



SOON TO PULL OFF A BIG UPSET...Cougar Mike Helmstetter, bottom, later countered a double-leg takedown attempt by hipping forward with a walkover to a front double grapevine pin Blue Devil Mike Kalimtzis, the Union County Tournament 103-lb champion, in 4:13 at 112 lbs.

David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Cougar Cagers Ice Comets at the Buzzer, 56-54

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in a lay-up and senior guard Kendall Grier banged a 3-pointer. During the first half, the Cougars were getting into a one shot and out mode as the Comets were controlling the boards.

Each team traded point-for-point in the third quarter until Grier hit a jumper and Gross sank two from the charity line to help the Cougars win the quarter 13-10. Grier finished with 10 points, an assist and a steal.

Pace sank a 2-pointer at the beginning of the fourth quarter. Green added a lay-up then Pace nailed a 3-pointer to give the Cougars a 42-41 lead with 6:40 remaining. After a Hillside

timeout, Pace fed Trotter, who swished his 3-pointer to extend the lead, but the Comets answered quickly to tie the score, 45-45, with 5:30 on the clock. Two minutes later, the Comets snatched a 49-48 lead then jumped to a 53-50 lead with a minute remaining. Gross hit a 2-pointer, and Green sank two free throws, but the Comets hit a free throw to knot the score with 12 second remaining.

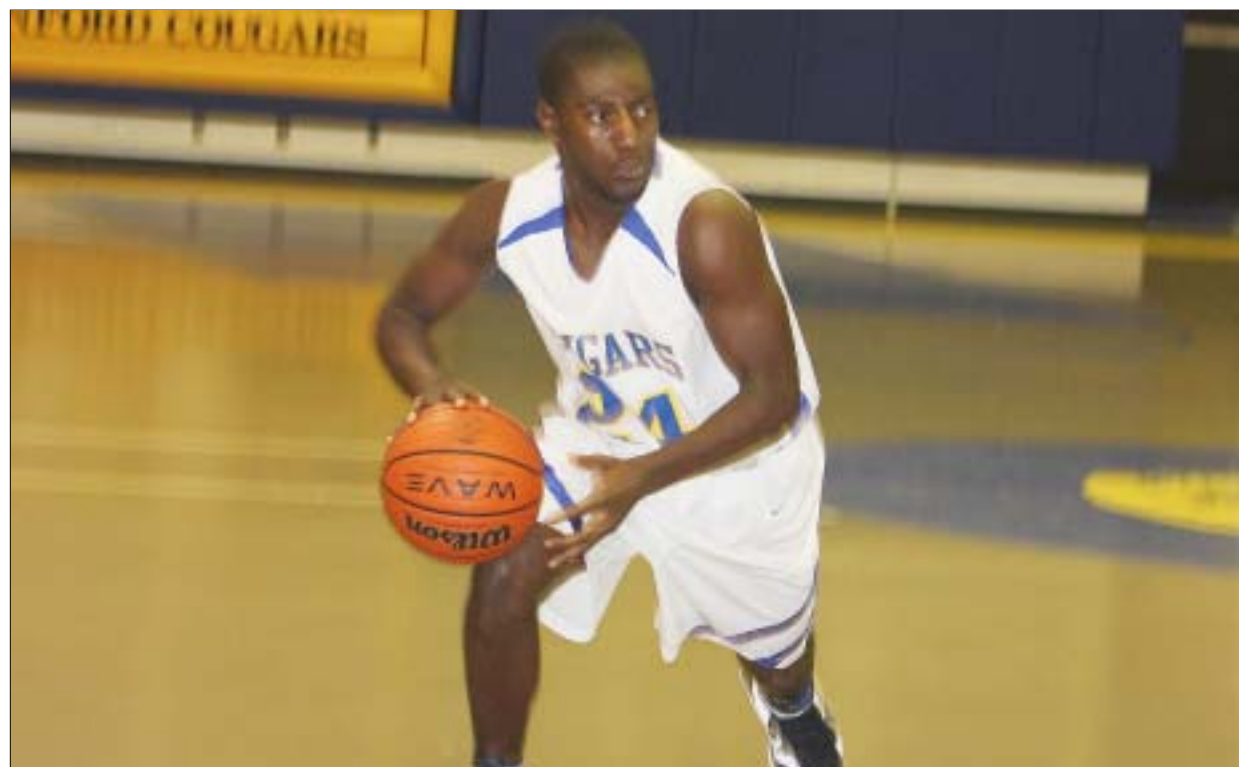
Cougar Head Coach Ryan Huber called a timeout. When the action resumed, Pace had the ball in the Comets' court. He sized up the situation and with five second on the clock

made his drive to the basket between a pair of Comet defenders and made the lay-up as the buzzer blared.

