

Judge gains character holding off Murray

By Bruce Smith
MatchupUT.com

MURRAY – Judge Memorial coach **Jim Yerkovich** has been trying to tell his team how important the first four minutes of the second half can be in a basketball game.

He said it cost the Bulldogs dearly in a game earlier this year, and it almost did again Tuesday night. Judge, however, rallied to hold off Murray 59-57 in a non-region game.

“It’s the key time in a game,” Yerkovich said. “They (the Spartans) were much more active. But it took character for us to come back from that.”

Judge built a 36-21 lead in the first half, thanks to 6-foot-10 center **Will Whitt**, who scored 16 of his game-high 24 points. The Spartans, however, scored the first 11 points of the third quarter and made it a game again.

The outcome wasn’t decided until Murray misfired on a last-second shot that could have tied or won the contest.

“We told the kids (at halftime) that they just weren’t playing hard enough,” said Murray coach Jason Workman. “Judge was getting all the loose balls and rebounds. It was about as one-sided as I’ve ever experienced.”

Cade Bullough and Mitch Tate buoyed Murray’s

GAME SUMMARY

Judge Memorial 21 15 12 11 - 59
Murray 11 10 22 14 - 57

JUDGE MEMORIAL (59) – Daniel Shiramizu 3-4 2-2 8, Basil Vetas 3-7 5-6 13, Zach Myaer 4-11 2-2 11, Kelton Quinn 0-0 0-0 0, Will Whitt 9-18 6-6 24, Collin Lawless 1-1 0-0 3, Ben Cook 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 20-41 15-18 59.

MURRAY (57) – Cade Bullough 5-8 5-7 18, Mitch Tate 5-6 0-1 10, Wyatt Woodard 3-8 4-6 10, Justin Escarciga 2-2 1-3 6, David Collette 4-6 2-2 10, Riley Grandinetti 1-4 0-0 3, Sam Sorter 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 20-36 12-18 57.

Total fouls: Judge Memorial 12, Murray 9. **Fouled out:** None. **Technical fouls:** None. **Three-point goals:** Judge 3-5 (Vetas, Myaer, Lawless), Murray 5-5 (Bullough 3, Escarciga, Grandinetti). **Rebounds:** Judge 24 (Quinn 8), Murray 15 (Woodard 4). **Turnovers:** Judge 12, Murray 12.



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second half rally, and the Spartans actually took the lead with 5:32 left when Justin Escarciga hit a three-pointer.

The game went back and forth until the end, when **Basil Vetas** swished two free throws with 32 seconds remaining to give Judge its two-point margin. That gave Murray time to set up a last shot.

“We wanted to go for a three with about 20 seconds left,” said Workman.

Judge had that covered. The Spartans also thought about getting the ball inside to 6-7 center David Collette, who has been its leading scorer this season. Workman figured Judge would be expecting that, though, since they tried that

play before.

So, they fed the ball to Escarciga and Tate, but neither was open. The last shot was a frantic attempt by Escarciga.

Yerkovich was especially pleased with Judge’s scrappy defense in the final seconds.

“It was an important win for us,” he said. “We came back and made the plays.”

In the first half, Judge made many plays. Whitt was the benefactor of most of them. He had his way in the key, but became less of a factor later. That’s when Murray became the aggressor, forcing four turnovers in the first three minutes that led to its 11-0 run.

A pair of Vetas free throws ended that streak. Vetas finished with 16 points.