

James Russell-Field:

Senior is recognized for his efforts to help the team wherever he could

By Bruce Smith
MatchupUT.com

James Russell-Field's usefulness to the Juan Diego basketball team won't appear in the season statistics.

He started at shooting guard when the team opened the season without some of its football-playing teammates who were not quite ready to play.

He scored 29 points, including a season-high nine during mop-up time in the Soaring Eagle's final 3A state tournament game against Morgan.

"Coach (**Sonny Tangaro**) said to just enjoy the game," said Russell-Field, "so I started shooting."

That was his reward. Tangaro carefully chose his words when he said Russell-Field was one of the team's most valuable contributors.

"He never quit," Tangaro said. "He didn't always get the playing time he wanted, but he showed up, worked hard and helped wherever he could."

Russell-Field might not have received a fair shake but, at 5-foot-10, he was a victim to reality. Fact is, Juan Diego often needed bigger players on the court. During his junior year, he lost his starting role at midseason when **Pablo Coro** joined the team. Coro ended up averaging more than 20 points per game, led Juan Diego to the consolation title in the 3A state tournament and then earned a basketball scholarship to Weber State.

This year, Russell-Field's playing time was reduced when the Soaring Eagle went up against 5A schools like Skyline, Bingham and Lone Peak.

"We really needed more height, so I started coming off the bench," he said.

When he played, he tried to get the ball into a scorer's hands.

"I stayed around the three-point line and would swing (pass) the ball really fast, so others could get



James Russell-Field acted as a player-coach for Juan Diego's team and was recognized for his contribution and attitude.

open shots," he said.

While he was on the bench, however, he always felt useful.

"I tried to help wherever I could. I always hustled in practice and in the games and I tried to offer as much advice as I could to the younger players."

In effect, Russell-Field used his senior season to act as a player-coach.

Russell-Field's sports expertise is actually tennis, where he teamed with **Corbin White** in 2009 to take second place in No. 2 doubles at the 3A state tournament at BYU. He also gained valuable

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experience on the basketball team during the spring and summer, competing in various tournaments.

He said he saw this year's team grow.

"We were a young team with only three seniors. This was always going to be **Ajay's (Pizza)** team," he said. "Ajay knew since his sophomore year that he would be counted on a lot this year, and he really stepped it up.

"**Brian Curran** really stepped it up, too," he added. "He started two or three games and did really well for a sophomore."

He said the season highlight was – by far – the victory at Judge Memorial. He didn't play, but ran onto the court with his teammates to celebrate the festive occasion with them.

For Russell-Field, there were countless memories and he will always appreciate them – and the team will appreciate him for the role he played in each.



Russell-Field was always listening and learning so he could help other players, in addition to himself.