"We wanted to set up Will (Green) down low to get the one-on-one play, but I knew when I did the crossover I had the lane, and I knew if I drove I had it, so I just took it," Pace explained.

Junior guard Keith Burgess finished with 18 points, senior forward Anthony Johnson sank eight points and forward Shakill Copland put in seven points for Hillside.

Hillside	18	11	10	15	54
Cranford	13	9	13	21	56



MAKING SOME KEY PLAYS...Kendall Grier sank a key 3-pointer and a key jumper to help the Cougars ice the Comets, 56-54, in Cranford on January 26. Grier finished with 10 points, an assist and a steal.

David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Cougar Matmen Hold Down Blue Devils, 42-22

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a walk-around takedown to win, 5-1. "We were looking for that match-up. We thought he could get him again. It ended up being the right move for the team," coach Torsone said.

At 130 lbs, Cougar Carmine Pellino amassed four takedowns, an escape and three nearfalls to seize a 16-1, 5:12, technical fall over Kevin Cascillo. Cougar Kyle Markovitch, last year's 119-lb District 11 champ who had been out all season due to a wrist injury, managed to make his second bout of the season worth while, recording three takedowns and an escape to defeat Ryan Jennings, 7-0, at 135 lbs.

"He has been working a lot on his own, which helps him get through the matches, but we are looking for him to get in better condition over the next couple of weeks to get ready for districts," coach Torsone said of Markovitch.

The third key bout came at 140 lbs. Blue Devil Christian Barber recorded a single-leg takedown in the first period on Matt DiGiovanni, escaped

and added a single-leg, pry-back takedown in the second period, then performed a head-and-arm takedown in the third period to claim a 7-2 victory, narrowing the Cougars' lead to 27-9.

Blue Devil Brian Henry racked up five takedowns of varying styles, a nearfall and a reversal before pinning Eric Knight with a half nelson in 5:22 at 145 lbs.

"Brian wrestled well as he always does. Win or lose, you know you have six good minutes of Brian Henry," coach Kurz said.

Blue Devil Erik Gozdzieski grabbed a 6-3 decision over Connor Londregan at 152 lbs to tighten the team score to 27-18, but Cougar JP Christiano used a grapevine and an arm bar to pin Chris Tomasso in 1:14 at 160 lbs.

At 171 lbs, Blue Devil sophomore Kieran Cline recorded a takedown and a three-point, head-smother nearfall in the first period of his bout with Chris Keim. He added an escape, a short-arm drag takedown and a double-leg takedown to earn a 10-0, majority decision.

"He can do some good things for us. We've got to get him in more of a wrestling frame of mind. I think once we do that, he will be, hopefully in our lineup regularly," coach Kurz said of Cline.

In the final head-to-head bout, Blue Devil Bill Kim jumped up to 189 lbs to face Errol Petgrave but dropped a 3-1 decision.

"Throughout the lineup, there weren't really many matches that were lopsided. A lot of them were close battles," coach Torsone said.

"We told the kids that we had a match plan that would put us in a position to win. It would be up to them to actually execute it to see if we were tougher than Cranford or they were tougher than us. We got our answer," coach Kurz said.

- BOU T SEQUENCE:**
 Hwt: — Brady (C) won forfeit
 103: — Slifer (W) p Castro, 1:47
 112: — Helmstetter (C) p Kalimtzis, 4:13
 119: — Henry (C) md Aldana, 9-1
 125: — Giaccio (C) d Skibitsky, 5-1
 130: — Pellino (C) tf Cascillo 16-1, 5:12
 135: — Markovitch (C) d Jennings, 7-0
 145: — Barber (W) d DiGiovanni, 7-2
 152: — Henry (W) p Knight, 5:22
 160: — Gozdzieski (W) d Londregan, 6-3
 160: — Christiano (C) p Tomasso, 1:14
 171: — Cline (W) md Keim, 10-0
 189: — Petgrave (C) d Kim, 3-1
 215: — Campo (C) won forfeit

Online Cougar Exclusive: Union County Wrestling:

For Cranford High School sports, check out the Online Exclusive Cougar pages at — www.goleader.com — Go to bottom of main page — Click Cougar Pages. Union County Wrestling results will be on the following page.

Online Exclusive Cougar pages can also be accessed by clicking on "Archives".

