



DeMar DeRozan

Compton's DeRozan goes aerial at NBA All-Star Dunk Contest

By Dennis J. Freeman
Bulletin Staff Writer

This should have been DeMar DeRozan's moment in the sun. Instead, the former Compton High School basketball standout received another slight during the NBA All-Star Dunk Contest.

After finishing as the runner-up in the dunk contest last year, DeRozan and Los Angeles Clippers star Blake Griffin were considered the favorites to win the most popular event of All-Star weekend.

Just like last year, DeRozan, who later took his jumping and shooting skills to USC before joining the NBA's Toronto Raptors, set basketball junkies abuzz with a plethora of skyline dunks. And just like last year, he had to play second-fiddle to the dunk contest's eventual winner.

With the world descending on Los Angeles for the 2011 NBA All-Star game, the dunk contest was a crowd magnet with DeRozan firmly lodged at front and center. Known throughout the league for his unfathomable 48-inch vertical leap, exceptional athletic skills and spectacular dunks, the 6-foot-7 DeRozan has placed a spotlight on himself.

Compton High School assistant coach Tony Thomas, speaking to The Bulletin prior to the 2009 NBA Draft, said he always knew that DeRozan would become successful as a professional basketball player.

"I'm predicting that he'll be an all-star in the next couple of seasons," Thomas said at that time. "He's the best player I've coached by far. He's the best player I've seen. He's always had this drive to be good. Whatever his weaknesses were, he worked on them."

Dunking the basketball has never been a weakness for DeRozan. That's one area he needs little improvement on as Griffin, the NBA and the fans can attest to, thanks to one of Compton's favorite son's dazzling display of aerial acrobatics.

He did not disappoint his legion of followers. In fact, DeRozan, who won the McDonald's High School All-American dunk title after his senior season at Compton High School, may have increased his fan base on Saturday when he outmaneuvered Griffin in a head-to-head matchup.

DeRozan came up with a dunk he named the "Show Stopper." His perfect execution for the first-round dunk did just that: stop the show. It was a far better dunk than Griffin performed. Sev-

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Compton adds health element to General Plan

ONE OF FIRST CITIES IN LA COUNTY TO USE NEW OPTION

By Cheryl Scott
Bulletin Staff Writer

COMPTON—The city of Compton plans to add a health element to its General Plan for the first time, according to Senior Planner Robert Delgado. Compton will be one of the first cities in Los Angeles County to use the optional element, which will address specific health needs in the city.

"We decided to add the health element after studying numbers we received from the Los Angeles County Health Department," Delgado told The Bulletin. "They show that there are

higher rates of diabetes, obesity and HIV, as well as a reduced life expectancy in our city."

One reason for the higher incidence of health problems in the city is its position in the 710 Corridor, the primary route for truck traffic from the Port of Long Beach to rail distribution facilities located in Los Angeles.

Studies have shown that there is a higher rate of pollution-related diseases in cities located in the Corridor. According to yearly county health surveys, mortality from diabetes, motor vehicle crashes, coronary heart disease and emphysema are higher in I-710 corridor communities compared to the rest of LA County.

In I-710 corridor communities obesity is 24 percent higher and diabetes 46 percent higher than in LA County, and five of the 10 cities with the highest rates of childhood obesity in LA County run along the I-710 corridor.

In addition to its location, Compton residents incur additional health risks because of various socio-economic realities. Crime in the community affects the life expectancy of its residents. Data shows that Latinos and African Americans are disproportionately affected by homicide as a leading cause of premature deaths. For Latinos it is the number one cause. For African Americans it is the number two cause.

"This results in cutting short the lives of young adults in the Compton Area," says Plan-

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Courtesy of Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

Washington Elementary School students on last year's camping trip to the Santa Monica Mountains sponsored by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.

WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY STUDENTS HEAD OFF FOR CAMP

By Cheryl Scott
Bulletin Staff Writer

COMPTON—For the second year, Washington Elementary School fourth graders are taking a camping trip to King Gillette Ranch in the Santa Monica Mountains.

The students left on Tuesday, Feb. 22, from the school parking lot. There to see them off were representatives from the office of State Senator

Roderick D. Wright, the Compton City Council and the Compton Unified School District Board.

City Councilwoman Yvonne Arceneaux said that the students will benefit greatly from their camping experience, sponsored by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. "This organization does a fantastic job and has worked very hard in our community," she said. "It's a wonderful experience for the students. They come back with a wealth of knowledge

about outdoor life and the environment."

MRCA sponsors overnight education camps that provide environmental education, team building experiences and old-fashioned camp fun for kids, many of whom have never left home before.

The students will stay three days and two nights at the outdoor education camp, accompa-

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ALL SET FOR BASEBALL!
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Elated kids wave goodbye before leaving for camp last year.

Compton kids go camping in the mountains



Compton students take a class in tree climbing.



Washington students enjoy the fun of hiking in the mountains on the camping trip sponsored by MRCA last year.

CAMP

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nied by camp counselors from MRCA and some of their teachers. The organization has introduced tens of thousands of urban youth to nature in more than 25 years of operating outdoor education camps.

"They can't believe how quiet it is at camp," said Jamie Cabral, chief of education and interpretation for MRCA. "They are so excited to be outside in a peaceful and idyllic setting. They begin to understand that nature is all around us. They are amazed by the deer and the other wildlife they see."

They spend their nights in a dormitory. "Even in the dorm they experience the quiet of life away from the city," said Cabral.

The MRCA is a Joint Powers Agency of the State of California. The organization has purchased a parcel of land adjacent to Washington Elementary within the Compton Creek restoration project. It plans to create a natural park on the four acres of unused land. The park will feature recreation amenities, California native habitats and green design, and will serve as a portal to the Compton Creek Bike Path.

It was designed through a collaborative process with teachers, community members and stakeholders.

"MRCA took a piece of land that had lain fallow for years," said Arceneaux, chair of the Compton Creek Task Force. "We are excited to have them as partners in our plan to create a nature preserve along Compton Creek."

Photos courtesy of Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority