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## Girls of Summer: Viewing period finale

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The action in the final major California viewing period event for girls basketball may have been down the Peninsula in Redwood City, but the Summer in the City Tournament was dominated by a team of girls mostly from the East Bay and two Yellowjackets in particular.

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*By Harold Abend, Special to CalHiSports.com*

Last weekend's **Summer in the City** Tournament at first glance looked like it would become a matchup of host **Mark Anger's** East Bay Explosion Black against **Ray Mayes'** FBC Blue, the Southern California team that couldn't quite close the deal last week at their own EA Sports National Showcase in Las Vegas.

Although the tournament was in the Bay Area at Sequoia High in Redwood City, the CalHiSports.com caravan only made the 200-mile round trip journey from its Sonoma County base on the final day's action of the July 29-31 event.

The one day of basketball we covered was outstanding even if the host EBX Black squad didn't hold up its end of the bargain, losing in the semifinals to Cal Ballaz after leading by eight points with around four minutes remaining.

"We just didn't take care of business," said Anger, who refused to make excuses but told CalHiSports.com he was without Carondelet's **Hannah Huffman** (2012) whose overall guard play this summer has been exemplary and amongst the top incoming sophomores in the state.

That ballhandling deficiency against the ballhawking Ballaz would prove fatal not only for Anger's girls but also for the team **Leroy Hurt's** team of mostly East Bay girls met in the Black Division finals, Maye's FBC Blue girls from the Southland.

Facing an 18-point deficit with just under 10-minutes left in the title game, the Ballaz fought back behind the stellar play of the Berkeley duo of slick guard **Brittany Boyd** (2011) and 6-0 post/power forward **Chairese Culberson** (2011), and a three-point shot by **Alexis Tillman** (2011) of St. Mary's (Stockton) that tied the game at 63-63 to force overtime.

Although Boyd had all three of her missed free throws in the extra period (9-of-12 overall) she made three and 6-1 **Khristina Hunter** (2011 from Rodriguez of Fairfield) added a pair. When

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Culberson blocked a three-point attempt at the buzzer by Blue's 6-1 **Jada Blackwell** (2011 from Etiwanda, Rancho Cucamonga), the Ballaz had pulled out a 68-66 victory.

When the Ballaz were down 50-32, it looked like a done deal. But that was when Boyd and Culberson took over. The stocky and solidly-built but lightning-fast Boyd went right at Blue's **Brittany Wilson** (2010 from Long Beach Poly) on both offense and defense. While Wilson led FBC with 17 points, she fouled out in regulation trying to corral a girl she very well may meet in March in the D1 final at the state championships.

Boyd finished with a game-high 19 points, 13 of which were in the second half where she also looked like a New York City subway pickpocket in gathering all eight of her steals. The 5-7 Boyd also had six rebounds and two assists.

Culberson had all nine of her points in the second stanza to go with 12 rebounds, five blocks and three assists. Down low she had no fear in the paint or on the glass against the big front line of FBC Blue.

Hunter looked good down low and should be a force in the Sac-Joaquin Section. She had a double-double 10 points and 11 rebounds and helped Culberson defend the block.

Tillman, who according to Hurt sat out last year at Lincoln (Stockton) in anticipation of transferring to St. Mary's, was 3-of-5 from outside the arc and had all 13 of her points in the second half. It might be a little crowded this year in the Rams' backcourt but Tillman has two year's remaining and should be a star in her senior season.

"We haven't played the top competition this summer and we sure didn't show up in the first half, but wasn't that a heck of a comeback," said Hurt, who pointed out to CalHISports.com he was missing three of his top players at the tournament who have summer jobs -- **Brandi Henton** (2010 from Modesto Christian), 6-3 post **Deanna Calhoun** (2011 from Albany) and speedy 2012 Berkeley guard **Elisha Davis**, all of whom will receive decent evaluations from

For FBC Blue, it looked like it was coasting with Mayes making a rare coaching appearance during the summer with his regular Blue coach **Larry Gholar** sharing the bench.

The team had a 34-22 lead at the half and after Blackwell got a rebound and putback FBC had scored the first six points of the second half to take a 38-22 lead. It stretched to the previously mentioned 50-32 margin but from that point on the roof began caving in.

Back-to-back-to-back steals by Boyd with her converting two baskets and assisting on a third, and a three pointer by **Katie Lopez** (eight points for the 2011 from Irvington, Fremont) got it down to 56-48 as FBC began to tire and Boyd and crew became energized, feeding off several dozen raucous fans in the stands.

