

Ranger Gameday: Senior Night Edition

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Rincon/University

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13 Stefan Oropeza
21 Jeremy Joe
23 Rojer Castro
24 Gabriel Orta
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Last Meeting - January 10, 2008: Rincon/University 55 Tucson 71

TUCSON BADGERS (17-7)

VS.

RINCON/UNIVERSITY RANGERS (11-15)

Tonight's Matchup:

Tonight being Senior Night, it seems appropriate that seniors be the focus. Tucson High's Hill, Gibson, Joe, Castro, and House have all played together for four years (and all but Castro in club ball before that). It is hard to pick any one over the others. Despite the fact that they rarely start together, the five lead the Badgers in scoring. After starting the season on a slide and losing their first three region games, Tucson is playing as well as any other team in the city right now (as evident by their 20 point blowout of Ridge on Friday). They move well, create bad matchup problems, and shift defenses extremely well. The Rangers will need a similar collective effort tonight if they are to upend the Badgers.

The Big Picture:

Both Rincon and Ironwood Ridge sit 4-1 in region with one game to play: head-to-head this Thursday night. The winner will be the outright region champion. While the Nighthawks beat the Rangers at home on January 16th, they are on a current skid, losing back-to-back games for the first time all season. As far as the state tournament goes, the Rangers are teetering between getting a first round home game and having to travel. 16 teams make the tournament and the top 8 seeds get to host the opening round. The Rangers currently sit at eighth place in power points, barely behind Carl Hayden and Tolleson and barely ahead of Mt. View and Marcos de Niza. Rincon could realistically finish anywhere between 6th and 10th.

Recap Of The Last Three Games:

In what was to that point the most important game of the season, the Rincon Rangers had possibly their best performance. On January 24th, the Rangers played host to the Mountain View Mountain Lions and thoroughly dominated the game from start to finish. Rincon put the game away early, building a fourteen-point halftime leading behind the three point shooting of Jesse Henry. He had four in the first quarter on his way to scoring a game-high 17 points. Gilbert Tafoya (15), Rob Perry (12), and Nate Foster (11) also provided double digit scoring efforts. On the other end, the Mountain Lions were unable to get any rhythm and thus fell 68-56.

Rincon traveled to Sunnyside High School last Wednesday looking for another region win before their clash with Ironwood Ridge. After a sluggish start, the Rangers finished the first half on an 11-0 run to take a two-point lead at the half. However, the second half belonged solely to the visitors, powered by their inside force Gilbert Tafoya. He finished the game with 16 points on 7-11 shooting from the field (64%) and 15 rebounds. Nate Foster also had a double-double for Rincon with 12 points and 11 boards to help Rincon win 61-52.

Early foul trouble plagued the Rangers last Friday night in Casa Grande. Posts Gilbert Tafoya, Rob Perry, and Eli Foy picked up two fouls in the first half forcing Rincon to go to a smaller lineup. That along with the inability to break the Cougars 2-2-1 full court press (22 turnovers) dug the Rangers a hole that they were unable to get out of. Tafoya and Nate Foster scored 16 and 13 respectively as part of the second-half run, but Rincon was unable to get over the hump, eventually falling 64-55. If the Rangers have to travel in the first round of state, the two losses to Casa Grande will be the most glaring lost opportunities to improve their power points.

