



COUGARS McCAFFREY SINKS 22, OBLACHINSKI 12, TROTTER 9; SPF's GIBBONS 9, GARY 8

Cougars' Run in 3rd Rattles Raider Basketball Boys, 56-41

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Senior John Oblachinski sank five of his 12 points and added an assist, which ignited a 13-3 run in the first half of the third quarter to put the Cranford High School boys basketball team on the road to a 56-41 victory over Scotch Plains-Fanwood in Cranford on January 30.

Prior to that breakout, both teams were locked in a back-and-forth struggle with the Cougars clinging to a two-point lead at halftime.

"Last game was a close game and they had like a 14-2 run. For 27 minutes, we played a close game then they get that run.

They were beating us off the dribble. They are nice athletic kids," Raider Head Coach Dennis Doherty said.

Two major deciding factors was the Cougars' ability to control the boards and dish out a large number of assists. Five Cougars had five rebounds or more and one grabbed four. Oblachinski pulled down nine, Tommy Trotter pulled down eight and Mike Guarriello grabbed seven, while Jack McCaffrey and Luke Christiano each grabbed five and Cameron Kutzer pulled four.

"He gets a lot of rebounds for us, a lot of put backs. Helps a lot through the course of the game," McCaffrey said of Oblachinski.

Chris Gibbons led the 8-8 Raiders with seven rebounds and nine points. Leo Ramos (4 points) and Quaryee Bull (2 points) each had

six rebounds. Rashan Gary netted eight points, Jack Poillon sank seven and Andrew Voysesst added five points.

"They were hurting us on the boards. They are strong kids. Football, even the baseball kids are strong kids. We got to get in the weight room to play against kids like that," Coach Doherty said.

"We tried to stay focused and box out. That's one of our main things, because most of the games that we don't win, we end up not being able to box out. That always seems to be an important factor," McCaffrey said.

McCaffrey was a major recipient of the assists and cashed in on them to lead all scorers with 22 points, half of them in the first quarter alone. He was also the "Chief Thief" with five steals.

"My team was finding the open looks for me. We were really looking to get the ball to the hoop on the zone, because they were really spread out and we could find a lot of gaps. My team used it well and found a lot of pass to give me easy looks," said McCaffrey, who also had two assists.

Trotter finished with nine points and four assists, while Christiano (5 points) and Kutzer each had four assists. Guarriello finished with eight points.

The Raiders seized the offensive initiative and scooted to a 9-4 lead midway through the first quarter with Poillon hitting for four, Gibbons sinking a 3-pointer and Ramos hitting for two, while McCaffrey had the Cougars' four points. But McCaffrey came back with a 3-pointer and a 2-pointer

and Guarriello rolled in a lay-up to give Cranford an 11-9 lead with 1:40 on the clock. The quarter ended, 15-13, Cranford.

The lead jostled back-and-forth in the second quarter but both teams added 10 points giving the Cougars a 25-23 edge at the break. The third quarter and the 13-3 run began with McCaffrey hitting a two and Oblachinski sinking a pair of free throws. With a Raider timeout at 2:34 on the clock, the Cougars led, 38-26. Gary rolled in a pair of lay-ups and Gibbons sank a two, while McCaffrey banged a three to make the score, 41-32, entering the fourth quarter.

The Raiders were unable to gain ground and trailed, 51-41, with 1:52 remaining, setting the stage for some necessary fouling.

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