

County teams get festive for invite

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A basketball showcase will take place today as the first SEBA Atlanta High School Hoop Festival tips off at the Cobb County Civic Center.

The one-day, 10-team high school invitational event will feature four Cobb teams -- McEachern, North Cobb, Osborne and Walton -- versus teams from throughout the metro-Atlanta area in "five highly competitive games," said tournament director William LoPresti. "We are really looking forward to it," LoPresti said. "We are really excited about the field of teams that we have, especially showcasing some of the top coaches and players in the area.

"I feel like we've put together a really strong foundation for a first year event. We've attracted some really good teams and we're looking forward to a great day of basketball." Organized by the Southeast Basketball Academy and McEachern, the tournament's featured game will include an evening matchup of McEachern (4-2) and Cherokee (6-1) at 8 p.m.

"LoPresti had the idea for this tournament and he gave me a call to see if we were interested in playing in it," said McEachern head coach Nick Chaykowsky, whose team on a four-game winning streak. "He said he'd give us a competitive game and we're pleased with who we're facing."

The tournament format, LoPresti said, will help showcase the high school teams in the area and provide publicity for the players to college coaches. "We wanted to get 10 teams that were quality programs to come in and, pretty much, play games throughout the day," LoPresti said. "(We wanted to do this) mainly for the benefit of trying to get the kids some exposure and the teams some exposure from coaches at the next level.

"Many of the players in this event have participated in SEBA camps and clinics during the off season and summer." The tournament will begin at 1:45 p.m. when Osborne takes on Morgan County. Etowah will face undefeated and Blessed Trinity, the undefeated second-ranked team out of Class AAA, at 3:15 p.m. Walton will follow with a game against Central Gwinnett at 5 p.m. and North Cobb will meet Shiloh at 6:30 p.m.

"I think (LoPresti) has lined up a great event with quality teams from the Atlanta area," said North Cobb head coach Terry Gorsuch. "We get to face a non-region, solid team that is well-coached and anytime you can do that is a plus."

Tickets for the festival are \$8 for adults and \$5 for students. Children under the age of 5 are free and tickets are good for all five games throughout the day.
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-- Marietta Daily Journal Sports Writer Carten Cordell contributed to this report.