 NATIONAL RANKINGS: No. 14 PrepNation.com, No. 19 ESPN/Rise, No. 21 USA Today.

### **Arden Christ School (37-2)**

#### NORTH CAROLINA CLASS 3A/PRIVATE CHAMPIONS

The Greenies became the first boys' team in western North Carolina to win more than three consecutive state titles with its fourth straight under coach David Gaines (320-70 in 12 seasons, five state titles), beating Charlotte Christian 78-59 for a school-record 37th win. With prominent seniors 7-0 Marshall Plumlee (6 points, 9 blocks in the title game), 6-6 Tony Kimbro, Jr. (18 points, 5 assists) and 6-5 DeMarcus Harrison all returning, look for Christ School (136-11 over four years) to remain among the nation's elite while running its hyper-speed offense. Plumlee, whose 6-10 brothers Miles and Mason both play at Duke, is considering Duke, North Carolina, Virginia, Purdue & Wisconsin; Harrison's list includes BYU, Charleston & Virginia. 2009-10 NATIONAL RANKINGS: No. 17 ESPN/Rise, No. 23 PrepNation.com.

### **Chicago Whitney Young (23-7)**

#### ILLINOIS CLASS 4A RUNNER-UP

The Dolphins fell a single game short of repeating in Class 4A, but coach Tyrone Slaughter is prouder of his program's 100-percent graduation rate over a five-year period. "I love who I coach. I love where I coach," he says. Where he coaches is now sitting atop Chicago public-school basketball, and a trio of high-major recruits, 6-7 senior Sam Thompson (considering Kansas, Ohio State, Oregon State, Georgetown & Florida), 6-8 junior Jermaine Morgan and 6-8 sophomore Tommy Hamilton, will lead Whitney Young into a very bright future. The Dolphins overcame a late-season, three-game losing streak to reach the state-title game, winning the Proviso East Sectional and UIC Supersectional before avenging a 17-point loss to Waukegan in the state semifinals 60-58.

### **Elizabeth St. Patrick (24-3)**

The Celtics will be making a record 10th City of Palms appearance since 1992 and are 21-10 in those trips. This time, they'll boast the nation's consensus and ESPN.com's top senior, 6-7 Michael Gilchrist (verbally committed to Kentucky) and a chip on their shoulder – St. Pat's, ranked No. 1 in the nation until mid-January, missed postseason play because of a dispute with the state association. The supporting cast includes 6-3 senior Derrick Gordon (Western Kentucky) and highly touted 6-9 sophomore Austin Colbert. The Celtics' three losses were all to nationally ranked opponents and all by a single point (71-70 to Findlay Prep, 65-64 to St. Benedict's and 79-78 to Oak Hill Academy). 2009-10 NATIONAL RANKINGS: No. 6 PrepNation.com, No. 6 USA Today, No. 7 ESPN/Rise.

### **Fort Myers (28-5)**

#### FLORIDA CLASS 4A CHAMPIONS

The Green Wave will bring a historic "first" to this year's City of Palms Classic. After holding off a furious rally by Orlando Oak Ridge in a 59-57 victory, coach Scott Guttery's team will be the first defending state champion from Southwest Florida – because no team from Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry, Glades or DeSoto counties had ever won a boys' basketball title in any classification. Fort Myers graduated five of its top seven players, but will rebuild around seniors 6-3 Evin Graham (13.7 ppg, 4.6 apg), the Fort Myers News-Press' Player of the Year, and 6-4 Matt Yance, who drained 6-of-12 from beyond the 3-point arc in the 4A Final Four.

### **Las Vegas Bishop Gorman (30-2)**

#### NEVADA CLASS 4A CHAMPIONS

The Gaels rolled to their second consecutive Nevada Class 4A state championship, and fourth in nine years under head coach Grant Rice – beating Reno Bishop Manogue 65-52 and Las Vegas Canyon Springs 69-48 – yet Rice thinks his young team "will be better at four positions" next winter. High-flyer Shabazz Muhammad (19 ppg, 10 rpg), a 6-6 junior whose list includes Louisville, Duke, Kansas, Arizona & Texas, has shown signs of becoming basketball's next megastar, but Bishop Gorman features two other heavily recruited 6-7 juniors in Rosco Allen (UNLV, Arizona, UCLA) and Ben Carter. A fourth junior, seldom-used Ronnie Stanley, a 6-7 left tackle for the Gaels' undefeated state football champions, had 14 points, 6 rebounds, 4 blocks and 2 assists in the semifinal win. Gorman won the prestigious Beach Ball Classic in Myrtle Beach, S.C., without the injured Muhammad playing a single minute. 2009-10 NATIONAL RANKINGS: No. 8 PrepNation.com, No. 10 USA Today, No. 13 ESPN/Rise.

