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Leopards hold on to defeat Skyline

By Mike Sorensen

Deseret News sports writer

Round One of the Region Three "big three" shootouts was staged Friday night at East High's crackerbox gymnasium.

And the Leopards won a close decision, staving off a furious Skyline rally to win 75-71.

East and Skyline, along with Highland are the "big three" not only in Region Three, but in the state since the Rams, Leopards, and Eagles are ranked as the top three in the latest Deseret News prep poll. Within 10 days, each team will have played the other and the Region Three picture will begin to get clearer.

In Friday's contest, the two teams nearly shot the lights out in the first half, totaling 89 points between them, with East on top, 49-40.

But the second half turned into a sluggish and sloppy affair, with controversial calls by the officials causing both coach Dick Milne of East and Skyline's Paul Jeppesen to fret on the sidelines.

The Leopards began the second half "flat" according to Milne, and the Eagles scored three quick buckets to get right back in the game at 49-46. The quarter ended with East scoring just 10 points and leading 59-54.

The final quarter was slow, but East kept a steady seven to nine point edge and never seemed to be in trouble. Brad Boyle sank a foul shot to put the Leopards up by eight, 73-65, with just 44 seconds remaining. That's when the roof started to cave in on East, almost completely.

Scott Spurrier, Brandon Bennett, and Brent Layton all hit jumpers in the next 35 seconds after some careless turnovers by East, and it was suddenly a two-point game, the closest it had been since the opening minutes.

But Boyle got loose behind the bunched-up Skyline defense and slam-dunked a final two at the buzzer.

Postgame, Milne explained his team's sluggish second half. "We started playing too careful when we got in foul trouble. Boyle and (Greg) Grant getting their fourth fouls early in the half hurt us more than anything."

Rich Gremillion led the East scoring with 18 points followed by Grant with 16. Spurrier had 18 for the Eagles.

"We're looking forward to playing them at our place," said Jeppesen afterward.

In the only other Region Three encounter Friday night, West staged a late fourth quarter rally to snare a 65-60 victory over Granite.

The Panthers were sparked by Carey Lloyd with 21 points and 13 rebounds and Craig Child with 18 points including 10 for 11 from the free throw line.

