

Tigers have big dreams this year

Early season success has Orem believing a trophy might await

By Bruce Smith
Matchup

A few weeks into the season, coach Golden Holt came up with a phrase to characterize this year's Orem High School boys basketball team.

He called it, "the team with a dream." Fact is, Holt has been dreaming about this team ever since last season ended and he had a chance to take many of the Tiger plays on the road to improvement.

Holt, a longtime AAU coach now in his second year at Orem, is no longer just dreaming. The Tigers' success has become reality. Their second-place finish at the inaugural Great Western Shootout in December made Orem a contender.

"I've said all along that this team has the chance to be something special," Holt said. "Whether they peak out early or keep it going is up to them."

Orem High has been around for 60 years and, despite being in the basketball hotbed of Utah County, it has never won a state championship. It's not uncommon for the Tigers to reach the postseason, and they've even advanced to the final game a few times.

But while many neighboring schools like



Point guard **Zach Hunsaker** is one of several talented players on Orem's roster.

have bulging trophy cabinets, Orem's still seems a little bare.

"We have the talent this year," Holt said. "The Lone Peak showed that we can compete with the best."

The Tigers have a lineup filled with long, lanky, talented players and are excited their potential to make a run at

Utah's 4A state championship. The team is still young, and coming off a 7-15 record in Holt's first season. However, they've tried to accelerate their learning curve, playing in 60 games during the offseason.

Orem is led by its two

Continued on next page



LEFT: Senior Josh Pollard is a team captain and a major contributor.

RIGHT: Orem fans celebrate an early season win over Lone Peak.

2010-11 season schedule

Nov. 22 – vs. Pleasant Grove	Jan. 24 – at Maple Mtn*
Nov. 29 – WASATCH	Jan. 27 – at Timpanogos*
Dec. 6 – at West	Jan. 31 – PROVO*
Dec. 9 – TAYLORSVILLE	Feb. 3 – SALEM HILLS*
Dec. 15-17 – GREAT WESTERN SHOOTOUT	Feb. 7 – at Springville*
Dec. 30 – at Westlake	Feb. 10 – at Timpview*
Jan. 6 – at Provo*	Feb. 14 – MTN. VIEW*
Jan. 10 – at Salem Hills*	Feb. 17 – MAPLE MTN.*
Jan. 13 – SPRINGVILLE*	Feb. 21 – TIMPANOGOS*
Jan. 17 – TIMPVIEW*	
Jan. 20 – at Mountain View*	

* - Region 8 games.
Home games in CAPS

Continued from previous page

senior captains – 6-foot-5 Josh Pollard and 6-7 Christian Clark. Junior Jordan Darger has also emerged as a dominant player in the middle.

The other junior is 6-2 point guard Zach Hunsaker who transferred after a family move from Woods Cross. Hunsaker, the son of Utah Valley’s head basketball coach, played point guard for Woods Cross the last two years and led them to the 4A state semifinals last year.

“Being ae coach’s son, it’s great to have a point guard with toughness and grit,” Holt said. “He (Hunsaker) has the mentality to lead our team.”

There are also high expectations for three sophomores. Dalton Nixon (6-7) is the son of Orem assistant coach Kevin Nixon, and had an outstanding summer. Cooper Holt (6-3), the son of the head coach, has moved from point guard to the shooting guard, which is his more natural position, and played a big role in the Lone Peak victory.

Quinn Peters transferred from Lone Peak

and has made a big impact with his versatility.

Backing up this group are two experience seniors, point guard David Runyan and athletic swing man Cole Payne.

Coach Holt feels Orem is among the most-talented teams in Utah this year.

“We have seven guys who can play at the next level,” he said. “Any of them can score 20 (points) on a given night. The key will be our defense and coming to understand and trust one another offensively.

The Great Western Shootout is over. The excitement it brought, however, continues. Holt hopes to make that tournament a tradition, and he wants to use it to keep Orem at the highest level.

“To be the best, you have to play the best,” he said. “We’ll have to prove ourselves every night because our region is very tough and we can’t sneak up on anybody anymore. The kids have to come ready to play.

“We’re dreaming big right now.”