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## Hoop City Classic shows off top recruiting prospects

By CANDACE BUCKNER  
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The gym doors open today for what is being billed as the biggest amateur summer basketball showcase ever seen in Kansas City.

The second annual Hoop City Classic, which runs from today through Sunday, July 25, tips off in many gymnasiums across the Kansas City area, featuring a field of nearly 300 teams that might have ordinarily spent their July days touring arenas in Orlando and Las Vegas.

The NCAA approves two 10-day open periods in July for college coaches to recruit prospects — the second and final window starts today and goes until the last day of the month. Traditionally, the best and brightest players and their AAU teams have ventured to Nevada or Florida. But as a cost-effective alternative for nationally recognized AAU teams, the Hoop City Classic began here. “I think this is probably the biggest basketball tournament that I know of that has been put on in Kansas City,” said Ed Fritz, the Blue Valley Northwest varsity boys basketball coach and co-organizer of the Classic. “Last year was the first year doing it and we almost doubled things this year. We’re going to keep doing things right and it’s going to keep getting better and better.”

According to Fritz, nearly 300 college coaches and scouts have expressed interest in attending the tournament, which would make the tournament a boon for prospects.

All games, which include girls and boys divisions, tip off today at various gymnasiums on both sides of the state line. But one bracket stands out among the crowded field. The Top 20 bracket, filled with the best 17-and-under teams in the tournament, will play exclusively at Swinney Recreational Center on the UMKC campus.

This particular bracket features four of the top 100 ranked players in the country, as rated by Scout.com. Anthony Davis, a five-star power forward whom the site ranks fifth nationally in the Class of 2011, comes out of Chicago. His Mean Streets team is scheduled to play at 6 tonight. Davis, at 6 feet 8 according to Scout.com, has drawn interest from Kentucky, Ohio State and Syracuse.

The No. 1 rated point guard in his class and sixth-ranked player nationally, Marquis Teague, will start play with his Spiece Indy Heat squad earlier in the day at 3:30 p.m. Teague, listed at 6-1, has committed to Kentucky, following the footsteps of standout John Wall, who was the top NBA draft pick this summer.

“Marquis is their next great freshman point guard,” Indy Heat coach Todd Hensley said. “Marquis right now I believe is the best point guard in his class. I think when everybody sees him play they’ll know why he was the only one (Kentucky) was going after for his position.”

Spiece Mo-Kan competes as the local team in the Top 20 bracket, and the team has height with 6-11 Willie Cauley, from Olathe Northwest, and 6-9 David Kravish, of Lee’s Summit North. Both big men have generated high interest from several Division I programs.

In conjunction with the Hoop City Classic, the College Basketball Experience will play host to a Top 20 slam-dunk and three-point shooting contest on Friday night at its facility inside the Sprint Center. For more information on ticket prices and schedules of games, visit [www.hoopcityclassic.com](http://www.hoopcityclassic.com)

**Players to watch**

•**Anthony Davis**, 6-8, forward, Chicago, Meanstreets: Averaged 30 points and 12 rebounds during his junior season, but was a relatively unknown prospect until early spring.

•**Marquis Teague**, 6-2, point guard, Indianapolis, Spiece Indy Heat: The younger brother of NBA point guard Jeff Teague, he averaged 16.3 points and 4.6 assists last season.

•**Amir Williams**, 6-9, center, Detroit, The Family: Played on the U.S. men's under-18 team that recently won the gold medal at the FIBA Americas U18 championships in San Antonio.

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