

***SENIOR McKEARY, SOPHOMORE MacLELLAND LEAD LADY COUGARS IN SCORING, STEALS*****Lady Cougars Finish at 11-13, with Young Basketball Squad**By **DAVID B. CORBIN***Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

Senior team captains Mairead McKeary and Kerry Wischusen, as the only returning starters on the Cranford High School girls basketball team, had their work cut out for them organizing a squad comprised predominantly of sophomores, but fortunately very talented sophomores.

"We were extremely young and for most of the girls it was their first year playing at the varsity level and against experienced talent," Cougar Head Coach Jackie Dyer said.

The Lady Cougars, who finished with an 11-13 record, had a variety of interesting games throughout the season, and the most lopsided one was a 45-8 thrashing of Kent Place on December 27.

The Cougars defeated Linden twice by a nine-point margin. The first being 49-40 and the second was 51-42. But probably the biggest victory was a 38-34 win over Governor Livingston on January 16. The two closest games were both decided by one point against Plainfield, beginning with a 55-54 defeat. The Cougars then returned the favor with a 56-55 triumph over the Cardinals on February 12.

The Cougars' two highest scoring games came against the same opponent, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Raiders. On January 11, the Cougars

outscored the Raiders, 65-43, then on February 4, they topped the Raiders, 65-52.

McKeary was indeed effective offensively, finishing second on the team with 227 points and

first with 44 assists. She scored double figures 13 times, and her defense was also top notch with 65 rebounds and a team-leading 45 acts of theft.

Wischusen helped set up plays

grabbed 61 rebounds and had 31 steals.

"Mairead and Kerry were great leaders for our team. They came into the season with big shoes to fill and they certainly did a

contributed to the team's growth.

As the season progressed, several of these young sophomores blossomed into fine players. Cerys MacLelland proved to be a definite asset in every aspect of the game. She led the team in scoring with 249 points and in rebounds with 146, while adding 32 steals and 20 assists.

Sophomore Lyndsey Pace got progressively more adept and finished the season with 175 points, 61 rebounds, 40 steals and nine assists. Her most productive offensive game came in the season finale with a 23-point surge against Summit.

Sophomore Isabella Speers received more playing time in the second half of the season and turned out to be quite an influence under the boards. She pulled 109 rebounds and scored 84 points, while adding 11 assists and four steals. She had two games where she grabbed 13 rebounds.

"My young players now have a year of experience under their belt, which will definitely be great for next season," Coach Dyer said.

Sophomores Hannah and Sarah Ross also made positive contributions to the team, as did juniors Erin Meixner and Jennifer Carovillano.

"I am extremely excited about our future. We are extremely talented, hard working and I have a great group coming in next year," Coach Dyer said.

*\*rebounds, assists and steals stats were missing from the second Plainfield game, although the points were listed, so all the girls who played in that game may have slightly higher numbers in those categories.*



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of The Westfield Leader*

David B. Corbin for *The Westfield Leader and The Times*

**A TEAM LEADER IN ASSISTS AND SCORING...Cougar senior Mairead McKeary, No. 13, led her team in assists with 44 and was second in scoring with 227 points. She also led her team with 45 steals**

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but also managed to bucket 103 points, while adding 27 assists. In four of her games she dished out four assists. She also

great job of filling them," Coach Dyer said.

Seniors Carly Maucione, Megan Pringle, Hannah DeMars and Jessica Casale, who also had previous varsity experience,