

Region 3 powers play for keeps

By Linda Hamilton

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There really ought to be marching bands, confetti and live TV coverage. After all, it'll be one of the best prep basketball games Utah will offer this season.

Instead, when Highland (8-1) travels to Olympus (4-1) for the Region Three opener, it'll be an afternoon-after the morning-after the morning-after affair. Who can get excited at 3 p.m. on a Tuesday after New Year's?

So, spectators will have to be satisfied watching three or four probable all-staters strut their stuff for two teams who undoubtedly will be ranked in the top 5 on the 4A poll.

While the Titan-Ram game will draw the most interest, other big Region Three rivalries also take place Tuesday. There's East at West (they've lost only twice each, and West beat East by a point in the Valley Tournament) and Cottonwood ponies up the road a few blocks to Granite. Skyline has a bye on this first day of region play.

Olympus is picked by most Region Three coaches to take the championship after being runnerup to Skyline last season. The Titans return three-year starter Ron Ence, 6-foot-5 co-captain who's been named to a pre-season all-America team; 6-5 Bob Hall, all-region and the team's second-leading scorer last year; and guard Mike Vanderhoof, a two-year letterman who is co-captain and a fine shooter.

Swingman Fred Trovato, 6-3, has three varsity letters, and two-year man Blair Oliphant, a 6-8 junior, has worked into the lineup. Willie Wright, Scott McGavin and Spence Philipoom are

regulars for Ron Steinke's team.

Highland averages about 86 points a game. Most of that comes from juniors Mike Maxwell and John Baucom. Maxwell was a third-team all-stater last year, is deadly on free throws and averages close to 30 points a game with one 42-point explosion already to his credit.

Baucom, 6-4 forward, averages 21 a game and displayed 14-for-17 field goal shooting in the Valley Tournament championship game against Skyline. Two other juniors also start for the runnin' Rams: Gordon Kener and Bill Moon. Alex Priskos, 6-5, centers.

East and West are about as even as could be. They have similar records, each beat Layton by a bunch (West by 25, East by 23), the forward lines match up well heightwise (East's 6-6, 6-5, 6-3; West's 6-5, 6-4, 6-3) and each has a high-scoring center and outstanding guard.

West banks on center Brent Shingleton and forward Tom Hewitson. Hewitson is the power forward who can shoot for 20 points and rebound well. Shingleton came on at mid-season last year and is capable of double-figure averages from inside.

Arnold Slowman, the assist-disher, doesn't score much but plays good defense and once held Maxwell to two points in a half. Other starters for the Panthers are John Ottosson and Clay Bloomquist.

For East, it's Doug Milne at guard and Brad Boyle at center. Each likes to score in the 20s, and when they do it at the same time, the Leopards win. Greg Grant, Tim Lunt and Chris Furgis complete the lineup. Bench strength is an asset, says coach Dick Milne, who

can pull in Jeff Davis, Ned Maxfield, co-captain John Stevens or improving 6-7 junior Rich Gremillion.

Region coaches are unsure about Cottonwood, a team coach Bryan Pavlish thinks "could be the best in Cottonwood history." The coaches have picked the Colts to finish anywhere from second to sixth. Pavlish has tri-captains Perrin Anderl (a region scoring leader as a junior), Brian Williams ("certainly one of the best guards in the region and state," says Pavlish) and Rick Nixon, an outstanding rebounder at 6-5. Completing the all-senior starting five are 6-4 forward Hal Lewis and 6-2 guard Royal Richards.

Most coaches said Granite won't be a factor in the region race, but coach Dave Mascaro disagrees. "We have seven good players. Seniors Randy

Allen, Kent Bruin and Kevin Walker will carry most of the load, along with two super juniors in Kevin Kuhn and Brad Abel. Stan Allen and Tim Goldhardt give us good depth," Mascaro says.

After winning the state championship and graduating all starters, everybody considers Skyline "down." However, coach Paul Jeppesen has Eric Slaymaker at playmaking guard and Steve Clark at center. Slaymaker does everything well; Clark is mobile and a good shooter with a soft touch, despite his football size.

And Jeppesen has found an outstanding forward in junior Paul Rasmussen, who's carried much of the scoring load. Quick Greg Snyder's the other guard, Brandon Bennett, 6-5, scores well inside and Dave England pops off the bench to provide scoring and rebounding spurts.