SUNY Cortland Men’s Basketball

SUNY Cortland vs. Ithaca College
Tuesday, December 9, 2003; Ben Light Gymnasium; Ithaca, N.Y.

FINAL SCORE: Cortland 64, Ithaca 56

ITHACA, N.Y. – Cortland rallied from a nine-point deficit with just under 13 minutes remaining to defeat host Ithaca College, 64-56, in a non-league contest. The Red Dragons have won three straight games and are now 5-2, while Ithaca falls to 2-3.

Sophomore guard Frank Ranieri (Cicero/Cicero-North Syracuse) led Cortland with 21 points, 15 in the second half, and seven rebounds. Sophomore forward Jon Rother (Sodus Point/Sodus Central) added 18 points and freshman guard Dave Jutton (Red Hook) finished with eight points, including two critical three-pointers during the Red Dragons’ comeback. Sophomore guard Brian Kirchhoff (Webster) finished with four assists. Jutton and Rother each dished out three assists and junior guard Justin O’Garrow (Paul D. Schreiber/Port Washington) matched Ranieri for the team rebounding lead with seven.

Senior forward Tyler Schulz (Monroe/Monroe-Woodbury) led Ithaca with 19 points and 10 rebounds in addition to recording four blocked shots and four assists. Schulz made 8-of-9 field goals and scored 17 points in the first half, but the Red Dragon defense held him to 1-of-5 shooting and just two points in the second half. Junior guard Jesse Roth (Saratoga Springs) scored 15 points for the Bombers and sophomore guard Jim Bellis (Bloomfield/Bloomfield Central) dished out five assists.

Ithaca led most of the half and took its largest lead at 34-24 on a running jumper by Bellis with seven seconds left in the half. Cortland, however, raced the ball down the court and Kirchhoff drained a long three-pointer at the buzzer to bring the Red Dragons back within 34-27.

The hosts led by nine points on two occasions in the second half, the last at 47-38 on a Roth three-pointer with 12:51 remaining. Cortland answered with eight straight points to get back into the game. Ranieri hit a layup with 12:34 left, although he was unable to successfully complete the three-point play. Sophomore forward Erik Orquist (Beacon) made a foul-line jumper at the 11:53 mark and Rother made a layup at 11:13, with Kirchhoff assisting on both baskets. Freshman guard Derrick Coleman (Valley Stream/Valley Stream South) completed the run with a 17-foot jumper with 10:40 remaining.

Cortland trailed 51-48 when Ranieri missed a layup with 7:16 left. Rother grabbed the offensive rebound and fed the ball out to Jutton, who nailed a three-pointer to tie the game. Ithaca missed four shots over its next two possessions, and Jutton hit another trey with 5:48 left to give the Red Dragons the lead. Ithaca knotted the game at 54-54 on a three-pointer by senior guard Matt Usher (Saratoga Springs) with 5:24 left, but Ranieri gave Cortland the lead for good with a three-pointer at the 4:17 mark.

Ithaca drew back within 57-56 with 3:51 left on Schulz’s lone basket of the half, but Rother hit closely contested medium-range jumpers on Cortland’s next two possessions to extend the lead to 61-56 with 2:28 left. O’Garrow made 3-of-4 foul shots in the final minute to seal the victory.