

As Gunn athletic director

Rotty brings order, builds programs

By TOM STIENSTRA

When Elaine Rotty was hired as Gunn High's athletic director this fall—for both the girls' and boys' programs—it caused many raised eyebrows among coaches from Midpeninsula high schools.

Rotty is the first woman athletic director on the Midpeninsula.

But for those that know her, Rotty's appointment came as no surprise. In the past seven years, she has funneled her full efforts into Gunn's Girls' sports program, making it one of the most respected in the Bay Area.

"It didn't come as a surprise at all," said girls' swimming coach Nan Blackledge. "She creates order where there's chaos. She's so organized that she takes care of all of us. She makes us function as good coaches."

Rotty is best known for her fiery spirit, determination and direct approach.

"If you're going to do a job, you've got to give it everything you've got and hope your best is good enough," Rotty said. "That's how I run my teams. If we play our best and the other team has more points, we're satisfied."

"I used to be high strung and nervous, but I've learned that when I run into a brick wall, well, I'll try to climb over it but I won't get an ulcer if I can't."

Rotty's administrative duties in the past seven years include directing the girls' sports programs of both the South Peninsula Athletic League and Santa Clara Valley.

Rotty's volleyball teams have never finished below second place

in either the SPAL or SCVAL and her top player of a year ago, Sandy Harris, received a full scholarship to Stanford this fall.

Her occasional outbursts, however, have received as much attention as her coaching record. When Rotty makes her mind up to do something, she is like a tornado with her detractors being carried away in the dust.

Rotty was one of the leaders who picketed the San Jose Mercury-News this year with more than 200 girl athletes. Rotty led the picketers, complete with signs, to the front door of the Mercury in spite of warnings from security guards.

"They were putting our sports scores under 'miscellaneous,'" Rotty said. "We were very well organized throughout. We were hoping they'd call the police because we wanted to be newsworthy."

The San Jose Police Department was not called, but KRON-TV did show up and interview Rotty.

Rotty is also the self-proclaimed most-hated volleyball coach by referees. "I get warned by them almost every time I have a game," she said. "I don't want to see someone's chances at a college scholarship hurt because of sub-standard referees."

She also helped lift an average girls' sports program at Gunn to the high caliber it's at now. It didn't happen easy, however.

"The girls' basketball team used to have to play outside," Rotty said. "We were told that 'girls come second.' Well, we had quite a

fight and then they began to realize that girls need a sports program.

"As long as we have one, we should do it right."

Rotty, 34 "going on 21," makes her home in Cupertino. She's single. She graduated from Winona State University in 1965 with a degree in physical education and competed on the swimming team there as a springboard diver.

Rotty graduated from Arizona State University with a Masters and came to the Bay Area for her first job.

"I knew I didn't want to stay in Minnesota," Rotty said. "Minnesota is a good place to be from. I saw Gunn and I said, 'Gee, I'd really like to teach here.'"

"But everybody laughed at me because Gunn has the air about it that you have to be special to be there and they said, 'Who do you think you are?'"

Rotty showed who she thought she was, securing a position on the P.E. staff after teaching two years at Pioneer and Leland high schools in San Jose.

At Gunn she molded one of the most feared volleyball programs in the Bay Area and won the Central Coast Section championship in the spring of '76.

When Steve Truesdell resigned as Athletic Director last summer, Instructional Supervisor Lee Megginson offered her the job.

Rotty's new duties include handling coaching assignments and budget requests, evaluating coaches, coordinating the use of facilities and a plethora of other

small but necessary tasks. Gunn has 39 athletic teams and Rotty is responsible to see that each runs smoothly.

"I'm finding out a lot about procedure," she said, noting more tact is required than she is accustomed to when working within a bureaucracy. "We have a common coaches room so I see every coach three times a day. The problem is to realize their problems."

"I don't like to hurt people's feelings and that's what I don't like about the job. Decisions have to be made and I have to learn to deal with that."

Rotty admits there is one duty which has her a bit perplexed.

"I haven't figured how to do the wrestling weigh-ins yet," she said. "They are supposed to weigh-in with nothing on at all."

Knoll falters

SAN JOSE — Jim Knoll of Mountain View tied for first place in the weekly Mini-tour golf tournament at Riverside Golf Club yesterday but lost in a three-way playoff to John Enright of Alameda.

Enright, Knoll and Dave Fowler of Oakland had scores of 145 in the 36-hole event. Knoll shot 70 to hold the lead after 18 holes but then had a 75 in the afternoon round. Enright won \$400 and Knoll and Fowler each got \$287.50.

Others among the leading scorers were Scott Hoyt of Menlo Park, Tom Pera of Riverside and Rick Hunter of Monterey.



Gunn High athletic director Elaine Rotty