

Region titles decided as 4A season almost finishes up

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The Class 4A prep basketball regular season is over — almost. Friday night, 18 of the 22 4A teams finished up their regular seasons (West and Alta finished last Tuesday), leaving just a solitary game between two of the best, East and Highland next Tuesday.

Now it's time for all of the teams bar six, to prepare for the state tournament next Friday at the Special Events Center. The 3A schools have another week of action before beginning their tournament March 12, also at the Special Events Center.

The 4A season has been an exciting one all year, and it concluded that way Friday night with two region titles at stake. Orem broke a three-way logjam in Region Two with a win over Brighton in overtime and Hillcrest edged Granger to tie the Tigers for first. In Region One Roy won its finale over upstart Bountiful to wrap up the title a game ahead of Clearfield and Layton. East's win over Cottonwood clinched an outright title for them.

Two pre-tournament playoffs will be held early next week. Sky View and Bountiful will play at Clearfield Monday night to see who gets the sixth and last spot in Region One and a right to play Granite, the sixth-place team from Region Three on Wednesday.

Region Three

It was one of those nights in Region Three where the top three played the bottom three with fourth-place West sitting out. And predictably enough, the top three all cruised to easy victories.

Each team scored in the nineties, as East smashed Cottonwood 93-72, Highland rolled past Granite 98-78 and Skyline demolished Olympus 99-59.

The Leopards were able to clear their bench early after sprinting away from a 41-34 halftime lead with a 27-11 third-quarter edge. East had 13 players score in the contest led by Greg Grant's 24, Rich Gremillion's 19 and Brad Boyle's 18.

Cottonwood, which finished the season in fifth place at 4-8, was led by Jim Brown, who has been coming on like gangbusters for the Colts lately, with 31 points.

Highland's game was similar to East's as the Rams held a 29-point lead, 82-53 after three quarters before letting

all the reserves see action.

All five Ram starters were in double figures, with Mike Maxwell, who is having a fantastic February, leading the way with 36 points. John Baucom added 18, Spencer Hewlett and Gordon Kener each had 11 and Bill Moon scored 10. Dave Fischer led the Farmer attack with 21 points.

Skyline used all of its players and had 12 of them score in its romp over Olympus. Brandon Bennett had 20 while he played and Scott Spurrier made 16. The Titans who went through the long season without a single victory, counted on Blair Oliphant's 23 points.

Region Two

Things came crashing to a reckless end in Region Two Friday, as Orem battled past Brighton 50-48 in overtime, to share a first place spot with jubilant Hillcrest, dropping the Bengals to third place.

The Huskies came up with a narrow win over Granger, 57-54 while Kearns pulled a fast one on defending state champs Bingham, topping them 49-47, to tie the Cougars with Alta for last place.

"I knew it'd be a close one," said Orem coach Joel Gardner, in an ecstatic post-game locker room scene. And Gardner, who's team goes to state in the first place spot due to Orem's two wins over co-champs Hillcrest, predicted, "We're gonna battle. If anyone beats us, they'll have to beat us at our best."

And a close game it was. Orem was never ahead until the overtime. The closest Orem came until overtime was midway through the fourth period, when Orem pulled to within two at 44-42.

In overtime, beginning at 46-46, each team picked up a bucket; then the pressure mounted, with stalls. Frenzied by the stall, Hudson was called for fouling Orem's McMullin, who picked up one end of a one-and-one shot, putting the Tigers ahead 49-48 with 35 seconds left. After a wild, time-consuming skirmish, Hudson was again caught making contact with Orem's Dave McGinn, who swished one of two, setting Brighton back two with six seconds left, wherein a last-second Brighton shot missed.

Orem's McMullin had top honors with 17, followed by Scott Schlappi and

Bennion with 12 and 11, respectively. They were countered by Brighton's Dan Hill and Rob Urry, both with 10.

Kearns surprised Bingham at the end of a hard-hitting game Friday afternoon, claiming a 49-47 win.

