

Prep Basketball

Sixth Man Buries Murray

By Roger Graves
Tribune Sports Writer

Judge's Joel Rotta, a 5-foot-10 jumping jack who can put it down with the daintiest of dunkers, is not your average basketball big man. But Rotta, despite his medium stature, was a very big man in the Bulldogs' wildly wonderful 73-69 victory over previously unbeaten Murray Tuesday evening.

Rotta, a resolute competitor no matter what role he plays, lost his starting point guard position one week ago to Steve Bills when Bills returned to the lineup following a broken ankle. However, Rotta, who should be nicknamed "AC" after sparkplugging Judge to triumph Tuesday, is quickly growing accustomed to his assignment as a sixth man.

Rotta, who played only the final 11½ minutes Tuesday at Murray, poured in a team-high 17 points coming off the bench to spark the Bulldogs to an important road victory. But when the effervescent Rotta checked in, it was not as a replacement for Bills. Bills and Rotta, working together instead of spelling one another, accounted for 18 of Judge's 24 fourth-quarter points, which allowed the Bulldogs to pull away from a 49-49 deadlock after three periods and secure the triumph.

"I'm just proud of our players," said an elated Judge Coach Jim Yerkovich, who saw his team climb to 3-1 and gain a share of second place in Region Five. "But I was especially proud of Bills and Rotta. Bills is from the Murray area here, so he was going against some old friends. And Rotta just did a fine job as a substitute."

Murray, determined to remain undefeated on its home ground, rode the hot shooting of Cizo Goncalves to break away from a 35-35 tie early in the third period and gain a 45-40 advantage. However, the fiery Rotta scored Judge's final nine points of the third quarter to force a 49-49 stalemate entering the final frantic eight minutes.

It appeared Judge had sewn up the win when the Bulldogs bolted to a 59-49 edge by outscoring Murray 10-0 to begin the final period. But Goncalves, who finished with a game-high 30 points, shot the Spartans (3-1) back into contention at 65-61 with 1:53 to play. However, the dependable Bills then swished six straight free throws to ice the triumph.

Bills, who collected 16 points on the night, was joined in double figures by Terry Murnin, Andy Mates and Brian Bentrude, each of whom popped in 10 points for the Bulldogs. Brad Hale and Steve Chapman backed up Goncalves' showmanship with 15 and 11 points respectively.

Cyprus High may be sending Judge a few thank-you notes following Tuesday evening's Region Five action. The Pirates, who knocked off Uintah 62-56 Tuesday, moved into sole possession of first place by virtue of the Judge triumph at Murray. Meanwhile, Jordan leveled its record at 2-2 with a 94-74 victory over Tooele, and Union dropped Carbon 63-53 for its first win of the league season.

Cyprus was forced to come from behind to defeat Uintah. The Utes raced to a 43-40 third-quarter edge, before Matt Miller, Brooks Jones and Dave Peck found the hot hand to help the Pirates outscore Uintah 22-13 during the closing eight minutes and wrap up the victory. Jones paced the Pirates with 20 points, while Miller chipped in 15, Mike Pulley 12, and Peck 11.

Doug Price popped in 26 points to captain Jordan past Tooele, while Bret Applegate took high honors for the Buffaloes with a brilliant 39 points.

Skyline High, feeling right at home and determined to show little respect for the No. 1-ranked team in the weekly Tribune Captains Poll, dealt Highland its first loss of the 1979 Region Three season by zipping to a 79-71 victory Tuesday night.

The Eagles, who dropped a heartbreaker at East last Friday, advanced to 3-1 and relegated the Rams to the same record by employing a good blend of inside-outside shooting to put down fast-breaking

Highland. Skyline, which led all the way, saw five marksmen realize double figures.

