

REGGIE GREEN LED SCORING, SEAN BABOS ASSISTS STEFAN FEDORCHAK 3-POINTERS

Cougar Boys Won 6 of Last 8, Finish 12-13 in Basketball

By DAVID B. CORBIN

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Midseason woes, coming up on the short side of very close games, may have been a bit discouraging for the Cranford High School boys basketball team, but the Cougars bounced back to win six of their final eight games to finish with a 12-13 record.

"Overall, with the exception of our state tournament loss to East Side, in our last 17 games, we were about 23 points away from being 16-1," Cougar Head Coach Ryan Huber said. "We lost to Rahway by one, Hillside by two, St. Mary's by five. About every game was right there. Late in the season, we started to step up and hit big shots."

Early in the season, the Cougars got stung by Summit, 48-46, and suffered an overtime loss to Westfield, 64-62.

"We had the opportunity to win that game [Westfield] in regulation. We needed a big defensive stop. Keegan Hess made a big play for them and knocked down some foul shots. Overall, games like that early in the season, helped us get our bearings, and

we did a lot better in those close games," Coach Huber said.

Junior forward/center Reggie Green was a dominant figure under the boards and led the Cougars in scoring with 405 points, which included 69 free throws. Green also led the team with 175 rebounds and added 10 assists, nine steals and four blocked shots.

"Reggie might be the second player who leaves here who scored 1,000 points without hit-

ting a shot outside 12 feet. He really matured, coming off a state championship in football. He was a little banged up early in the season, because he got hit every play in football. He really came through late in the year and became a force to be reckoned with. He became a really good passer. He would turn the ball over to Kurt Rutmayer and that really opened up our offense. He was great going to the basket, but he's got to develop a primary

jump shot to open things up," Coach Huber said.

Senior forward/center Rutmayer could be deadly from the perimeter, as well as underneath with putbacks and re-bounds. Rutmayer sank 20 3-pointers and finished with 266 points, which included 70 free throws. He also grabbed 122 rebounds and led the team with 10 blocked shots.

"Kurt is a consistent player in anything he does. Whether it's

football, basketball or baseball, he is a great leader out there. He does everything you ask him to do. He does it without ever saying two words against it. He is going to be missed not only because of his basketball ability, but he is going to be missed just as much as a leader," Coach Huber said.

Senior point guard Sean Babos led the team with 71 assists, but despite his unselfishness, he managed to score 199 points, including 33 3-pointers and 42 free throws. He was the Cougars' chief thief with 14 steals.

"Sean! Once we got the ball in bounds, we didn't think many people were going to be able to take the ball away from him. Early in the season we thought we relied too much on Sean in terms of bringing pressure. I talked to him in the middle of January that he had to score a little bit more, and he really did that. Once he started shooting more, that really opened it up, because he's got range from 25 feet in," Coach Huber said.

Junior forward Stefan Fedorchak led the Cougars with 38 3-pointers (114 points), sank

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David B. Corbin (January 2012 files) for The Westfield Leader and The Times

TEAM LEADER IN ASSISTS...Cougar Sean Babos, No. 1, led the team with 71 assists, but despite his unselfishness, he managed to score 199 points.

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