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## **Baruti's block seals win for Mesa**

**By Kyle Odegard, Tribune**

Blondy Baruti said defense is what gets his offense started.

On Monday, his finest defensive play got the team bus started.

The Mesa High boys basketball forward blocked a game-tying shot attempt by Mountain View's Jaron Sweeney with one second left as the top-ranked Jackrabbits held on for the 54-52 overtime victory in the Martin Luther King Basketball Classic at Wells Fargo Arena.

Jahii Carson hit a free throw to give the Jackrabbits a two-point cushion with 14.2 seconds left.

After a timeout, No. 4 Mountain View passed the ball around the perimeter until it went to Sweeney, who drove and attempted a floater from in the paint.

Baruti timed his jump perfectly for his fourth block of the night and the hard-fought victory.

"We were sticking to (Mountain View's 3-point shooters) and if they drove we were hoping Blondy would get a block," Mesa coach Shane Burcar said.

Mountain View had a chance to win at the end of regulation, but Asaad Woods missed a fadeaway.

The Toros (13-3) were still in control late in overtime as they held a 52-48 lead with possession of the ball with under two minutes remaining.

But Mountain View, generally a team very fundamentally sound, turned the ball over on four straight possessions and Mesa (15-3) scored the last six points of the contest.

Carson, who scored a game-high 33 points, put his team ahead 53-52 on a pull-up jumper with 31 seconds to go and pushed the lead to two points by making one of two free throws before Baruti's heroics.

"We made plays at the end," Burcar said.

A recruiting violation forced Baruti to sit out the second half of last season, beginning with the first of two games against Mountain View.

He returned to play Jan. 8 this year, and this was his first meeting with the crosstown rival Toros.

"I was ready for this game," he said.

Woods scored 13 points for Mountain View, but he missed nearly eight minutes of the second half because of an erroneous foul call which was intended to go on Tyson Lane.

Baruti picked up his fourth foul with more than four minutes left in the fourth quarter, but neither star player fouled out.

### **Other MLK Classic boys results**

**No. 4 McClintock 70, No. 1 Sunnyslope 52:** The Chargers used a big third quarter run to blow out the top-ranked and defending state champions. Cameron Forte led the way for McClintock with 34 points and 12 rebounds.

Kansas-bound senior Royce Woolridge had 28 points for Sunnyslope, but it wasn't nearly enough as McClintock played one of its best games of the season to pull off the upset.

**Chaparral 60, Red Mountain 48:** The Firebirds defense held Red Mountain to just 13 points at halftime and 24 through three quarters as they cruised to the victory.

The lead got up to as much as 25 points in the fourth quarter, as Jarrett Upchurch had 17 points to lead the way for Chaparral.

Paul Newendyke returned to action for the first time since injuring a tendon in his foot in mid-December but scored only three points and fouled out.