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## Cranford Cougars Were Competitive; Finished Season 11-12 in Boys Basketball

the first round of the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 3 Tournament, 56-36, to the Colonia Patriots, who went on to win the title.

"This season was a successful year even though our record is not as great as we wanted. These players came to play everyday whether it was practice or a game and it showed, since we were in every game this year no matter who the opponent was. These kids have changed the culture and have the program moving in the direction that we want it to be going," Coach Trotter expressed.

Individually, senior Hunter Goff had a banner season, leading the team with 364 points, which included 83 free throws and 18 3-pointers. He was particularly strong driving to the basket which resulted either with a lay-up or a trip to the charity line. A prime example of his effectiveness was in the 61-59 loss to Hanover Park where Goff put in 32 points, which included eight free throws. Goff also dished out 38 assists and added 59 rebounds, 18 steals and three blocked shots.

"Hunter Goff was our go-to guy this year. For a guy who had not played much varsity time, we really relied on him to run our offense," Coach Trotter said.

Senior Jeremy Ruka, a stalwart on defense, led the team by far with 27 blocked shots, something that became very discomfoting to opposing teams. He was second on the team in rebounds with 143 and third in assists with 36, while adding 19 steals. Another discomfoting factor to other teams was Ruka's ability to bang the big "three" as

he pumped in a team-leading 41 3-pointers. It was evident when he hit five 3-pointers in the classic 77-74, overtime loss to the Pioneers, who won the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 1 title, and the Group 1 title. Ruka finished with 221 points, which included 28 free throws.

"Jeremy Ruka was a great two-way player for us and stepped up

contributing 37 points. Defensively, he pulled 64 rebounds and was second on the team with 38 acts of thievery, while adding four blocked shots.

"Kevin Donovan is the guy who will do anything you ask of him," Coach Trotter expressed.

The "Chief Thief" however was junior Cole Blazek, who snatched 41 basketballs. Blazek also

but also across the board. He was hands on everywhere and led the team with 201 rebounds, while creating 32 steals, dishing out 24 assists and adding 11 blocks. In the 77-74, overtime game against the Pioneers, Petgrave pulled a team-leading 14 rebounds.

Sophomore Joe Carrea demonstrated his scrappiness by pulling down 99 rebounds.

He scored 105 points and added 20 assists, 17 steals and a pair of blocked shots. Another sophomore, Dennis DiMarino, experiencing partial time on the court, scored 48 points and added 25 rebounds, 11 assists and seven steals. Sophomore Devin Haughey contributed 36 rebounds, 28 points, two assists, two blocks and a steal.

With limited court time, sophomore Jack Connolly scored eight points and added two rebounds and a blocked shot. Junior Pat Blowe had seven points, 11 rebounds and an assist. Junior Anthony DeCostello had seven

points, four rebounds and two assists. Senior Gaven Bridgeman had five points and five rebounds, Sophomore Adam Kutzer had four points and three rebounds, junior Jake DiClerico had six steals, two rebounds and a point, and junior Anthony Serson added a rebound and an assist.

With the graduation of Goff and his inside scoring ability, Ruka with his accuracy from beyond the perimeter and defensive toughness, and Donovan with his play setting, the Cougars will have some shoes to fill but the shoes will be there with the return of an experienced depth-filled crew of underclassmen.

"This years senior captains, Donovan, Goff and Ruka, did a great job leading this team and showing the rest of the program the dedication and hard work it takes to win in this county. The seniors will be greatly missed and I thank them for making my transition as head coach as easy as it was," said Coach Trotter, who added, "We are looking forward to the future with a lot of players returning that we are expecting a lot out of. We are hoping Petgrave, Blazek, Carrea and all the other returning players will make a big step in the right direction after a solid year this year. Losing three big starters is going to hurt a lot but hopefully with all the returning players we have, we can continue to get better and better."



as one of the only players returning with significant minutes last year. He did a great job being our defensive force and also scoring on the other end," Coach Trotter commented.

Primarily a play setter senior Kevin Donovan led the Cougars by far with 66 assists, while con-

grabbed 86 rebounds, scored 141 points, including 10 3-pointers, and added 33 assists and two blocks.

Sophomore Arjun Petgrave certainly left a positive impression, not only being second on the team in scoring with 244 points, which included 52 free throws,

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