

'Diggers great start sets up a season of excitement

By Bruce Smith
MatchupUT.com

Jordan basketball coach **Rob Geertsen** said the Beetdiggers' 2009-10 season went about like he expected. But nobody could have predicted the roller-coaster ride the team experienced along the way.

There were plenty of highlights. When the season began, Jordan barely made the *Deseret News*' list of the state's best 25 teams. But the Diggers had nine seniors and thought they were much better, and they spent more than half the season proving it.

"The whole preseason was a highlight for us," said senior forward **Kevin Goldsmith**, who was the team's leading scorer (17.8 points per game), rebounder (7.0) and made the all-state team. "We got up to No. 3. It was cool to go against all odds."

The Diggers eventually finished the year with a 14-9 overall record, and claimed fifth place in a tough Region 4 with a 6-6 mark. Jordan was the team to beat early in the season. Unfortunately, it was often the team that was beaten for the latter part.

"We had a lot of good guys, but no great ones," said Geertsen, "and they had spurts where they really played well together."



Alex Hart (No. 14) and Caden Sperry (No. 4) lead the Jordan players onto the court for the Beetdiggers' game at Energy Solutions Arena against Cottonwood.

Geertsen was especially proud of the team's grade-point average (3.6). He also made sure they were involved in several off-court activities within the community, and that made the whole team great.

At press time, two players had earned college scholarships – **Alex Hart** (football) to Utah State and **Cory Hunt** (baseball) to the University of Utah.

Geertsen said Goldsmith was named the team's most valuable player. **Steve Morgan** was a wizard with the ball, likely breaking the school record for assists (if anyone could find the previous mark). **Taylor Loomis** and **Tanner Barlow** were the most

improved.

With all of that talent, the Diggers would have had many good memories, regardless of how they finished. But the players considered the team highlights to be:

** - They won two of three games at Logan's holiday tournament. Geertsen, who grew up in Logan, has entered the team in the tourney in each of his three years at Jordan, and has had great success. This year, the Diggers defeated San Bernardino, Calif., and host Logan, and their only loss was a 61-59 buzzer-beater to 5A power Bingham.*

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JORDAN BASKETBALL: 2009-10 season recap



Steve Morgan ... assist leader



Kevin Goldsmith ... top scorer



Tanner Barlow and Taylor Loomis ... most improved



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* - They played at Energy Solutions Arena and defeated Cottonwood.

* - Played host to their own tournament and, for the first time, won both games and the championship trophy.

* - Qualified for the 5A state tournament and won their first-round game.

Goldsmith said he felt the Bingham game was the most memorable, and not just because he poured in 25 points.

"That's where people found out we were legit," he said.

Jordan rolled through its non-region season with a 7-2 record. The Diggers then shocked a lot of people, except perhaps themselves, by winning five of their first six games in region.

At the end of January, they were 12-3 overall and the talk of their school – and the town. The Diggers were on a hot streak and in first place.

"When we won, they (the fans) were all excited and it was like we were on the top of the world," said center **Nate Monson**.

Coach Geertsen reluctantly agreed.

"That's where we were at our pinnacle," said Geertsen. "The turning point was Pleasant Grove."

Jordan broke a tie game with a 10-0 spurt, but

Pleasant Grove came back with a 14-1 run and handed the Diggers a rare loss on their home court.

The regular-season went downhill after that. Jordan defeated Hillcrest in front of an excited crowd, but then dropped their last four contests.

They reached the state tournament and defeated Cottonwood on the road. The Diggers advanced to play at Davis, the eventual state runner-up, and were defeated, 59-52.

"If we could have beaten Davis, I believe we would have been in the state championship game," said Geertsen. "When we were healthy, we could beat anyone in the state."

We'll never know. That's because the Diggers had to deal with injuries to Hunt (football-related leg injury), Monson (knee tendonitis), **Joe Mero** (mononucleosis) and Morgan (toe). That made a difference.

Mero came on to be Jordan's second-leading scorer (12.9 ppg), was among the state's leaders in three-point shooting and will likely be an impact player next year. Morgan led the state in assists and other players, like **Caden Sperry**, **Taylor Smith** and Barlow had occasional moments of brilliance.

It didn't result in a state championship, which disappointed some. But it was plenty to excite Jordan's huge crowds and everyone benefited.