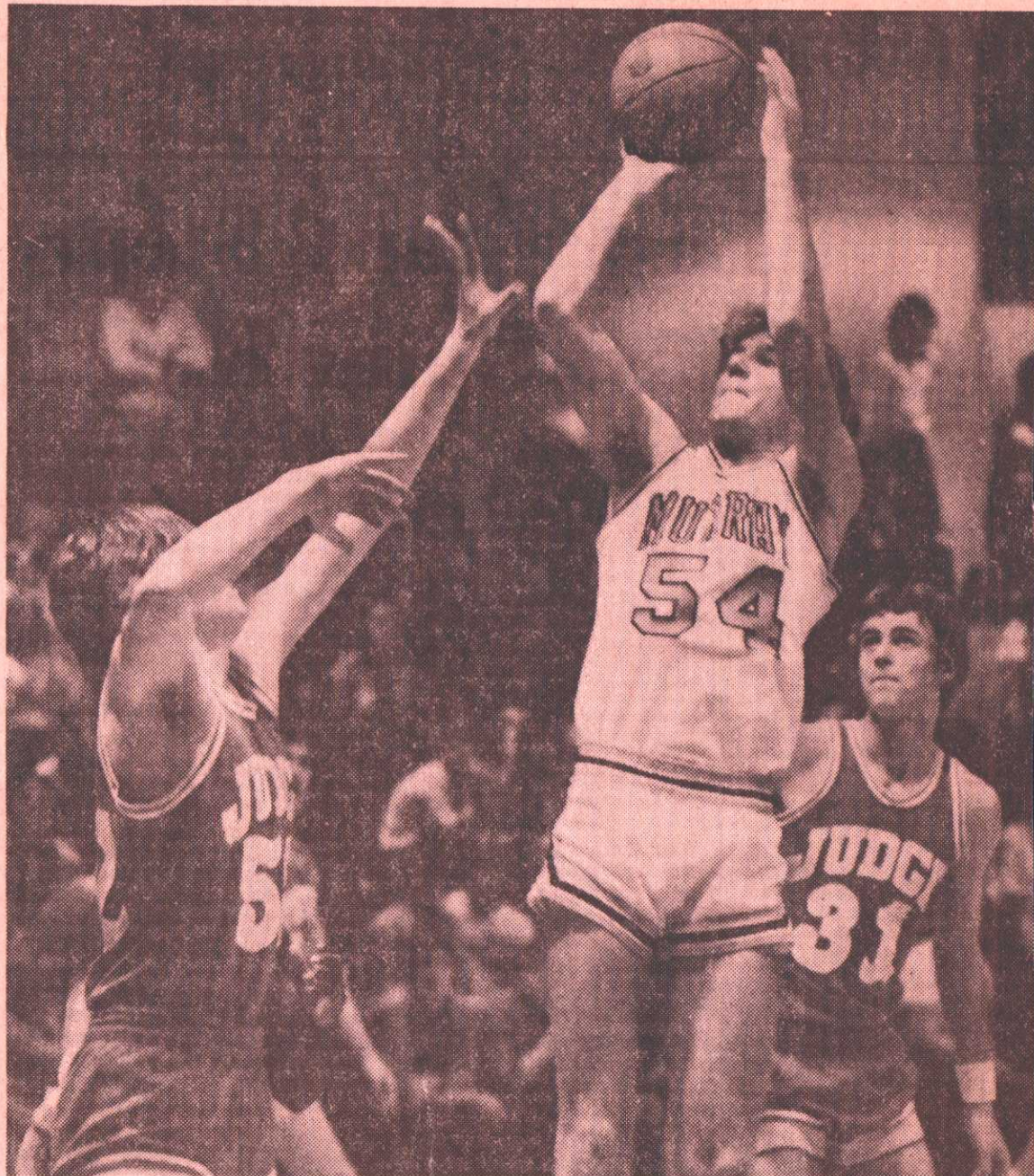
East was the main beneficiary of Skyline's victory Tuesday. The Leopards, who coasted past Granite, 87-75, Tuesday, secured sole possession of first place in Region Three while climbing to 4-0. However, the East victory contained a bit of bad news for Coach Dick Milne. High-scoring Rich Gremillion broke the ring finger on his shooting hand and was forced to leave the game in the first period.

West, which lost its first three outings of the season, won its second straight by outlasting Olympus, 57-50, in the other Region Three encounter Tuesday.

Hillcrest, which has now won four straight league confrontations, assumed sole control of first place in Region Two Tuesday by disposing of defending region champion Bingham, 79-65.

Brighton aided its own cause and presented Hillcrest with first place by turning back Granger, 60-46, while Orem also improved to 3-2 by virtue of its 54-44 victory at Alta Tuesday night.

Clearfield maintained the No. 1 perch in Region One Tuesday evening—but just by a whisker. The Falcons boosted their record to 6-1 to remain a step ahead of the pack by nipping Weber, 51-49.



—Tribune Staff Photo by Frank R. Porschafi

Murray's Brad Hale goes up for a shot as Judge Memorial's Jim Lytle (31) and

Terry Murnin (52) watch. Judge won the contest handing Murray defeat at home.