



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Elmont Shines Again During 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament at Dutch Broadway School

JACK M. MARTINS July 19, 2011

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It was 7 a.m. Saturday at Dutch Broadway School, where over 200 volunteers were putting up banners, assembling tents, setting up hoops and putting the finishing touches on the 2011 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament. Months of preparation, that began this past February, were being executed by high school and college students with precision and efficiency that local civic leaders marveled at. “This is what Elmont is all about,” said Tournament Sponsor,

Senator Jack M. Martins.

By 8:15 a.m., you could hear balls bouncing. Children were riding their bikes up to the school, locking them up and practicing for the long awaited event that has become the largest Summer event in Elmont outside the Belmont Stakes. Those first basketball dribbles were in anticipation of the 11 a.m. tip-offs. A Dutch Broadway School student said, "You have to get here early and get warmed up. That's how the pros do it."

The tournament is sponsored by Senator Martins and Senator Dean Skelos and received critical support from the Town of Hempstead, County Legislator John Ciotti, Councilman Ed Ambrosino, Councilman Jim Darcy and Assemblyman Ed Ra.

By 9 a.m., hundreds of young people were lining up, practicing jump shots and getting ready for their tip-off. Different displays were going up from the New York Knicks, Snapple, Verizon, AFLAC, SPRINT, US Army, National Guard, NYS Police, Bethpage Federal Credit Union, T-Mobile, Cablevision, OKKK Karate School, POWERADE, Health Plus, Autism Speaks and much more.

By 10 a.m., crowd estimates were that over 1,500 children and adults were streaming into the tournament. "When I drove down Dutch Broadway, I couldn't believe the cars were parking all the way down to Western Beef," said Tournament Committee member Sandra Smith. "All the side streets had cars parked and hundred of kids were walking on the sidewalks toward Dutch."

By the end of the day, organizers had counted over 4,300 young people and adults had come through the school to participate in the day.

"This is the biggest turnout I have ever seen," said Senator Martins. "This is Elmont's greater family reunion. For months, young people on this tournament committee met and worked

incredibly hard on this tournament. I would go to their meetings and listen to the ideas and reflect on what a great thing this is. It's our young people creating and putting together an event for their neighbors and community. There is only one phrase you can say about the tournament- it was awesome."

Senator Skelos added, "This is one event I never miss. It's exciting from start to finish and it's all about families and our young people. The volunteers that put this together are some of the greatest young people I have ever known. I'm proud to call them friends."

Basketball teams battled it out on the court from 11 a.m. until 8 p.m. at night for bragging rights for the best 3-on-3 team. In the early evening, 200 young adults in high school and college suited up for high stakes 7-on-7 football that electrified the Dutch Broadway School athletic fields.

The big game during the 3-on-3 Tournament that brought out hundreds of spectators was the showdown between the Nassau County Champion Elmont Memorial High School Varsity Boys Basketball team and the Henry Viscardi School Cougars. The Elmont team played the Viscardi Cougars in wheelchairs in an action-packed basketball game that had the crowd cheering and some even crying watching the children play. "This was one of the most emotional things I think I have ever seen," said Elmont resident Darian Bryant, who noted, "Only in Elmont could you see a game like this. It has educated all of us."

The Viscardi Cougars beat the Elmont Spartans 70-53. According to Elmont's Kyle Johnson, the score was "A lot to a little!"

Robert Chambers, another Elmont star, added, "They know how to play. It was great fun!"

Senior captain Dillon Williams said, "This was the greatest tournament by far!"

New York Knick legend John Starks dropped by the tournament and did the opening tip-off of the Viscardi-Elmont game. "This is really amazing. It's an honor to be in Elmont and I thank all of you for having me. The Knicks are proud to be a part of this day," said Starks.

The Knick superstar did the opening tip-off between the Viscardi-Elmont game.

County Legislator John Ciotti worked the food tent at the tournament and served over 3,000 slices of pizza, 1,000 hamburgers and cheeseburgers as well as fruit, drinks and chips with volunteers for hours during the tournament. "This is the biggest and most fun event we have here in our community. Everybody is happy and having a good time. It doesn't get any better than this," Ciotti said.

Assemblyman Ed Ra added, "Seeing all these families come together like this makes you reflect on how lucky we are to have a community like Elmont."

The basketball action on the courts had the crowd pumped as teams progressed in their respective division brackets. The winners came from Elmont Memorial and Sewanhaka High Schools as well as Gotham Avenue and a sleeper team that clinched the 5th and 6th grade division championship from Dutch Broadway School. "The 5th and 6th grade championship game was intense," said Senator Martins, who presented the winning team with NY Mets tickets. "These kids were battling it out and hitting shots all over the place."

The slam dunk competition was another area where the crowd intensity and excitement had people cheering and screaming. One of the highlights of the Slam Dunk Competition had Elmont senior Aaron Dennis, a soccer star, flip a basketball in the air with his feet to Alex Bowen who slam dunked the ball for a sensational score. Slam Dunk Competition Chairman Timothy Jean said, "There was only one way to describe that dunk- wow!"

Tournament Chairman Scott Cushing said, "This is probably the proudest moment I have of our Elmont community. All of these young people throughout the area playing together and having a great time and all the families that stayed for the day and enjoyed all the fun events. When you have well over 4,300 people come together like this can only mean one thing- something great happened in Elmont!"

Later in the day, the first annual 7-on-7 football element was added to the tournament. High school and college football players put on their cleats and battled it out on the fields of Dutch with hundreds of spectators lining the fields. "This was definitely a hit at the tournament. Senator Martins told us to put it together and guys would play; he was right. We had over 15 teams. It was incredible," said Football Chair Donald Pierre-Louis.

Soccer was also on tap at the tournament as young people lined up at the soccer quad and took turns playing with local soccer greats Ahkeel Rodney, Ajani Jones, Darian Bryant and Jules Riche. The Elmont graduates taught youngsters how to do soccer tricks and played pick up games with elementary school children throughout the day.

"Every year this tournament keeps getting better and better," said Tournament Referee Chair Marvin Lee. "No matter how young or old you are, everybody had a blast. Dutch Broadway was jumping!"