

## BATTLE OF THE VALLEY: BOYS

# East seniors set tone early, finish victorious

## Buckley's Polan wins MVP honor

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Less than two minutes into the 11th annual boys' basketball Battle of the Valley Senior All-Star Game at the Matadome on Saturday, Knight High of Palmdale's Hassan Stephens received a pass just inside the key and drove to the basket.

The 6-foot-6 wing then soared to the hoop and unleashed a two-handed slam dunk.

Although it only gave the East an early two-point lead, the play became a theme that would carry on through the rest of the contest, as the East never trailed in its 94-85 defeat of the West.

"It felt good to be an all-star," said Stephens, who finished with 12 points and eight rebounds. "I just tried to play like a good teammate, and it's even better that we won."

The West didn't go down without a fight. Trailing 54-32 at halftime, it went on a 13-2 run in the first three minutes of the second half to cut the deficit to 12 points and pulled to within as close as nine.

The East used a strong inside presence by Richie Polan (Buckley of Sherman Oaks), who finished with 26 points and seven rebounds, good enough for the New York University-bound forward to be named the game's most valuable player.

"This was a great way to end my basketball career," Polan said. "I used to go to this game all the time, and playing in it has always been a dream for me. ... And winning was the icing on the cake."

Wayne Robinson (Village Christian of Sun Valley) made two first-half 3-pointers to finish with 17 points for the East.

Kareem Maddox (Oak Park) led the West with 20 points and nine rebounds. Teammate and Louisiana State-bound center Garrett Green (Taft of Woodland Hills) had 12 points and 11 rebounds, and Bobby Macias (Thousand Oaks) scored 17 points, 12 in the second half.

► **Dunkathon:** Maddox, who stands 6 feet 6, outdueled the 6-10 Green to win the halftime slam dunk contest, which featured former Cleveland High of Reseda and USC star Nick Young as a judge.

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