### **Memphis Melrose (36-4)**

#### TENNESSEE CLASS 3A CHAMPIONS

The Golden Wildcats had to beat league and district rival White Station an astonishing four times in 36 days before claiming the state title 75-70 in Murfreesboro. In three years, coach Jermaine Johnson has overhauled the Orange Mound community's four-win program – in his words, "transforming the 'hood for good" and allowing Melrose to significantly beef up its schedule. Adonis Thomas (considering Memphis, Tennessee, Florida, Ohio State, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, UCLA, North Carolina & Georgetown), a 6-6 wing, is a consensus national top-15 senior and had 19 points, 13 boards and 4 blocks in the Golden Wildcats' first

state-title victory in 27 years. Add 6-2 point guard Cedric McAfee and 6-4 Bobby Parks, Jr., and Melrose has three of the top half-dozen seniors in Memphis. 2009-10 NATIONAL RANKINGS: No. 9 PrepNation.com, No. 15 ESPN/Rise.

### **Miami Dr. Krop (24-5)**

#### FLORIDA CLASS 6A SEMIFINALISTS

The Lightning was held to a season-low in a 50-42 loss to Class 6A runner-up Orlando Dr. Phillips in the state semifinals, despite a game-high 23 points from tough senior guard Angel Rodriguez. But it was a breakthrough – the school’s first-ever trip to Lakeland – under sixth-year coach Marcos “Shakey” Rodriguez. Yes, that Shakey Rodriguez (577-91 in a 25-year career; 142-29 at Krop), the architect of Miami Senior High’s basketball dynasty, where he averaged 33 wins and won big-school state titles in 1987, ’89, ’90, ’91 and ’93. Keep a very close eye on 6-9 junior center Tyrone Haughton, whose length and terrific motor make him high-major material, and 6-0 transfer guard Cody Mann.

### **Middle Village Christ The King (28-5)**

#### NEW YORK FEDERATION & CLASS 2A CHAMPIONS, NYC CATHOLIC CHAMPIONS

Despite the Royals’ storied history, a lot of observers think 6-4 junior shooting guard Omar Calhoun (14 ppg) could become the program’s best player ever – as his 20 points and 11 rebounds led CTK past Brooklyn Bishop Loughlin 81-78 in double overtime for its fifth CHSAA title and second in four years. Joe Arbitello’s Royals topped it all off with the school’s first state crown, knocking off Albany Christian Brothers 63-60 and city public-school champ Boys & Girls 52-49 behind Calhoun’s 20-point MVP effort. Seniors 6-1 Corey Edwards (considering Rutgers, St. John’s, Hofstra, Villanova & Auburn) and 5-10 Terrence Curry highlight a strong group returning around Calhoun (Villanova, Pitt, Florida, Arizona & Rutgers). 2009-10 NATIONAL RANKINGS: No. 35 ESPN/Rise.

### **Norfolk Christian (26-4)**

#### VIRGINIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS DIV. II CHAMPIONS

The Ambassadors won their last 21 games following a 46-38 loss to Bartow on Dec. 30, driven by consensus national No. 1-ranked James McAdoo, a 6-8 senior who averaged 22.5 points and 9.9 rebounds, en route to the school’s first state championship. McAdoo strongly considered enrolling early at North Carolina this fall, but surprised coach Michael Allen with his decision to return (he’s still verbally committed to the Tar Heels). Nine of 12 players are back, including 5-9 junior point guard Michael Murray, 6-3 junior Kwontie Moore and 6-1 senior Dontrell Silver. McAdoo was “held” to 17 points in the 47-44 state-title victory over Cape Henry, but he had 34 in a semifinal win against Atlantic Shores. He also has the genes – his father Ronnie’s cousin is NBA legend Bob McAdoo.

### **North Port (21-4)**

The young Bobcats emerged as one of Southwest Florida’s premier programs in coach Curt Allen’s second season, opening 14-1 and earning the top seed in Class 6A-District 8 before giving up 13 threes in a 47-46

semifinal loss at home to St. Petersburg. Nationally known 6-7 Kasey Wilson (20.5 ppg, 11.3 rpg, 3 bpg) – one of Florida’s top five seniors, according to ESPN.com – has reopened his recruitment after earlier pledging to Virginia Commonwealth, and is joined by seniors 6-4 Daunte Johnson and 5-9 Eric Litvin. Throw in battle-tested, 6-0 junior point guard, Larry Taylor, and it’s easy to see why hopes are so high in southern Sarasota County.

