

High School BBall Weekend of Champions

Written by Stacey Hough, Sports Columnist

Thursday, 28 February 2013 15:04 - Last Updated Thursday, 28 February 2013 15:46



This weekend begins March Madness, nationally and locally. The basketball world hums with major college teams positioning themselves for a big tournament run, historically Black college teams battling at the CIAA tourney in Charlotte, and South Carolina high school teams playing for state titles right here in Columbia. A lot of great storylines and talent will be on display at the Colonial Life Arena (CLA) on March 1st and 2nd, for those who only seem to think that our youth are up to no good, here's a chance to show and support those who are striving to be successful, academically and athletically.

The Weekend of Champions begins on Friday night with a class 4A doubleheader. The girls tile game features Dorman High School (Spartanburg) vs. Dutch Fork High School (Irmo). Dutch Fork is the defending 4A girls champion, having defeated Orangeburg-Wilkinson last year to win it all. The Silver Foxes of Dutch Fork are led by 6'5" Senior Center Alaina Coates, McDonalds All American, who has accepted a scholarship offer to play at the University of South Carolina next year. She has been a dominant player in the state for the past several seasons. This matchup with Dorman (who also has a big center, 6'3" Kenya Ollie) is actually a re-match of last season's upperstate final, played in Greenville at the Bi-Lo Center. Dutch Fork prevailed and went on to capture the title, and are now looking to repeat. Friday's nightcap will feature the Irmo Yellow Jackets vs. Goose Creek Gators, in a game that will put two different winning streaks on the line. Irmo, led by Justin McKie, the son of former Irmo and Gamecock star BJ McKie, is undefeated (28-0) on the season and nationally ranked (21st). On the other side, Goose Creek Head Coach Blake Hall is in the midst of a very impressive streak of his own. Hall coached North Charleston High to the 2A championship last year in his first season as coach. He then accepted the head coaching position at Goose Creek, and in his first season there is, again, in the title game. So Coach Hall has never lost a postseason game in his young career. Either Hall's or Irmo's streak will end at the CLA on Friday night, March 1st.

High School BBall Weekend of Champions

Written by Stacey Hough, Sports Columnist

Thursday, 28 February 2013 15:04 - Last Updated Thursday, 28 February 2013 15:46

Saturday games begin at 11Am with the 1A girls championship game between McCormick and Hemingway. McCormick has a player to watch in 5'11" junior center Narquevia Jennings. Immediately following that game, the boys' 1A title match will have Lewisville vs. Whale Branch (Beaufort). Lewisville Coach Larry Davis will try to lead his team to a championship in the city where he starred for the USC Gamecocks in the late 1990s. After the 1A games are concluded, the girls 2A championship games pits defending champ Bishop England High (Charleston) vs. W.J. Keenan High (Columbia). Bishop England features a deep team looking to repeat, while Keenan is also deep, and has one of the best players in the state in 5'8" Senior Kiera Robinson, Class 2A Player of the Year, who is committed to play college hoops at Virginia Commonwealth University. The boys 2A game follows, and it is a much-anticipated matchup between Lake Marion (Holly-Hill) and Newberry High. Lake Marion, ranked #1 most of the season, is a deep and talented team that features Clemson football recruit Mike Williams (6'4" WR) and guard Khalil Halls. Newberry plays 14-15 players per game, and run-gun at a frenetic pace. During the playoffs, they averaged around 90 points per game. This could be the best game of the weekend. The final classification of the weekend will be the 3A girls and boys. The 3A girls game will feature Orangeburg-Wilkinson High vs. Lower Richland High (Hopkins). O-W, now competing on the 3A level after playing for the 4A title last year, are a huge team with 4 girls 6'0 or taller. They will be matched by the undefeated Lady Diamond Hornets, a deep team coached by Debbie Stroman, who will be going for her 7th championship as coach. This will be a hotly contested game, and a large crowd is expected. The Finale of the weekend will have the 3A boys defending champion Hartsville Red Foxes vs. Eastside High (Greenville). Hartsville will be led in their repeat attempt by senior guard Jaylen Shaw(6'0) who is getting major college interest, and is arguably the best point guard in the state. In the past year, Hartsville has won the basketball title, softball and football titles. Eastside has a very deep and talented team also, led by 6'5" senior Davaris McGowens, who is committed to play college hoops at High Point University.

Basketball fans will want to catch these stars and leaders of tomorrow as they lay it on the line for the joy of playing and for school spirit. Let's go out and support the kids who are trying to do positive things. If you cant make it to the Colonial Life Arena to watch in person, the games are available live on Time Warner Digital Cable channel 520. The games will also air live in Greenville/Spartanburg area on Me-TV(WSPA) and in Charleston area on MY-TV WMMP ch 36. Also available on www.schsl.tv powered by PlayOn Sports. Join our broadcast team as we bring you al the action and commentary: Emerson Phillips, Stacey Hough, Burch Antley, Duane Everett, and Rob Brennan.