

Sports

Editor: Dustin Perry dustin.perry@bliss.army.mil



PHOTOS BY SPC. BROOKS FLETCHER

T.J. Caldwell evades a defensive block during a lay-up.



(Top) Prior to the contest, teens were briefed on the rules and regulation on the tournament.



(Left) Rene Nava, CYS sports and fitness director, prepares the brackets for the double elimination basketball tournament.



Youth Services, Power 102 host teen basketball tourney

SPC. BROOKS FLETCHER

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The Huskies won a double-elimination, three-on-three basketball tournament by defeating the Kings Friday at the Youthplex, Bldg. 195 here on post.

The Fort Bliss Middle School and Teen Services, a division of Fort Bliss' Child and Youth Services, hosted the all-night event with help from radio station Power 102.

The all-night basketball event allowed middle and high school teens from the El Paso area to participate in the bi-monthly event.

Fort Bliss teens are allowed to invite friends from other El Paso schools to participate in the event, said Gabriele Johnson, MS&T director.

In an effort to keep the teens off the streets, Youth Services offer these events so teens have an alternative to hanging out on the street, said Johnson.

"We want to keep the teens in a safe, fun environment," said Rene Nava, CYS sports and fitness director.

During the past few months, attendance to the basketball tournaments has grown to about 45 to 90 teens, a sizeable increase from the six to 12 teens who originally participated.

The growing interest validates the popularity of the event, said Nava, who is hoping to reach the Youthplex's full capacity in the following months.

With the increased popularity of basketball among teens and the assistance of Power 102 and on-air personality "Monica," the night's event

turned out successfully.

The radio station provided the music during the basketball games and dance contest, as the players competed and the dance contestants moved to the beat.

"We want to, not only attract younger teens, but the older teens as well," said Johnson. "Older teens

think that they may be too cool to do stuff like this, so we do things that are more appealing to them here, like the basketball tournament, which has drawn a larger crowd."

Six, four-man teams competed against one another in the 3-on-3 competition. The double elimination rule gave the teams an equal opportunity to prove themselves.

"[The event] builds sportsmanship and camaraderie among all the teens," said Nava. "It sort of gives [the teams] bragging rights, too."

Nava also said the winning team received a T-shirt as a token for their accomplishment.

As the teams rallied back and forth, in and out of bracketed slots, they played enthusiastically, diving for loose balls and yelling across the court.

"The kids get a good workout," said Nava. "When they get home, all they want to do is go to sleep."

The Huskies, who lost their opening game, took advantage of the double elimination, winning their next five games in a row to claim the champion's title.

For more information on Fort Bliss CYS events, stop by the Youthplex, Bldg. 195 or call 568-KID.



After winning the tournament, teens from the Huskies received T-shirts. Player from left: Brandon Copeland, Corinthean Sanchez, T.J. Caldwell and Tevin Caldwell.