

The Second Annual Hoop Mountain High School Showcase took place Saturday at the Orlando Sports Complex. In all there were 16 teams divided into two 8-team brackets. It was a field that any HS tournament organizer would love to have.

In Bracket I the field was comprised of Orlando Faith Christian Academy, Orlando Oak Ridge, Ocala Forest, Eustis, Orlando Central Florida Prep, Orlando Timber Creek, Bradenton Edison, and St. Augustine.

Timber Creek made it to the championship game after defeating Central Florida Prep and St. Augustine. Facing them in the title game was an experienced Ocala Forest squad. They polished off Eustis and then defeated an Oak Ridge team that was without high-major recruit Cady Lalanne who was on an official visit to Ole Miss this weekend. Forest had played impressively this summer and many thought that they would be the class of this group of eight.

The teams matched each other bucket for bucket for most of the first quarter. With the teams tied at fifteen with a minute to play, Timber Creek hit on a three point play and found themselves up 19-16 at the end of the period.

Timber Creek maintains this slim lead for much of the second quarter until they switched to a zone defense. This effectively limits Forest to one shot per possession. Timber Creek is able to turn missed shots into transition baskets and at the halftime horn they lead by twelve, 37-25.

Not much changes for either team in the third quarter. Timber Creek continually penetrates and gets to the rim for buckets while Forest is unable to find the basket from long range. Forest is able to go on a mini-run near the end of the quarter but still find themselves down by eight, 53-45, at the end of the period.

Timber Creek is able to keep Forest at arm's length for much of the quarter. With 2:30 left to play, Timber Creek is up eight and the game looks over. However, Forest throws a full court press and things get interesting very quickly. In one minutes the margin is down to two points. Timber Creek leads by three and has the ball with 21 one seconds remaining but throws an errant pass. Forest now has a chance to tie. They execute a play to perfection and their best player gets a wide-open look but it fails to go down. Timber Creek wins by a score of 70-67.

In Bracket A the field was made up of Arlington Country Day, West Orange, Bartow, Delray Beach Atlantic, Providence, West Oaks Academy, Dwyer, and Clearwater. Clearwater was missing Okaro White (official visit to Florida State) and Providence was missing Wayne Martin (in Arkansas on a family visit) but otherwise the stars were all in place.

ACD reached the title game with blowout wins over West Orange and Bartow. Providence would reach the final on the other side of the bracket. They played two amazing games to reach the title game. West Oaks Academy led most of the game but Providence tied late and then with under five seconds to play, Kentucky recruit Stacey Poole scored on an inbounds play. They came back do defeat a very young but very talented Dwyer team. This would place Providence in the final against ACD but the coaches and organizers agreed that it would be best if the two teams waited until the regular season to play, given the history of rivalry between the two

programs. Dwyer played the final against ACD while Providence took out Bartow in a “consolation” game.

This game was high octane all the way. Dwyer was up by six with three minutes left in the first quarter but ACD was able to go on a 14-7 run to go up by a point, 28-27 after one quarter of play.

The second quarter was just as intense. Both teams took turns holding a lead but it was never more than four points on either side. The score was tied at 45 with 2:30 remaining in the quarter. Both teams played very aggressive defensively and scored with a flurry of transition baskets. At the half, ACD led by two, 54-52.

In the third quarter, the experience of ACD came to the forefront. For the first half of the third quarter, they outscored Dwyer 17-7 and led 71-59. But from that point, Dwyer turned the tables. They took advantage of some questionable ACD shots and outscored them 13 to 7. With one quarter left to play, ACD led 79-72.

Dwyer fights all the way back in the final quarter to tie the game at 86 with 3:15 to go. However, playing in their third game of the day, fatigue seems to set in for Dwyer. Four consecutive turnovers lead to ACD points. Over the final three minutes, ACD outscores Dwyer 9-2 and holds on for a 95-88 victory.

This was a great day of hoops and the organizers at Hoop Mountain are applauded for putting together a great field which resulted in some tremendous games.