

BATTLE OF THE VALLEY: GIRLS

Balanced attack difference for East

Hart's Thomas named game MVP

BY JOHN WAREHAM

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Cal State Northridge played host Saturday to the Battle of the Valley All-Stars, where high school basketball players representing the East and the West faced off in a 3-point shooting contest, a dunk contest and two games — a boys' game and a girls' game.

In the girls' game, the East used a balanced scoring attack to defeat the West 77-73. Nicole Leon of Canyon of Canyon Country led the East in scoring with 16 points and 15 rebounds, and Tatianna Thomas of Hart of Newhall finished with 15 points and 10 rebounds and was named the game's most valuable player.

"If I played hard and I played well, I thought there was a possibility," the Oregon-bound Thomas said about earning MVP honors.

Thomas and the East had to fend off a late West rally in the second half to preserve the win. Guard Andrea Chavez and forward Arpi Armirkanyan, both

of Grant of Van Nuys, led the West's comeback attempt, which culminated with a Chavez high-arching 3-pointer that put the West up 68-67 with five minutes left.

The two Grant players and the East's combo of Leon and Thomas traded points, which kept the game close, until a 3-pointer by Bridget Jenkins of Alemany with 40 seconds left shifted the momentum. A 3 by Tiffany Hurd of Moorpark got the West back to one, but a basket by Jenkins and a free throw by Thomas sealed the win for the East.

"The strategy was to try to get everybody equal minutes in the first three-fourths of the game, and then in the last quarter of the game, we wanted to make sure we had our best team in there to try to win", said East team coach Hollie Wilson, head coach of the girls' team at Birmingham of Lake Balboa. "We had a couple of big plays at the end. It was really a tough game. I thought it would be easier for us."

In the other festivities, Yoyo Greenfield of Harvard-Westlake of Studio City won the weekend's 3-point shooting contest over East teammate Jenkins of Alemany.