

On Prep Front: East, Rams Eye Rematch

By Roger Graves
Tribune Sports Writer

There are certain unravelings of fate, however fortunate or unfortunate, that one would like to forever remember or forever forget—depending, of course, on whether you were the victor or the victim.

Take Act I of the three-part East-Highland basketball rivalry for 1978-79, for instance.

Considering the above theorem, it is evident why Highland High vividly recalls its 75-66 triumph over East last December that gave the Rams the Salt Lake Valley Holiday Tournament championship. It is also obvious why East would like to write off the entire incident as a bad dream.

To review a bit of history, East seemingly had the game in its pocket after amassing a 54-43 advantage with only eight minutes to play. But, alas, Highland tied the score at 55-55, exploded for 32 fourth-quarter points and transformed apparent defeat into a nine-point victory and the tournament title for the second consecutive year.

This reversal is mentioned only because East (5-0) has patiently been waiting for a rematch on its home grounds, while Highland (4-1) has patiently been waiting to prove its previous triumph was no fluke. The day of reckoning comes Tuesday at 3 p.m., when the Region Three pacesetters take Act II of their spirited rivalry to East High.

The rematch promises to be every bit as heart warming as the original confrontation. That is, if both teams can find five able-bodied, healthy young men to dress in a basketball uniform.

It is common knowledge (or should be) by now that East will be without the services of 6-foot-6 Rich Gremillion, while Brad Boyle is another doubtful starter for the Leopards. What is not well known is the status of Highland's high-scoring Mike Maxwell, the multi-talented senior who has led Region Three in scoring each of the last three seasons.

Maxwell spent the weekend in the hospital, with doctors worrying over a high white blood cell count.

"We thought Mike might need to have his appendix taken out," said Highland Coach Larry Maxwell, who, of course, is Mike's father. "But it started to subside and the doctors said Mike could come home. He isn't out of the woods yet, but he'll play."

Larry Maxwell, whose Rams were ranked No. 1 throughout 1979 in the weekly Tribune Captains Poll before losing that position to East Sunday, is not one to issue an in-depth injury report on his team. He offers no pre-game alibis.

"We have more than our share of injuries," noted Maxwell, "but we like to keep ours a secret. We don't want to be known as cry babies. I don't think there is a team in this league that doesn't have its share of injuries, and we're certainly no different."

Further prodding revealed that Highland's gem center John Baucom has three stitches in his head, guard Gordon Kener is playing with a broken wrist, Maxwell is still bothered by an injured knee, and last but not least, Larry Maxwell's ulcer is acting up. But don't tell the Rams where you heard it.

Injuries aside, Tuesday's East-Highland affair has all the ingredients of another classic. Greg Grant, who carries a 24.7 scoring average, was not in uniform for round one and will be a big plus in East's favor. Meanwhile, Mike Maxwell, who owns a 26.8 average, Baucom (20.8) and Kener (14.2) will join Bill Moon and Spencer Hewlett in the starting lineup for Highland. If Boyle is unable to compete Tuesday, East will be without two of its top three scorers. That will place added pressure on Dave Johnson, George Furgis, Tim Lunt and Paul Schmutz.

While Highland and East seek first place, Skyline (4-1) visits Granite (2-3), and West (2-3) hosts Cottonwood (1-4) to further highlight the Region Three schedule Tuesday. Olympus (0-6) takes the day off Tuesday, as Region Three completes the first half of league play.

Another intriguing rematch is scheduled Tuesday, but this one takes place in Region Two. League leader Hillcrest (5-1), whose lone loss came against Orem at home to begin the season, guns for revenge against the Golden Tigers (3-3), as Region Two begins the second half of league competition.

Granger (3-3) hopes to snap a three-game losing streak by hosting arch rival Kearns (1-5), and Brighton (4-2) hopes to solidify its second place standing with the possibility of gaining a share of first at Alta (2-4) in other Region Two encounters.

Cyprus (4-1), which lost its first league game of the season last week, will be without the services of injured center Mike Pulley when the Pirates invade Jordan (2-3) in the Region Five headliner Tuesday night. Pulley, an instrumental figure in Cyprus' brilliant 4-0 league start, tore ligaments in his ankle during the Pirates' loss to Union Friday. He hopes to return for the Murray game Friday.

Judge (3-2), which was ambushed at Tooele last Friday, returns home to host Carbon (1-4) Tuesday, while Murray (4-1) seeks sole possession of first place by entertaining Uintah (2-3), and Union (2-3) visits Tooele (2-3) to round out the Region Five schedule.