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Chelsea Gray

NorCal Gems

By **Chris Hansen**

National Director of Scouting

Posted *Wed, 10/03/2007 - 11:57 A* pair of St. Mary's youngsters led the parade of talent at the Northern California Elite Showcase.

STORY & PHOTOS BY CHRIS HANSEN



LOS ALTOS HILLS, Calif. - Two of the best players here this past weekend were a pair of 2010 gems who were playing with their high school team, St. Mary's of Stockton. Chelsea Gray, the cousin of Cal star point guard Alexis Gray-Lawson, was fabulous throughout. She looked like she was on another level and she's just starting her sophomore year. Her poise, passing and scoring were matched by so few and she'll have to be considered as one of the top underclass point guards on the West Coast and maybe in the country. Most impressive is her improvement from this summer to now.

Gray's teammate, Afure Jemerigbe, played great this weekend as well. Her quickness and ability to score the ball are tremendous. She's a kid who does most of her damage off the dribble, breaking down defenders and just finishing strong at the cup. Saturday I thought I had her figured out - that she didn't like to use her left to finish and I even told her club team coach who was there watching of my observation. Sure enough, Sunday was a whole new day and she seemed to go out of her way to score using her left hand and it looked super smooth, full extension with good touch.

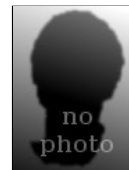
Many of you may not remember, but St. Mary's was home to Jacki Gemelos, the 2006 class's No. 1 ranked guard and HoopGurlz's No. 2 overall player. Gemelos also played for the same club team, the East Bay Xplosion, as Chelsea Gray now does. So in Stockton, and the greater Bay Area, there definitely is life after Gemelos and Vicki Baugh, both of whom are the highest ranked players to come out from the West Coast since Ashley and Courtney Paris. After talking with Gray, it seems as though the run-and-gun style of St. Mary's is poised to take the next step and get to the Division III title game, where it came up a game short a year ago. The team also returns UC Davis commit Courtney French, a three-point bomber who also

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Pos: PG

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played this weekend.

The 2007 NCAA Fall Evaluation Period is one of the most saturated of the evaluation periods with an event seemingly every 60 miles along any major freeway across the nation. Our efforts out West led us to Foothill College, for the Northern California Elite Showcase. The event is run by Mark Anger, the East Bay Xplosion club director, and included a great collection of players from California, Nevada and Oregon. College coaches from several conferences, including the Pac-10, WAC and WCC among others, came to watch the talent on hand. Also on hand as a coach for one of the team's was former NBA coach Gary St. Jean, who last spent time with the Sacramento Kings and Golden State Warriors.



Afure Jemerigbe

The St. Mary's kids were not the only players impressing in the Silicon Valley. Deanna Weaver, a 5-foot-10 wing from Santa Clara, Calif., put on a show on Sunday. She plays a lot bigger than 5-10 because of her length and leaping ability. The 2010 player from Wilcox High School was a terror in passing lanes and in transition, showing the ability to score in traffic at the cup and also a dialed-in, mid-range jumper. She was among the most athletic players in the event. Another Deanna, **Deanna Calhoun**, also showed great potential and athleticism. The 6-3 class of 2011 post is from El Cerrito, Calif., has a lot of natural ability, scores inside, blocks shots and could be a really good prospect if she continues to learn the game and how to use her size. Calhoun is a freshman at Albany High School.

One of the most fun players to watch was 5-7 guard **Mikayla Lyles** from Pleasanton, Calif. The 2010 scorer from Amador Valley High School showed solid handle and a nice shooting stroke. She really gets off the ground when shooting the rock, hanging in the air on her mid-range jumper and she finished her shots and made plays for her team. Reaching out of the collection of California collection of players leads us to Reno, Nev., and 6-1 forward Danielle Peacon of Reed High School. She's another player who plays bigger. She strong shoulders and good presence, scores inside when she has a mismatch and can step out and knock down the elbow jumper as well.

Elisa Davis from Oakland, Calif., hasn't played her first high-school basketball game as she's a 2012 prospect, but the 5-6 point guard is a great creator who utilizes her quickness to get into the lane. She is strong going right, has nice touch on her passes and knocked down open threes. One of the players getting strong attention from the college scouts in attendance was freshman post Vanessa Leo. The 6-4 Leo is more than just tall and long. She showed some great interior passing skills on the block, using her vision over smaller defenders to find cutters on top of roaming the paint defensively. She needs to get stronger but may still be growing. She is a freshman at Archbishop Mitty High School.

Cheyenne Cathy a 5-11 forward from Elk Grove, Calif., showed the ability to play both inside and out. She was surprisingly effective inside against bigger defenders with solid pivots, a strong base and soft hands. She works hard inside to get position and on the perimeter she used believable shot fakes to beat defenders and get to the basket. Takara Burse, a 5-6 freshman point guard at Notre Dame Belmont, showed great creative abilities with the ball.

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Chelsea Gray

She likes to make things happen off the dribble and dropped several dimes including an incredible no look pass along the baseline leading to an easy bucket for her teammate.

Another Reno native, Cierra Dunbar, showed incredible potential as a combo guard. She has a ton of athleticism and shake in her game and is strong for a 2010 prospect. Her ball handling is the strongest part of her game right now and adding better decision making and knowing where to be without the ball will make her a much better player. She's got a build and style that has some similarities to another Nevada great, Italee Lucas, now a freshman at North Carolina.

The Elko High School sophomore is not on Lucas' level yet but she has the physical gifts to be a special player.

One of the smartest guards this weekend was 5-7 sophomore guard Melissa Cachopo. She played both point and off the ball. She sees the floor incredibly well, uses ball fakes, hits players in the hands with passes, doesn't telegraph passes, maintains spacing even with out the ball and makes good decisions with the ball. Physically some strength and quickness training could really unlock her game more. She's already super effective, even against quicker and bigger players.

There was a lot of young talent on display and these players are just a fraction of those impressing. More will follow including platinum detailed evaluations and summary evaluations of many more players on display at the EBX Northern California Elite Showcase 2007.

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Chris Hansen is the National Director of Scouting for Women's Basketball at HoopGurlz.com. He leads the panel that evaluates and ranks girl's basketball prospects nationally for HoopGurlz. Chris has been involved in the women's basketball community since 1998 as a coach, trainer, evaluator and reporter. He can be reached at chris@hoopgurlz.com.



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