### **Orlando Christian Prep (26-6)**

#### FLORIDA CLASS 1A CHAMPIONS



OCP ended Jacksonville Arlington Country Day’s bid for a record sixth straight state title with a dramatic 59-54 victory at The Lakeland Center, the third consecutive 1A title for the Faith Warriors. Tough defender and 6-3 junior Jordan Montgomery (14 points), bouncy 6-4 senior Adonis Burbage (12) and 6-4 junior Isaac Cohen (11) starred in the win, and are joined by 6-1 senior glider Terral Merritt in a lineup that’s short on size but long on experience. It was OCP’s second win over the Apaches, whom they beat 49-47 on Dec. 12. Third-year head coach Reggie Kohn will look familiar to City of Palms fans for a reason – he was on the sidelines for Lake Howell in December 2005 and coached against future pros Brandon Jennings, Wayne Ellington and Gerald Henderson.

### **Palm Beach Gardens Dwyer (25-4)**

#### FLORIDA CLASS 5A SEMIFINALISTS

Dreams of a Class 5A state title for Palm Beach County came up short after a 54-48 loss to Bartow in the semifinals. But the Panthers return almost all of their key players under coach Fred Ross, including leading scorer 6-4 Jacoby Brissett (15.2 ppg), guard Terrell Harris and 6-6 forward Greg Louis, who had 11 points and 11 rebounds in the loss. Another rapidly improving wide-body is 6-9, 240-pound junior Joell James, making Dwyer a tough matchup for a lot of teams. Brissett’s 27 points led a 70-57 regional semifinal victory at home over previously-undefeated Pompano Beach Ely, but he could easily miss the Panthers’ first-round City of Palms game – he also threw for 1,982 yards and 26 TDs as a junior and could be leading his nationally ranked football power in the 4A state-title game.

### **Reserve Riverside Academy (38-6)**

#### LOUISIANA CLASS 2A CHAMPIONS

You’ll remember Baylor star Demond “Tweety” Carter from the 2004 and ’05 City of Palms Classics, and it was head coach Tim Byrd and 13 players from Reserve Christian’s four-time defending state champions who migrated down the street when the school closed last year to form Riverside’s roster. Two of the Rebels’ breakout stars are 6-7 junior Ricardo Gathers (19 ppg, 15 rpg) – who had 23 points, 8 rebounds, 4 steals and 3 blocks in an 84-61 rout of Jonesboro-Hodge in the state title game – and 6-3 junior Louis Dabney. The 220-pound Gathers is ranked No. 15 in the Class of 2012 by ScoutHoops.com’s Dave Telep, who calls him “one of the strongest juniors we’ve EVER seen.” Riverside will play in the 2010 and ’11 City of Palms.

### **Santa Ana Mater Dei (32-2)**

#### CALIFORNIA SOUTHERN SECTION DIV. 1AA CHAMPIONS, STATE DIV. I SEMIFINALISTS

Since becoming the Monarchs' coach at age 29 in 1982, Gary McKnight's basketball dynasty has reeled off 27 league, 20 section, seven state and two City of Palms titles to go with an 860-78 overall record (18-4 COP). Mater Dei reached its customary national top-5 ranking before bowing 71-63 to Los Angeles Westchester in the state semifinals, and has reloaded for its sixth visit to Fort Myers despite heavy graduations. The new wave includes two prized freshmen, 6-5 Shaquan Aaron, described by veteran LA Times sportswriter Eric Sondheimer as "a Kevin Durant in the making," and 6-6 Stanley Johnson. Others to watch include 6-6 junior Xavier Johnson, a Temecula Chaparral transfer and an all-CIF selection as a sophomore, and 5-8 soph Wes Mitter. 2009-10 NATIONAL RANKINGS: No. 9 ESPN/Rise, No. 11 PrepNation.com, No. 13 USA Today.

### **Winter Park (29-6)**

#### FLORIDA CLASS 6A CHAMPIONS

Two-time unanimous City of Palms MVP Austin Rivers (23 points) led the Wildcats past Orlando Dr. Phillips 76-57 for the school's first state title. Coach David Bailey (108-21 in four seasons) loses seven seniors, but does return 6-2 Brett Comer, a Florida Atlantic commit, and has added 6-3 sharp-shooting senior Austin Keel, who transferred from rival Winter Springs. The confident Rivers (considering Duke, Florida, North Carolina, Kansas & UCLA), a 6-4 senior, has reopened his recruitment after earlier pledging to the Gators. He has already amassed 2,002 points and produced two of the eight highest-scoring games in the 37-year history of the City of Palms – netting 46 in a nationally-televised, 91-87 third-place victory over Marietta Wheeler in 2008, and 45 in a 75-60 semifinal conquest of Newark St. Benedict's in 2009. His 37 fueled Winter Park's 82-72 win over Christ School in the postseason ESPN/Rise National High School Invitational at Coppin State. 2009-10 NATIONAL RANKINGS: No. 11 USA Today, No. 11 ESPN/Rise, No. 13 PrepNation.com.