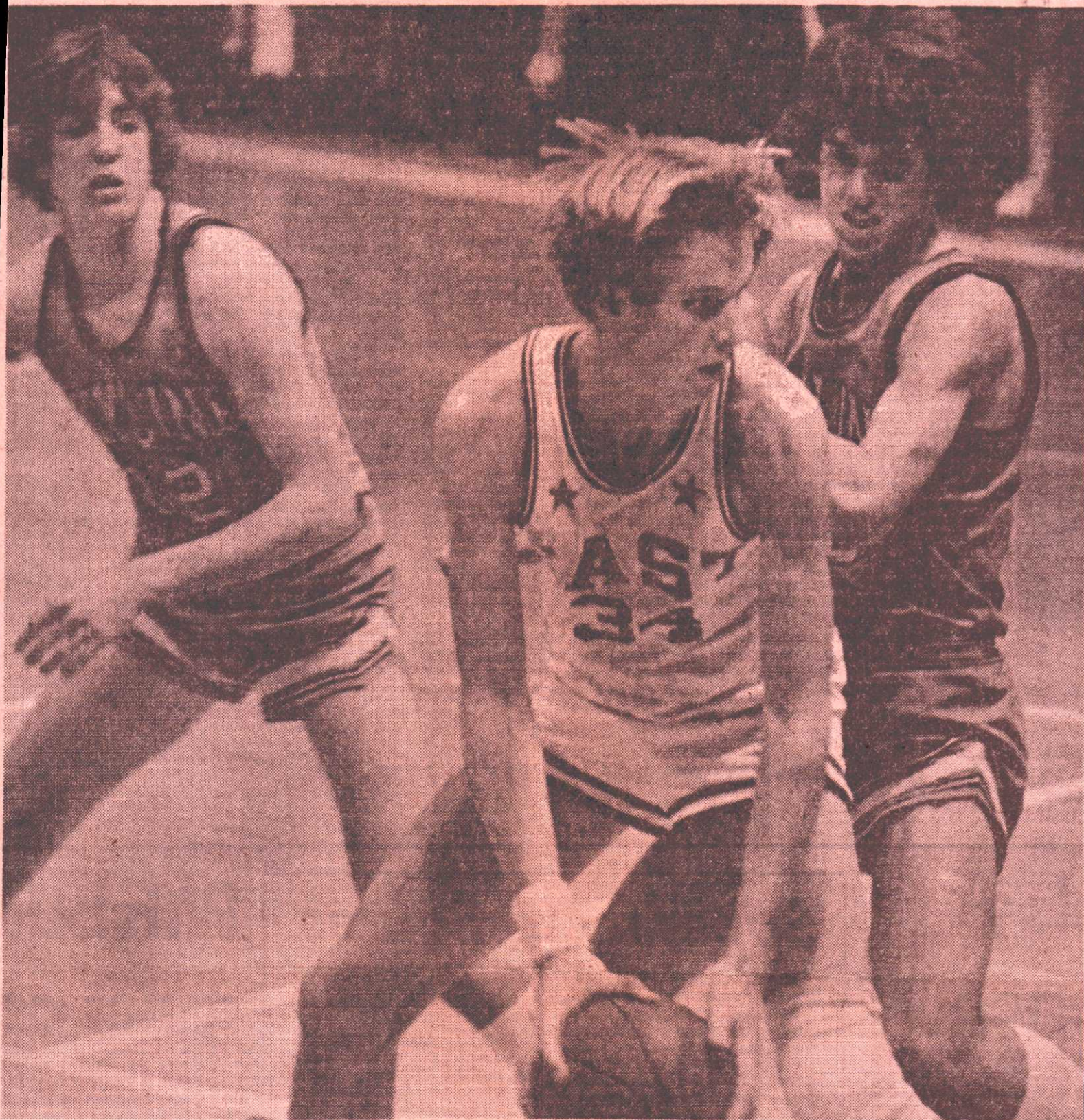
West coach Clark Godfrey, excited by West's first Region Three victory said, "We have good athletes who have reacted well to our earlier losses and showed courage to come back and win tonight."

With 4:31 left in the game Granite held a four point lead, but that soon melted as West reacted well to this pressure situation. Both teams pressed all over the court and exhibited the potential to be contenders in Region Three. Kevin Kuhn led the Granite scoring with 19 points.

The Judge Memorial gym may still be smoking after Friday night's barn-burner between Judge and Jordan. The game was a lot hotter and closer than the 80-66 score indicates.

Jordan fielded a strong, scrappy team that kept Judge fighting all the way. The Beetdiggers led 16-15 after the first quarter and 37-32 at the half behind the shooting and rebounding of Doug Price, the high scorer with 17 points.

It was a tough physical game with 67 fouls



Rich Gremillion is defended by Skyline's Scott Spurrier while Dixon Duncan looks on during East's 75-71 Region Three win.

called. Judge shot 45 of those, a crucial advantage in such a tight contest. Judge coach Jim Yerkovich said, "We knew these officials would call a lot of fouls. We substituted early though, and it paid off. We knew Jordan had been in foul trouble in their other game. With these officials, we knew they'd have trouble, and they did."

Jordan coach Hal Hale said fouls were a problem for his team. "Craig Ensign, our big man, is really valuable. Yet, because of the fouls, he probably only played half of the game. With Judge shooting so many more free throws, well, you can see what that does to a game. "Our shot selection was bad the last half, too. I

would rather the kids slow down and work for the shots. We let down some, too, in the third quarter," he said.

The Bulldogs came back strong in the third quarter. They took the lead midway through the period and led 58-47 at the buzzer. Jordan battled back to within one point during the fourth quarter, but too many fouls and several missed baskets put the win out of reach. Judge kept adding to the lead and came away with the 14-point win.

