

CR's TROTTER HITS 24; GUARRIELLO 13 PTs; KUTZER 10 RBs; WF's KANE NETS 10 PTs, 8 RBs

Cougars Jump on Blue Devils at Investors Games, 61-47

By DAVID B. CORBIN

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Momentum hopped in the Cougars' favor midway through the first quarter and remained there long enough as the Cranford High School boys basketball team startled the Westfield Blue Devils, 61-47, at the Investors Games at Kean University in Union on January 12.

Part of the Cougars' success came from their ability to hit from 3-point range, and four of those 3-pointers were launched by Tommy Trotter, who led all scorers with 24 points.

"It's a credit to the kids. Yesterday after practice, they all stayed and worked. The custodian had to throw guys out of the gym, because an hour later the kids were still in there shooting. Tommy stayed for an extra hour and just shot and shot and shot. We came out and shot the ball well today," Cougar Head Coach Ryan Huber said.

Senior Dave Kane was the Blue Devils' main man under the boards with eight rebounds. He also added 10 points, three steals and an assist. Sophomore Chris Boutsikaris scored 14 points, including three 3-pointers, and sophomore Parker Hess hit a pair of 3-pointers and finished with eight points. Junior Sean Elliott (3 rebounds, blocked shot, 2 steals) also finished with eight points.

"We didn't come ready to play at all today. I am disappointed. I am disappointed with our team. We played like crap to open up and we couldn't fight back into the game. It was awful," Kane expressed.

The Cougars not only were a jump ahead of the Blue Devils in rebounding, especially in the first half, but also, they were having much success with rapid, cross-court passing to set up their shots.

sively. He diagrammed a couple of things up. We did it and we got it done," Coach Huber said.

Cougars Mike Guarriello and Cameron Kutzer also left a lasting impression on the court, espe-

steals. Kutzer led the team with 10 rebounds and netted 12 points. Luke Christiano had six points, four assists, four rebounds and two thefts. Jack Schetelich had four points and Jack McCaffrey (3 rebounds) had two points.

"Mike and Cameron have really stepped up the last two games through Johnny's absence and really played great. Cameron, especially, has played unbelievable the last two games. If we keep continuing like this, we are going to be a tough team to beat," Coach Huber said.

The Blue Devils actually carried a 6-2 lead midway through the first quarter, but the Cougars abruptly answered with 11 unanswered points, including a pair of 3-pointers from Trotter, to grab a 13-6 lead. Three pointers from Trotter and Kutzer opened the door for a 14-5 run in the second quarter and a 27-11 lead at the half.

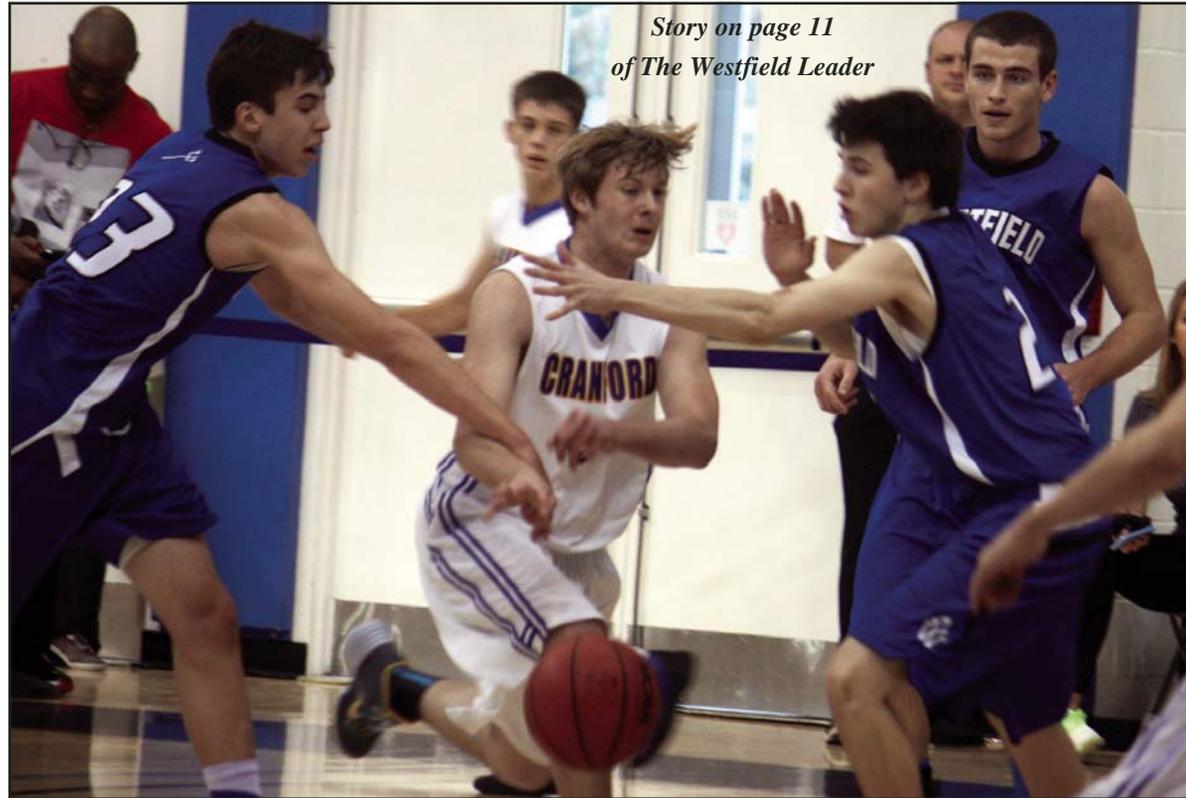
Twenty Three of the Cougars' 34 points in the second half came from the free throw line. The Cougars, who were 5-for-8 from the line in the first half, hit 28 of 37 free throws for 76 percent. The Blue Devils finished 11-for-18 (61 percent) from the line.

"It's the work that they are putting in. Sometimes a loss opens our eyes. I think our loss to Roselle really opened our eyes. We did what we could do. We had a couple of great days of practice. We just got to keep the momentum going forward," Coach Huber said.

"Like I said, 'We didn't come out to play.' We got destroyed. This was an awful loss for us," Kane said.

Cranford	13	14	16	18	61
Westfield	6	5	8	28	47

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JUST PASSING THROUGH...Cougar Mike Guarriello, center, passes the ball through Blue Devil defenders Ben Schumen, left, and Eric Shor, right, in the Investors games at Kean University in Union on January 12. The Cougars got on a hot streak early and kept on throughout the game to win, 61-47.

David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

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"In between quarters, coach [Chris] Loeffler was looking at what they were doing defen-

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cially in the absence of senior starter John Oblachinski, who had been away for college interviews the past several days. Guarriello sank 13 points, while adding five rebounds, two assists and two