



## **All-Star game unifies schools in Southern Utah**

~ Jeff Ames

ST. GEORGE - Most will happily avoid watching an all-star game, especially if it involves the inflated egos of professional athletes, but few in Southern Utah would dare miss out on March Mayhem.

The perennial event, hosted by the School of Life Foundation and TEAM RAW Youth Outreach program, represents everything positive about sports. While an all-star game serves as the event centerpiece, the goal is to bring Region 9 schools together through fun, engaging activities.

"This event has a mission of celebrating, inspiring and empowering youth down here in Southern Utah," said School of Life founder Jack Rolfe. "The game's a lot of fun, but there's more to it."

The fifth annual March Mayhem in the Desert is scheduled for Thursday at 7:30 p.m. inside the Old Gym on the campus of Dixie State College. It will intermix student

body activities - such as the Region 9 spirit competition - with typical all-star basketball events.

"All the schools will be there participating in fun activities," Rolfe said. "Then at halftime we have unity events such as a unity cheer, and even a unity dance afterwards. So it's not only a competition, but it's trying to draw all the youth in our community together."

Other scheduled charitable events include handing out of the School of Life Foundation Straight-As for Life Scholarship, which will be rewarded to a student who is trying to live all aspects of their life and acting, as Rolfe explained, as a positive community influence.

"Doing stuff like this is good for the rivalry aspect, but it's done with good sportsmanship," said Desert Hills' student body president McKay Cummings during Monday's pep rally held at Hurricane High School. "It brings us all together."

Cummings enjoys the friendly rivalry that takes place between the schools, but nevertheless isn't afraid to egg on the competition.

"We feel like our students have the most school spirit," he said. "You go to our games in the Thunderdome and you see why we have the reputation of being the loudest. If we get our students out there it's no competition at all."

Snow Canyon spirit club co-president Marissa Farris has a different opinion. "I think we've got it in the bag," she said. "We've got the pride and the spirit and a couple of special things planned that I'm not allowed to talk about. We plan on passing out candy and beads - we've got the whole nine yards. We're ready to go."

Cummings and Farris have their work cut out for them if they're to dismantle reigning champion Hurricane High.

"We won it last year and that was really special for us because we're one of the smaller schools," said Hurricane's Boston Gubler. "We don't have as many students. It was the same way at the rally - our numbers were smaller, but we were able to pull out the win. So hopefully that'll stir up the competition from the other schools this year."

March Mayhem has plenty to offer for those looking to enjoy a community event. The game itself offers a chance to see Region 9's best and brightest match up against talented individuals from TEAM RAW.

"Come watch an exciting basketball game," Rolfe exclaimed, "but also come watch our youth celebrate being youth."

Other events include the Miracle Minute during which students pass around a bucket and fill it with money. The school that donates the most wins, with all proceeds going to a student in need.

"We're supporting other organizations, like Big Brothers, Big Sisters and Score for 4," Rolfe said. "This is much more than a great basketball game."