Behind up until the fourth period, something caught fire in the Cougars, and they scurried to a six-point lead. With the help of turnovers and fouls, Kearns was able to keep the Miners' last-minute comeback rally to four points, and Kearns went away wearing the victor's hat.

Cougars Greg Jenson and Chad Mantle shone with 11 points each, while Tom Roberts and Mike Quigley of Bingham had 13 and 11, respectively.

Cougar coach Ron Carling said of his team's final season victory, "It's a good way to end the season."

Hillcrest controlled a scrappy Granger team to a 57-54 finale, in another close Region Two bout. Mike Bernardo led the Hillcrest attack, with his usual 21 and Bob Keyes had 17, and Royce Stephens led the Lancers with 17 points.

"Our kids were ready to play. We can beat anybody on any given night," commented Jim Jimas, coach of the Region Two co-champs.

Region One

Roy declared itself "king of the hill" in Region One with an impressive 75-64 win at Bountiful.

The Royals took charge in the second quarter with Mark Sindle and Rob Vanderwood sweeping the boards and Fred Fernandes and Nate Herzog in control of the guardline. Roy won the rebound battle 37-27 and outshot the Braves from the field.

Sindle hit 26 points to lead all scoring, while teammates Vanderwood and Fernandes each had 15 points and Herzog had 11. Blaine Benard swished eight of 15 from the field to end with 22 points while Brave Jim Perkins contributed 13.

The Royals led at the end of every quarter and were up by 15 with less than three minutes to play, but then the Braves came alive. They outscored the Royals 13-3 in just over a minute's time and closed the gap to five. But time favored the Royals and from their four-corners offense they nursed the lead back to win by 11.

"This is our eighth straight win,"

said coach Ted Smith of his Royals, "and they did it because they believed they could."

Viewmont coach Ron Johansen described Bonneville as "the best one-win ball team in Utah," after his 73-72 overtime victory over the Lakers.

Layton's Gordon Anderson poured in 10 field goals and four foul shots for 24 points in leading the Lancers to a 64-54 win over Sky View.

Clearfield topped Weber 59-47 to end up tied for second place in Region One with Layton.

Region Five

The Bulldogs skinned the Buffaloes Friday night as Judge Memorial downed Tooele 72-54. Judge showed improved teamwork in keeping Tooele away from the basket and the boards.

Bulldog coach Jim Yerkovich said, "Our team defense was excellent. We were a little disorganized in our offense in the first half but we got organized in the second half and took the lead from around 14 points to up around 30." Tooele never saw the lead. Judge jumped to a six-point lead before the Buffaloes ever scored. The Bulldogs led 16-8 after the first quarter.

Brian Bentrude led the Bulldogs with 18 points. Andy Mates followed with 11 while Steve Bills and Joel Rotta each added 10. Bret Applegate was high scorer for Tooele with 26 points.

Judge remains in a tie with Jordan for second place in Region Five while Tooele is in third place.

League-leader Murray rolled over Carbon 63-49. Brad Hale led the scoring for the Spartans with 15 points. Cizo Goncalves added 14 while Jeff Rogers had 12 and Steve Champman added 11. Robert Burge tossed in 16 for Carbon.

Jordan avenged an earlier season loss to Uintah by defeating the Utes 82-65. Doug Price was high scorer for Jordan with 20 points. Craig Ensign scored 19 while Dave Olsen had 16. Lynn Jensen scored 13 points. Ron Ellis led the Utes with 21 points.

Union picked up its fourth win of the season by knocking off Cyprus 78-67. Jay Mt. Lion led the scoring with 21 points. Karl Martinsen followed with 16 while Doug Chasel had 14. Clay Harrison scored 11 points. Alan Dyches was the high Pirate scorer with 15. Matt Miller and Brooks Jones each added 10.



Hillcrest's Gene Player hammers Granger's Lee Giles in prep action.