

From teammates to foes, Newcomb, Starrett battle

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Joe Newcomb spent his high school playing days with Clay Starrett passing him the ball, but when Cornell College (Iowa) traveled to Franklin on Nov. 27, the two were wearing different uniforms.

Starrett is a junior on the FC basketball team and Newcomb is a senior at Cornell. It was the first meeting between the two since they graduated from Eastern.

Starrett and Newcomb weren't the only familiar faces, Newcomb battled in the post with former Salem rival Gunner Erwin, who is a sophomore at FC, and Charlestown graduate Zach Mershbrock who is a junior for the Grizzlies.

In the end, Newcomb and Cornell picked up a hard-earned 73-69 win.

The Grizzlies trailed by as many as eight points on two occasions in the opening half before coming back to take a one-point lead on a 3-point basket by Starrett with one second to go before the intermission.

The second half was tight most of the way before the Grizzlies built their biggest advantage of the game at 57-51 with 6:50 remaining. But the Rams answered with 10-1 run to go up 61-58 with 4:47 left.

FC last held the lead at 69-68 when freshman guard Bailey Howard (Nashville, Ind./Brown County H.S.) hit a 3-pointer. Unfortunately, it also was the Grizzlies' last basket of the day.

After Cornell tied the game with a foul shot with 1:11 to go, the visitors took the lead on a jump shot by guard J. Ryan Lott with 32 seconds left. The Rams added two more free throws in separate trips to the line in the final half minute.

Lott paced all scorers with 25 points. Rory Cotter and Alex Miller added 13 and 12 points for Cornell.

Franklin was led by Howard, who hit 7 of 10 field goal attempts, dropped in all seven of his free throw tries and tallied a career-high 23 points. Sophomore forward Gunner Erwin scored 17 points – hitting 7 of 9 shots – and grabbed nine rebounds. Starrett chipped in 15 points and made three assists.

Newcomb scored three points and grabbed four rebounds for Cornell.