

Insports Center, Trumbull, CT- The 2014 Capital Shootout was held over the weekend in a tournament brought to you by Elite Sports. On display were some of the highest risers in high school basketball players from CT, MA, and NY. Teams in attendance included Hillhouse High School (New Haven, CT), Fitch High School (Groton, CT), Green Farms Academy (Westport, CT), and University High School (Hartford, CT). The AAU teams that competed were USAD out of Danbury, CT, Knights (Danbury, CT), Wizards (Waterbury, CT) CT Hoopstars (Wallingford, CT) and CT Elite basketball teams including a 17U team, a High-School (9th Grade) team, and a middle school team.

The first match-up featured 2 Time CT State Champions (15U, 13U) USAD against the CT Hoopstars. With a front-line that boasted 6'7" Alex Preston, 6'6" Hayes Kelchner, and 6'6" Peter Kotulsky, USAD played the game from inside out. The touches into the paint would result in an easy shot opportunity with seemingly every missed shot picked off by one of the bigs and into the basket. The length of the bigs bothered Hoopstars inside who were harassed all game long in the lane with multiple shots sent back rudely. When USAD wasn't forcing the ball into the low post, the three-headed guard attack of Justin Siedeman, Jordan Means, and Carter Scott pushed the ball on offense breaking down the defense for easy looks. When their outside shots started falling, it was pretty much over with for the determined yet undermanned Hoopstars squad. Ray Makusiewicz fought valiantly inside using his bulk to battle against the thinner USAD defenders but did not have enough help inside. Trevor Biel hit 3 consecutive threes to give Hoopstars life but USAD methodically pulled away down the stretch for the victory. (17U)

During the earlier part of the day, teams participated in really intense drills and work-outs that demanded a lot of physical effort and mental focus. Teams were made to match-up randomly and square up to play intense defense. In the workouts players struggled to keep up with the demands of the drill but players from Hillhouse High School seemed to bring out the most intensity during the morning session. That intensity was in full display later on that day in their first game match-up against the University Hawks out of Hartford. Right from the start the intense pressure led to multiple turnovers and easy baskets. The player coached Hawks had no answer for the press and continuously tried to dribble their way out of it. That just compounded matters as Hillhouse pulled out to a big lead by half-time. In the second half it was more of the same but at this point the pressure was making the Hawks fatigued and that led to wide open lay-ups and multiple offensive rebounds by Hillhouse. Joey Kasperzk (13 pts), Jalil Wilkerson (13 pts), and John Lewis (10 pts) wrecked havoc all over the court and got in the head of the University players. G Will Hardie started off hot with 6 of his 8 pts in the first half, but after an awkward fall was not able to continue attacking the rim. G/F Justin Williams did his best to keep his Hawks team in it (14 pts) but little support from his teammates the result was inevitable. Hillhouse wins big against University. (17U)

The third match-up featured the Falcons of Fitch-Groton versus the New England Class C prep school champions Green Farms Academy out of Weston, CT. Green Farms boasted the size and power of 6'8" Sunday Okeke in the post but found it hard to use that advantage throughout the game. With blinding quickness and laser like shooting, the Falcons were able to get out on the break, penetrate, and kick out to wide open shooters. With two of their star players out on college visits (Zach Baines, and Jim Djema), the Dragons did not have enough fire power in this match-up to keep the game closer. Evan Roteman and Isaac manton kept getting into the lane to create

opportunities for themselves and their teammates but still could not stem the tide as Fitch ran out on every opportunity for easy transition baskets. Every time it appeared the Dragons were closing in on a run, it was stopped by a back-breaking three pointer from Eddie Volkerts. When big man Sunday Okeke was resting, Beau Fasida feasted inside for easy layups and put backs. Fitch pulled away for the win. (17U)

CT Elite-Powell matched up against the Hoopstars in the fourth game of the day. With the inside-combination of Mark DiLauro, Colby Adekanbi, Joey Canty, and Matthew Kronenberg, the Elite squad was able to pull out the victory. The backboards were absolutely dominated by the Elite bigs and they had ample opportunities at the rim. First half foul trouble by Elite allowed CT Hoopstars to stay in the game along with some timely baskets to keep it close at the half. Shawn Backus was able to get off some good looks but tired legs from fighting down low led to some off the rim misses. Cristian Brown kept attacking the rim against Elite before eventually fouling out. Eventually the depth (Elite dressed 12 players) wore out the feisty Hoopstars team. (17U)

In the most competitive game of the day, USAD outlasted CT Elite-Powell in the night cap 51-45. With both teams showing incredible defensive intensity, it was some late free-throws and timely offensive rebounds that proved to be the difference. USAD's normal height advantage was negated by Elite's own big man and the game came down to execution. USAD showed why they were the defending state champs by coming up big in the final minutes with some nifty passing and taking advantage of several overplays for back-door layups. Several desperation jump shots fell short at the rim and the USAD big men built a wall around the rim to prevent any late game heroics by CT Elite. (17U)

Other results included:

Fitch-Groton over CT Elite / University Hawks – 17U

Hillhouse over Green Farms Academy – 17U

Team NYC over Waterbury Wizards – High School

Knights (Danbury, CT) over Team NYC – High School

Waterbury Wizards over CT Elite – Babikian – High School

Knights (Danbury, CT) over CT Elite - Babikian – High School

CT Elite - Babikian over Team NYC II – Middle School

Team NYC II over CT Elite – Taylor – Middle School

Team NYC I over CT Elite – Taylor – Middle School

Team NYC I over CT Elite – Babikian – Middle School

Here are some of the players that stood out during the weekend that was filled with intense workouts and drills as well as competitive games.



Middle School Champion (TEAM NYC) Standouts:
 From L to R – Mike Vitale, Jovayne Walters, and Rivaldo Allen

Other Middle School Championship Standouts:
 Nick Kronenberg (CT Elite)
 Jack Scholl (CT Elite)
 Zayian Eusebe (CT Elite)

