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## Highland pair bound for Weber State

*Wildcats coach thrilled to have local players*

**By Tim Peterson**

Deseret Morning News

Even though the college basketball season is still some six months away, Weber State head coach Randy Rahe seems very excited with the new talent in Ogden.

Rahe recruited nine new players into the Wildcats program, including four Utahns.

"First of all, everything revolves around recruiting," Rahe said. "It's critical to bring in kids with local flavor."

In his first recruiting class as head coach, Rahe thinks he's got a dynamic duo that will contribute right away. LDS-mission bound guard Jake Orchard and 6-foot-8-inch center Steve Panos (both from Highland High) have signed letters of intent to play for the Wildcats.

"Highland's Jake? He's a unique player. You're not sure if he's a one, two or three . . . but he's a winner," Rahe says. "Steve is going to be a very tough, solid, post player in the Big Sky. They're both everyday guys, players that will show up at practice and make everybody better."

The Wildcats are coming off the turmoil of a 10-17 season. They also failed to qualify for the Big Sky tournament and then fired their head coach, Joe Cravens.

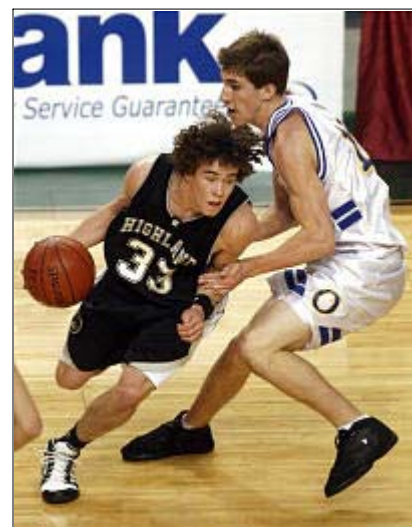
Rahe knows that the process could take time, but he also said that he's not a patient man. In 2005-06, the Deseret Morning News honored the 6-foot-4-inch Orchard as 4A's Most Valuable Player. He averaged 17 points and five rebounds per game. The senior led the Rams to the 4A championship and a record of 24-1.

Panos is coming off a tremendous regular season in which he averaged 14 points and six rebounds. Panos was a first team All-State selection and the player of the year in Region 6.

Rahe believes that the program will get back to basketball prominence by landing the local kids.

"Anytime you can stay and play, it's really good for the player and the fans," Rahe says. "But you have to recruit well to get to that point."

Orchard and Panos are equally excited about bringing their talents to Weber State to continue their basketball careers together. The two have been teammates almost since their diaper days.



Highland High School's Jake Orchard drives against Orem High School's Mike Hall in the 4A boys semifinal game at the E Center in March.

*Jason Olson, Deseret Morning News*

"I'm really excited," Orchard says. "We've played together since we

were little."

Added Panos: "It's really unique for me and Jake to have that choice. It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

They both had other offers from schools that were interested in them, but after taking their official campus visit to WSU they knew it was the place for them.

"Coach Rahe offered us scholarships on the spot," Panos said.

The two may just be teammates for a season. Orchard is planning on serving an LDS mission after his freshman year and Panos may redshirt after next season.

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