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NEWS RELEASE

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## CHAPARRAL-DESERT MOUNTAIN GAME IS SPECIAL FOR COACHES

PHOENIX, AZ (Dec. 1, 2009) – The football coaches from Scottsdale’s Chaparral and Desert Mountain high schools have mixed emotions about their Class 5A Division II semifinal matchup on Friday night at Phoenix Sandra Day O’Connor.

Chaparral’s Charlie Ragle and Desert Mountain’s Tony Tabor have been good friends for nearly six years, working together briefly at Chaparral and maintaining contact after that.

Desert Mountain won an earlier meeting between the two 27-20 on Nov. 6, giving Chaparral (11-1) its only loss. Desert Mountain is 9-3.

“This is a very hard thing to do for me personally,” Ragle said. “I’m wired differently than a lot of coaches and friendship and loyalty mean the world to me.

“Having to go out and try to beat a guy like that . . . and end their season . . . is tough. But I have an obligation to the program, the kids and myself to try to win and make it to the state championship game.”

Said Tabor: “Charlie is a good buddy of mine. It’s easier to go out and play against a guy you are mad at or who you don’t like. It’s kind of an odd situation.”

Both men have won state championships as assistant coaches – Ragle at Phoenix Moon Valley in 2004 (Class 4A) and Tabor at Phoenix North Canyon in 2005 (5A-II). Now they want a title trophy of their own.

And, of course, Ragle will use the earlier loss as motivation.

“That is huge. I’d be lying if I said anything else,” he said.

There were some off-the-field issues that might have been a factor in Chaparral losing its focus, “but I’m not an excuse-maker,” Ragle said. “You are going to have great moments and you are going to have bad moments. In your evaluation of those, you have to know your strengths and weaknesses.

“But I’m not going to take anything away from Desert Mountain at all. They won the game and they deserved to. It put them on the map.”

It has been a long time since Desert Mountain played in the playoffs – 1997 – and the Wolves were eliminated in the first round.

“This game, this season, has been important for the seniors we have and the building of the program,” Tabor said. “We are in uncharted territory, but the kids believe they can play.”

There is promise in the lower levels. The junior varsity finished around .500, Tabor said, and the freshman team was 6-3.

Ragle has had some knock-down, drag-out battles with Scottsdale rival Saguaro, but Chaparral moved up from 4A-I to 5A-II and now the rivalry is growing with Desert Mountain.

“I don’t think I’ve ever been this excited about a game in my career,” Ragle said. “Everything we’ve worked for is at stake. We’re playing this game for the ultimate bragging rights. These kids socialize with each other, go to the movies . . . we want to play for and win a state championship, but in order to do that, you have to win this one.”

Tabor said his team moved the ball on Chaparral the first time they played, “and that’s what we have to try to do again, not turn the ball over. We’ve come back in a few games this year. It’s nice to have confidence that you can do that. The kids don’t seem to panic.”

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