Region Two

Hillcrest, now tied for first with Granger, licked Kearns in a spectacular scoring display by standout Mike Bernardo, who led the Huskies

to their 82-77 victory.

The Huskies, under Coach Jim Jimas, got an early lead which was occasionally narrowed by an aggressive Kearns offense. But Bernardo kept putting them in, tallying 15 field goals and five free throws, for 35. Bob DeMarco had 14.

Kearns was led by Chad Mantle with 33 and Greg Jenson with 19.

"Although we were out-offensed by Kearns' long shots, we were able to outrun them," said Coach Jimas. Hillcrest plays Granger in a first place battle this Friday at Granger.

The Brighton Bengals also retained their Region Two first place bid by beating defending state champs Bingham 57-51 at Bingham.

While Bingham outboarded the Bengals by 11, they missed the necessary inside shots. And although they came from a 40-29 deficit in the third period to within one at 51-50 with seventeen seconds left, three Bingham fouls cost the Miners crucial points.

Region Two leader Granger went under to up-and-coming Alta in overtime Friday night, 41-30.

With a tightened zone defense, Granger threatened several times the second half, coming within two on Matt Almond's 15-footer late in the third. Royce Stephens also connected on a 25-footer to narrow the gap at the end of three to 35-31.

Throughout the fourth quarter, Alta kept control until the two-minute mark, when Granger finally came alive. Both Mike Birch and Almond had "steal and lay-up" combinations, tying it at 30 apiece at the final buzzer.

Neither team scored in overtime until 28 seconds were left, when Granger was caught on a travelling call, giving the Hawks the ball. From a chaotic mess, Alta's Dave Mills pulled the ball and sank a five-footer to put Alta ahead. With three seconds, Granger's Stephens' 60-foot attempt failed and Alta secured its second region win.

Region One

"That's my first taste of victory against Roy in three years," beamed a happy Russell Florence of Clearfield after leading his Falcons to a convincing 65-48 victory over the Royals.

Russell is the scoring leader in Region One and he fattened his 20.4 scoring average by pumping in 26 big ones. Clearfield's other big man, Roger Vincent, popped in 17 points with his fadeaway jumpers and three-for-five from the line.

Bountiful's Blaine Benard played a perfect game of basketball, Friday night, in leading the Braves to a surprising 78-73 victory over league-leading Layton.

From his guard position, the 6-foot-2 Benard connected on 10 for 10 from the field and four for four from the foul line for 24 points to lead the upset.

In a foul-infested game at Centerville, Sky View outshot Viewmont from the field, but the Vikings converted 25 of 31 foul shots to beat the Bobcats 81-74.

Region Four

Frustration and coach Mike Gardner's Davis Darts met head-on in the closing period of action with Woods Cross Friday night, enabling the Wildcats to sail on to victory 68-47.

Woods Cross led after the initial period of play, 11-10. The Darts were putting on a splendid shooting performance, even with the methodical-looking offense, shooting a whopping 66 percent in the first half. The Darts led at the half 25-24.

Mark McClery led all scorers with 20 points and had three Wildcat teammates in double figures. Mark LeCheminant chipped in 14, Jeff Ostler had 13 and Lynn Westergard had 10. The play of Greg Tuttle coming off the bench was a key to the Wildcat win, noted Baker.

Jeff Emery led Davis with 12 and Brad Peterson netted 10.

Box Elder picked up a 78-73 win over South, but coach Roger Williams of the Bees admitted it wasn't easy.

"They came to play. Our kids were scored to lose to a team that hasn't won much, so they poured it on in the second half," said Williams.

South led at half 43-39, but succumbed in the late going. Mark McCarron led the Bees with 21, while teammate Eric West had 20. Hal Sorenson's 18 points were tops for the Cubs, and Rick Thomas and Richard Stayner each added 17.