

# Bingham's streak in jeopardy vs. Alta

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It has been 717 days and 25 games since Bingham lost a football game.

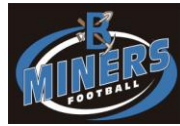
The third longest streak in state history is very much in jeopardy Saturday night at Rice-Eccles Stadium in the latest installment of the "Black & Blue Classic."

Even though Bingham beat Alta quite handily at Rice-Eccles Stadium last year, Alta won the junior varsity and sophomore games earlier in the week, and Bingham coach Dave Peck believes those two losses are a big reason many consider his Miners the underdogs this weekend.

Whether or not it's accurate to classify the two-time defending 5A state champs as underdogs, that's how Bingham is approaching the game and the kids are fired up.

"Our kids are no doubt feeling excited and want to go out and prove that we're for real, that we're not going to back down. We're going to compete and strive to be the best program in the state," said Peck.

Saturday's clash at Rice-Eccles Stadium is part of a doubleheader that will have an exciting South Valley flavor to it with Herriman facing Riverton at 4 p.m. followed by Bingham-Alta at 8 p.m. Last year's two



## Bingham-Alta rivalry

Coming into the season, Alta led the overall series 14-11, but Bingham won this year 21-18 for its fourth straight victory. *For details on the game, see Pages 10-11.*

games netted roughly 20,000 fans, and with this year's Alta-Bingham clash not a foregone conclusion like a year ago, another big crowd is expected.

"The week before college football starts, you've got the two teams that have won the last five 5A state championships, most people would like to go watch that game," said Peck.

Saturday is the 10th meeting between the fierce rivals since 2006, and the Miners have a pretty significant 6-3 edge including three straight wins.

First-year Alta coach Bob Stephens is no stranger to the rivalry, having served as an assistant coach under former coach Les Hamilton for all nine of the recent meetings. He said there's a special vibe around the team and school during "Bingham week" as he refers to it.

With the Hawks coming off a disappointing 4-7 season, but confident in a bounce-back year, Stephens said his players can't wait to test themselves against Bingham.

"It's a new year, new potential, new opportunities. That's what every school is thinking," said Stephens. In the build-up to this year's game, both coaches acknowledged stopping the run is key. Bingham racked up 346 rushing yards last week against West Jordan, with Daniel Palepoi leading the way with 170 yards.

Alta churned out 206 rushing yards against Timpview, with workhorse back Bryan Engstrom accounting for 149 of the yards.

In watching film of the Hawks, Peck said he noticed they were more balanced with the run and pass unlike a year ago when Alta threw nearly 75 percent of the time.

Bingham has always been a run-first team, and Alta will get a heavy dose of the power running game if it can't stop it consistently.

"Bingham's always a team that's going to test you up front, and especially with their running game and their big power running game," said Stephens. "First thing we've got to do is stop the run. If we can contain the run and keep them from going off that will help their cause."

New Alta defensive coordinator Scott Ditty will have his hands full coming up with a game plan to slow an opponent that routinely scores 40 to 50 points a game.