

MLK hoops snapshots: Scenes from Wells Fargo

Nine hours of hoop mania on Martin Luther King Day ended with a thrilling OT game between longtime rivals Mesa and [Mountain View](#). Mesa relied on defense to scrap back and win it 54-52, holding Mountain View scoreless in the final 1:53 of OT.

Mesa 6-foot-9 forward Blondy Baruti's block at the end and 5-6 guard Jaymen Green reaching his arms out for teammates on the bench while being administered for a cut near his eye were vivid scenes at the end.

Junior point guard Jahii Carson gets it done at both ends for Mesa. His two steals helped ignite Mesa in the final two minutes of overtime. He had 33 points and showed off that 42-inch vertical with a high-flying dunk off a steal. Oregon State [assistant coach](#) David Grace had a front row view. He got Carson to commit to the Beavers last summer. You can bet he'll do everything he can (within [NCAA](#) rules) not to lose that commit.

Nice roll by Tempe McClintock in the second half, and where did 6-foot-5 junior guard Cameron Forte come from?

Forte looked like Carmelo Anthony against No.1 Phoenix Sunnyslope. He stole the spotlight from Kansas-bound senior guard Royce Woolridge. Forte, who had to sit out last season after transferring from Tempe [Marcos de Niza](#), had 34 points on 13 of 21 shooting. He also had 12 rebounds, 11 on the defensive end.

Forte said he knows his ticket to the next level.

"My dad tells me I have to work on my defense," Cameron said.

McClintock, preseason No.2 in Class 4A Division I, won 70-52.

Great strategy by McClintock coach Jase Coburn by having Forte out front at the point, pulling out center Jesse Milleson.

"We wanted to try to create a matchup," Coburn said.

Coburn was impressed by senior guard Jeremie Gooden's defense of Woolridge. Last year, Coburn regretted not putting Gooden on Woolridge more, and Woolridge scorched McClintock for 44 points.

Monday, Woolridge had 26 points. All of them were quiet except one ferocious follow slam that prompted maybe the biggest noise from the fans all day.

Chaparral boys will go as far as their guards will take them. They've got some scrappy guards, led by junior Jarrett Upchurch, who had 17 points and a couple of steals in a 60-48 victory over [Red Mountain](#).

Nick Tomsick, Zeke Chapman, Upchurch and Luke Roh all are capable of getting Chaparral deep at state in 5A-II. Chapman still is a bit rusty after missing the first 11 games with an injury. It was only his fifth game back. When he works his way into form, Chaparral could be a dangerous player in a tournament that looks to be wide open.

St. Mary's girls basketball team has six freshmen, two sophomores, two juniors and two seniors.

"I don't know if there is a younger team in the state," St. Mary's coach Curtis Ekmark, who lost three Division I players from last year's team that lost to Gilbert Highland in the 5A-I championship game.

Ekmark said quite a few of his young players are being recruited by D.I colleges. Imagine this team in a couple of years. As it is now, it's pretty good. It beat Xavier Prep 70-50 by holding Xavier to 34 percent shooting.

Tolleson girls made 13 of 19 second-half shots in an 80-50 rout of Phoenix Pinnacle in the first game of the day. It made 11 of 22 3-point shots in the game. Four players scored at least 15 points.

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