Hurt did a masterful coaching job in the second half, working the officials to allow more hand-checking as his team made its run by stepping up the defensive pressure.

"You told ME you were going to let them play," Hurt bemoaned to one official who called what the coach thought was a ticky-tack foul. From there the calls on the Ballaz were few and far between.

**Kody Burke** (2010 from Notre Dame, Sherman Oaks) had another solid game for FBC but tired a bit down the stretch as the long haul of the summer took its toll on her. Still the 6-1 post/power forward being looked at by several colleges, including Notre Dame, registered a double-double with 12 points and a game-high 16 rebounds while adding two blocks.

Blackwell, who like Burke is 6-1 and has good size, also registered a double-double, finishing with 11 points and 10 rebounds. She also had two steals, two assists and two blocks.

Brittany Wilson's twin sister **Ashley** and **Nicole Nesbit** (2010 from Harvard-Westlake, Sherman Oaks) contributed seven and six points, respectively, but neither could handle Boyd when she turned up the juice down the stretch.

One of the other contests we observed was the Black Division fifth-place game which saw Anger's EBX Black 2 team eek out a 49-47 victory over Stockton Mustang Gold behind a breakout game by **Lia Coito** (2011 from Branson, Ross). Coito, who is 5-11 and plays any position, will probably be down low for the Bulls this season. She finished with 27 points and five three-pointers with three-in-a-row coming late to help seal the win. She was also more aggressive than we've ever seen and that bodes well for her high school team that has her for two more seasons.

Another team that looked very good and had several talented girls was Swoosh Elite who entered the event too late to play in the Black Division.

After dispatching Williams' Bay Area Elite, 51-43, in the Gold semifinal, they swarmed Stockton Mustang Blue in the championship, winning 72-53 going away.

The squad was loaded with underclass players from Southern California, mostly from the Salesian Force of Los Angeles club team, but no one looked better than **Destiny King**. The younger sister of boys' phenom **Keala King** was a freshman at Los Angeles Dorsey last year but is yet to be enrolled in a high school for her sophomore year (note: Kaela is transferring to Mater Dei). In the semifinal victory, she had a game-high 16 points.

We also got a chance to get a look at some of the real babies on Anger's EBX Future team and saw a familiar name, facial features and an even taller version at this stage than her big sister. The girl was 5-11 **Mikayla Cowling**, sister of Alex and one of a handful of 2014 girls that will get a ranking

Several other girls we saw performed very well at the Summer in the City and will garner evaluations that qualify for a ranking in the final Girls of Summer feature later this month. Girls not previously mentioned above or in other stories include the following with school and year but not the club team – and in alphabetical order:

**Brianna Barrett** (2012 from Oaks Christian, Westlake Village), **Alexus Bryant** (2012 from Canyon, Canyon Springs), **Khyra Conerly** (2010 from Alameda), 6-1 post **Kiara Harewood** (2011 from Acalanes, Lafayette), **Alexandra Inouye** (2011 from Los Angeles Baptist), **Savannah Morgan** (2010 from Presentation, San Jose), **Janice Peterson** (2010 from Encinal, Alameda), **Amara Wainwright** (2011 from Christian Brothers, Sacramento), **Alysa Valentine** (2012 from Lincoln, Stockton)

Before the final Girls of Summer rankings of California only girls is released and the criteria for the numerical ranking is explained once again, there is one more edition of the feature that will cover the Back to School Classic.

This year's annual event hosted by Chabot College Women's Coach **Don Queyrel** and Gladiators assistant and Chabot Dean of Special Programs & Services **Gerald Shimada** has had to move from the Hayward campus to Dougherty Valley High in San Ramon.

Shimada tells CalHiSports.com by email the 40-plus-year-old Chabot gym is undergoing a facelift that will continue until Labor Day, hence the move off site.

That won't change the competition which includes just about all the Bay Area's top teams.

According to Shimada the "contenders" entered include Bishop O'Dowd (Oakland), Berkeley, Pinewood (Los Altos Hills), St. Mary's of Berkeley, Yosemite (Oakhurst), Miramonte (Orinda), Dublin, Valley Christian of San Jose, Deer Valley (Antioch), Branson and, of course, Dougherty Valley.

Corrections or comments? Email [mark@studentsports.com](mailto:mark@studentsports.com) and be sure to leave a comment so others can check out what you have to say.

*basketball, CA, Brittany Boyd, Chairese Culbertson, Berkeley, Lia Coito, Branson, Alexis Tillman, Stockton St. Mary's*

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