Additional photos of events covered by Dave Corbin and Fred Lecomte can be seen by clicking "photo library" on upper right — then click "photos" on top. Scroll to appropriate list.

Cougar Snacks:

Cougar Boys Place 4th, Girls 7th at UCT Swim

In a very competitive Union County Tournament, dominated almost exclusively every year by the Westfield High School boys' and girls' teams, and sometimes by Scotch Plains-Fanwood, the Cranford High School boys swim team placed fourth and the Cougar girls placed seventh at the Sonny Werblin Recreation Center on the Rutgers University campus in Piscataway on January 30.

Once again, the Blue Devil boys and girls took top honors with 442 points and 418 points, respectively, followed by the Raider boys at 411.5 and girls at 354. The Cougar boys totaled 173 behind the Summit Hilltoppers, who finished third with a 320 total. New Providence at 246, Kent Place at 219, Summit at 208 and Governor Livingston at 161.5 also finished ahead of the Cougar girls,

Cougar Boys Hold Off Indian Cagers, 68-67

The Cranford High School boys basketball team dodged the bullet by holding off the 5-8 Rahway Indians, 68-67, in Cranford on January 29. Sophomore forward Chris Gross pumped in a career-high 28 points, pulled 11 rebounds, had five blocks, two steals and an assist for the 9-3 Cougars.

Senior Will Green bucketed 18 points, sinking six of seven from the line, and added eight rebounds (2 offensive), two steals, two assists and a block. Point guard Sean Trotter hit four of seven from the field, including two 3-pointers, and 1-for-2 from the line for 11 points. He also had five assists, three rebounds and a pair of thefts. Senior Kendall Grier sank five points, had six assists, made a steal and grabbed two rebounds. Nick Pace had four assists and four points, while Greg Goode had two points, an assist, a rebound and a theft.

Rahway	13	15	6	19	67
Cranford	14	10	15	16	68

who totaled 118.5.

Cougar Brian Woo touched second in the 200-yard freestyle with a time of 1:48.87 and teammate Nicholas Kalafatis touched sixth at 1:56.5. Woo also finished second in the 500-yard freestyle with a time of 4:54.61. Eric Walano finished fifth in the 500-yard freestyle with a time of 23.46. The Cougar boys placed fourth in the 200-yard freestyle relay at 1:34.54 and fifth in the 200-yard medley relay at 1:51.04.

Allison Schneider brought the Cougar girls a third place in the 500-yard freestyle with a time of 5:16.38. She also touched sixth in the 200-yard individual medley with a time of 2:18.23. The Cougars girls placed sixth in the 200-yard freestyle relay at 1:51.49 and sixth in the 200-yard medley relay at 2:05.12.

The girls broke seven meet records and the boys broke two. Blue Devils Matt Meserole, Jack Lorentzen, Larry Zhang and Mike Oster broke the record in the 200-yard medley relay with a time of 1:38.66. The old record of 1:39.75 was set by Westfield in 1978. Raider Greg Baliko broke the 200-yard individual medley record of 1:58.09, set by Westfield's Darren Hertell in 1993 with a time of 1:57.41.

SPF Raiders Caitlin English, Kelsey Rossi, Becca Dunn and Hannah Markey set a meet record in the 200-yard medley relay with a time of 1:52.19. Julia Kudryashova of New Providence broke meet records in the 500-yard freestyle at 24.09 and the 100-yard freestyle at 52.27. She teamed with Kim Kaller, Kim Closs and Kelly Carroll to break the meet record in the 100-yard butterfly with a time of 57.84. Westfield Blue Devils Becky DeLaFuenta, Anna Fetter, Meredith Smith and Suzanne Lemberg broke the meet record in the 400-yard freestyle relay at 3:34.88. Governor Livingston's Abby Pires broke the meet record in the 100-yard breaststroke with a time of 1:06.29.

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COUGAR PRIDE

This page is reserved for Cranford High School sports only. To make this weekly page a success, help is needed from the coaches, a stat person and/or a designated parent, who follows any of the teams and wishes to contribute a to the point, factual account of the event. Any good photos of the event may also be welcomed.

Please e-mail by Monday at noon to David B. Corbin, (Asst. Publisher/Sports Editor) dcorbin@goleader.com

GO COUGARS!



COUGAR ATHLETE OF THE WEEK...Sophomore Tim Coda, in his first year on the bowling team, rolled a 200+ game and finished with a three-game series over 500 at the Union County Tournament this past weekend.

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