

The Ranger Gameday

November 29, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 1

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Last Meeting - December 21, 2003: Marcos De Niza 63 Rincon/University 54

MARCOS DE NIZA PADRES (0-2)

VS.

RINCON/UNIVERSITY RANGERS (1-5)

Tonight's Matchup:

The Padres appear to be far from the team they were before the departures of standouts Kal Bay (Eastern Utah) and Mychael Broom (Detroit) two years ago. Last years team finished 13-13 with a 3-5 record in the 5A-I Central Region. To make matters worse, Marcos graduated its top three scorers. The top returning scorer (and rebound leader and steal leader) is senior Daniel Johnson. He, along with Donald Richardson and Ryan Bawek are the players to watch for the Padres. The key to the game will be the matchups down low. If Rob Perry and Gilbert Tafoya have big games for the Rangers, Rincon should be leaving the gym tonight with their first regular season win.

Rincon 64 Sahuarita 67:

The Rangers began their regular season campaign on Tuesday with a trip south to Sahuarita. Rincon jumped out to an early lead thanks to the long range shooting of Jesse Henry, who was 4-5 from three in the first half. However, the lead at halftime was only two. In the second half, Gilbert Tafoya took over (he finished with a team high 22). But turnover problems plagued Rincon and regulation finished in a tie at 57. After trading buckets, the Rangers took the lead on an and 1 by Tafoya. On the next possession, Chris Rieman was fouled shooting a three pointer and made all three free throws to give the Mustangs the lead back for good. Nate Foster also chipped in 10 points and 9 boards.

Salpointe Tip Off Classic:

After off-season changes were made to the Santa Cruz Holiday Tournament, the Rangers chose to enter the preseason tournament they had not played in since 1999 and not won since 1994. Rincon's pool consisted of three other Southern Arizona 5A teams (meaning we will see them all at least twice more this season). The season opener pitted the Rangers against two time defending 5A Southern Region Champion, Sierra Vista Buena. Buena's Mike Grayson and Brandon MacLellan combined to score 36 points en route to a 72-63 win. Gilbert Tafoya had a career high 30 in the loss. The Rangers completed their pool play with two uninspiring performances against Sunnyside and Marana Mountain View, highlighted only by a 26-point effort by Nate Foster. Sunnyside's Marco Cruz led the Blue Devils with 20, while the Mountain Lions were headed by Andre Hatchett (12) and Aaron Anderson (11). Rincon was then matched up with stacked Gilbert Highland, including Washington State signee, Nick Witheral and freshman U of A recruit Matt Carlino. Witheral and two others each chipped in 19 to win 84-64. However, as a positive, the Rangers shot 27-32 (84%) from the line. Rincon finished the tournament with a Saturday 50-39 victory over Yuma Kofa. The Rangers spread the scoring around in a balanced attack, which combined with a strong defensive performance helped Rincon to its first win of the year.

