Gries-led Raiders turn up defensive pressure to throw CG-Belgium boys for loss

A fast start to the season for the Cedar Grove-Belgium boys' basketball team came an abrupt halt Monday night.

Riding the hot hand of Brandon Gries, visiting Kiel surged past the Rockets, 68-58, in nonconference play.

Gries, a senior guard, scored a game-high 19 points, including 10 in the second quarter when the Raiders took a commanding lead.

"That's a good basketball team we played," said Cedar Grove-Belgium coach Jim Meinen, whose squad fell to 2-1 overall after opening the season with a pair of easy wins.

"Their backcourt is very strong, and they mixed their defenses well. We didn't handle the ball well and had a lot of turnovers."

Gries started the night needing 27 points to become Kiel's all-time leading scorer. He fell short of that goal, thanks to a determined defensive effort by the Rockets, but still gave his team enough spark to pull away.

After grabbing a 13-7 lead in the first quarter, the Raiders took charge with a 25-15 run in the second period that put them up, 38-22, at halftime.

Cedar Grove-Belgium had trouble getting the ball inside, where center Jesse Anderson was limited to 10 points before fouling out.

"The game never really got to Jesse because so much was happening in the backcourt," Meinen said.

Despite their turnover problems, guards provided most of the Rockets' offense. Senior Nic Vrubley scored a team-high 17 points, including a trio of three-point baskets, and fellow guard Weston Meinen had 12 points.

"Nic had his best offensive performance of the season so far," coach Meinen said.

Cedar Grove-Belgium's comeback hopes were hurt by poor shooting at the free-throw line, where it made just 15 of 31 attempts.

The Rockets will resume Central Lakeshore Conference play Thursday when they host Howards Grove and then travel to North Fond du Lac for a nonconference game Dec. 14. Both games start at 7:30 p.m.

CG-Belgium 64, Elkhart Lake 37

A strong first half propelled the Rockets to an easy road win last Friday that improved them to 2-0 in conference play.

Cedar Grove-Belgium raced to a 17-6 lead in the opening quarter and stretched the margin to 33-12 by halftime.

Meinen scored a team-high 16 points for Cedar Grove-Belgium, which also got 13 from Anderson.

The Rockets focused their defensive effort on containing guard Dane Blake, Elkhart's top player. Blake was limited to eight points after scoring 28 in his team's

season opener.

Cedar Grove-Belgium turned the game into a rout despite making only 17 of 34 free throws.

CG-Belgium 75, Stockbridge 48

A 21-9 scoring run in the first quarter gave the Rockets control quickly in a season-opening win at home Dec. 1.

Anderson and Josh Mulloy shared game-high scoring honors with 16 points apiece. Anderson also had nine rebounds.

Meinen added 15 points.

After trailing by 20 points at halftime, Stockbridge began to trim the deficit in the third quarter. However, the Rockets responded with a 29-15 run in the final period.

CEDAR GROVE-BELGIUM'S Josh Mulloy tried to control his dribble in the face of tight pressure from Kiel's Joey Burris during a nonconference game Monday. Kiel pulled away in the second quarter on the way to a 68-58 win.
Photo by Sam Arendt