

MORGAN MILLER DRIVES FOR 20 POINTS; J. McCOY SCORES 8 POINTS, GRABS 5 STEALS**Cougars Top Mountaineers for Girls Hoops Title, 38-32**By **DAVID B. CORBIN***Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

Outside shooting was ice cold in the first half, so senior forward Morgan Miller came up with another idea. She began driving toward the basket and found the success that the Cranford High School girls basketball team needed to defeat the West Orange Mountaineers, 38-32, in the championship game of the Coaches vs. Cancer Tournament in Cranford on December 29.

Miller, who had no points in the first quarter, began her drives to the basket in the second quarter and finished the game with a game-leading 20 points, including two 3-pointers and hitting four of six from the stripe. She also added a rebound, an assist and a steal.

"I think penetrating was definitely key, because it makes the defense uncomfortable. Even if you don't get a shot, you draw the defense towards you, and you have open shooters or you get fouls. It put pressure on them instead of passing the ball around the 3-point line," Miller explained.

The 3-2 Mountaineers took advantage of the 4-0 Cougars' frigid shooting and tentative defense to seize a 14-8 lead after the first quarter. Chisom Amaefuna sank four of her team-high 12 points and Allison Mejia put in four of her seven points in the quarter. Cougar forward Carly Maucione (3 rebounds) banged a 3-pointer, while Mairead McKeary (5 points, steal, rebound) had three points

and guard Jess McCoy (4 rebounds), who led the team with five steals, put in the first two of her eight points.

In the second quarter, Miller's driving strategy drew some fouls.

She hit three of four free throws and added a lay-up, and McCoy added a lay-up, while the Cougar defense limited the Mountaineers to just two points to cut the lead to 16-15 at the half.

job of slowing us down. When we are slow on defense, our offense doesn't really click. We picked up on defense, and that's when our offense started to come, Cougar Head Coach Jackie Dyer said.

the ball on the outside, we either got shots in the paint, got fouled or kicked it back out opening shots from the outside," Miller said.

The Cougars won the third quarter, 11-9, to take a slight 26-25 lead. Point guard Jenna Goeller, who finished with four assists, managed to pass the ball into McCoy, who sank a lay-up, and out to Miller, who banged a 3-pointer. Center Kaitlin McGovern (4 rebounds, 2 points, tipped pass, block) had a key theft that set up a lay-up.

Miller really caught fire in the final quarter and bucketed 10 of the team's 12 points to seal the deal.

"In years past, we have always been known as the outside shooting team, but we have been working and concentrating on taking the ball to the basket, giving Kaitlin the ball when she is posting up, having more of an inside game. Today was a good example of what happens when we use our inside game. Same thing happened with New Providence. We were down and we started bringing the ball to the basket. It's when we picked it up and started winning," Coach Dyer said.

The only disappointing part of the final quarter was that the Cougars' free throw shooting slipped to 33 percent (3-for-9) during that span.

"We are going to be working on that. We take about 100 free throws a practice. We might go to about 150," Coach Dyer promised.

West Orange	14	2	9	7	32
Cranford	8	7	11	12	38

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

DRIVING TO THE BASKET...Cougar Morgan Miller, No. 3, found out that driving to the basket could be lucrative in the championship game with West Orange. Miller finished with 20 points, including a pair of 3-pointers.

"The first half was a little slow. We are not a slow team. We like to pick up the ball and go. West Orange was doing a really good

"I think it was probably one of the worst starts we've had this season. We were a little flustered with their defense pressure, but I think we adjusted to it well. We were composed. We started doing a lot. Instead of just moving

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