### **Signature Series (Dec. 20-22)**

### **Academy of the New Church (12-12)**

Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

The Lions' 6-9 Rakeem Christmas (considering Florida Int'l, Georgetown, Florida, Texas, Oklahoma & Rutgers) and 6-11 Malcolm Gilbert (Ga. Tech, St. Joseph's, LaSalle, Delaware & Rutgers) along with gifted 6-6 junior Savon Goodman (Villanova, Penn State, Pitt & Texas) could easily be the most physically imposing frontcourt in the country. "Philadelphia has a great basketball tradition," Lamont Peterson, a former Memphis assistant under John Calipari, told MaxPreps. "But I don't know if this area has ever had a high school frontcourt like this." Don't be deceived by the .500 record, a product of a brutal schedule – New Church returns as many as 12 of its 14 players, and the athletic, shot-blocking Christmas has a huge upside.

### **St. Mark's (23-6)**

Southborough, Massachusetts

## NEW ENGLAND PREP (NEPSAC) CLASS C RUNNERUP

The Lions won 19 consecutive games, before falling 55-43 to unbeaten Lawrence Academy for the NEPSAC title. The team's late-season tear – a 14-1 mark in the Boston-area Independent School League and an 80-78 thriller against Winchendon Prep at the National Prep Invitational – coincided with the improvement of 6-8 Alex Murphy (considering Kansas, Arizona, Ga. Tech & Florida) and 7-0 Kaleb Tarczewski (Providence, USC, Kansas, Boston College & Georgetown) ranked Nos. 1 and 4, respectively, in Massachusetts' junior class (New England Recruiting Report). Eli Lubick, a 6-4 junior, has committed to Colgate. St. Mark's, with approximately 325 students, was founded in 1865. Coach Dave Lubick's teams won NEPSAC Class C titles in 2006, '08 and '09.

### **Ursprungschule**

Ulm, Germany

Coach Ralph Junge has built a powerhouse at the self-described "small, tranquil" Ursprung Basketball Academy, winning a national high school title in 2002, a U16 crown in 2004 and sending 15 players to American colleges since 2002. Ursprung has participated in many of the best U.S. high school tournaments, including the Iolani Classic (Honolulu) and the Arby's Classic (Bristol, Tenn.), as well as elite youth tournaments across Europe (Italy, France, Austria).

### **Westchester Country Day (27-2)**

High Point, North Carolina

## NORTH CAROLINA CLASS 2A/PRIVATE RUNNERUP

Many observers consider 6-9 Quincy Miller (considering Baylor, Wake Forest, Kentucky, OU, Duke, Texas, Tennessee, Illinois & Syracuse), who transferred from Quality Education, to be the nation's most gifted senior. But the truth is coach Pat Kahny's Wildcats were already loaded, powered by 6-4 senior Quiddus "Deuce" Bello (Louisville, Clemson, Okla. State, Wake Forest & Tennessee) one of the nation's fastest-rising recruits who scored 18 points in Westchester's 66-64 upset loss in OT to Victory Christian in the state quarterfinals, 6-2 senior Ike Nwamu and junior guard C.J. Plummer. Two of Bello's highlight-reel dunks have made their way to ESPN's SportsCenter – a between-the-legs flush on Jan. 12 at Burlington Christian and a double alley-oop with Nwamu a year earlier.

### **Sunshine Series (Dec. 17)**

### **Fort Myers Bishop Verot (19-11)**

## FLORIDA CLASS 3A-REGION 3 RUNNERUP

Coach Matt Herting has always found a way to win during his 11 seasons at Verot, and he did it again despite a 4-6 start. The Vikings beat rival Fort Myers Dunbar twice – once to win a sixth consecutive district title, again in the 3A-Region 3 semifinals – but were denied a second consecutive trip the Final Four when they were held to five second-quarter points in a 56-53 loss at home to Avon Park. Highly touted guard Quinten Payne has moved back to Illinois, so 6-3 senior Nate Howard and 5-9 sophomore Mark Wagner will take on much bigger roles.

## Thomasville (24-5)

### GEORGIA CLASS 2A STATE RUNNER-UP

A trio of juniors – 6-8 Robert Carter, 6-7 Willie Clayton and 5-7 Trey Gosier – started as sophomores and led the Bulldogs to their second Class 2A championship appearance in four years, but Greater Atlanta Christian's 77-65 victory ended a storybook season for Ben Tillman's team. The 230-pound Carter (considering Alabama, Florida, Florida State, Georgia, Ga. Tech, Texas, USC & Va. Tech) had 20 points and Clayton added 12 in the loss. Thomasville won all of its previous four playoff games by double digits, including a 69-43 dismantling of Jefferson in the state semifinals, in which Clayton had 25 points and 14 rebounds – 11 of them on the offensive glass.

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