

Vikings, Eagles Renew Rivalry

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The Emerald High School girls basketball team has beaten Greenwood just once in its 15-year history, but that hasn't stopped Vikings coach Anarie Duckett from using any strategy possible to get her team pumped to face their cross-town rivals. That rivalry continues when the Greenwood and Emerald girls and boys basketball teams face each other tonight at Finis Horne Arena. The girls game will tip-off at 6 p.m., with the boys following at 7:30.

The Greenwood boys and girls teams, both Class AAAA top 10 teams in the state, have been dominant against the Vikings in recent years, with both teams sweeping Emerald last season. Having struggled so much against the Eagles, the Vikings enter with little pressure on their shoulders, but Duckett said even that is sometimes not enough. "That's what we try to tell them, but you know how kids are," Duckett said. "We haven't beaten them but one time, so they go into the game a little nervous. "I've tried all kinds of different strategies, from building it up to not saying anything, but ultimately it's up to them."

The Eagles have had a lot of success against Emerald, but Greenwood girls coach Susan Thompson is careful to keep her girls sharp for games against Emerald. "Well, you know, the saying -- any given day," Thompson said. "We work to prepare for Emerald like we would anyone else. It's bragging rights for the city."

On the plus side for Emerald is the boys and girls' teams enter today having won their opening two games last week at Ninety Six and against Mid-Carolina. "Obviously with the wins, our defensive intensity has picked up," Duckett said. "We started slow in the first game and then we played better defensively and that helped us stay in the game."