

Croft scores 32 to lift Amityville over Glenn

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QUICK SUMMARY

Darien Croft scored 32 points in Amityville's 62-61 victory over Glenn.



Photo credit: Newsday/Alejandra Villa | Amityville's #24 Darien Croft during a game against John Glenn High School. (January 9, 2010)

Most of Darien Croft's points came from so far downtown that he was shooting from beyond the city limits. His game-winning basket with 2.1 seconds to go, however, came on a coast-to-coast drive. Amityville's dynamic 5-11 junior guard turned the Glenn gymnasium into Croft Country Saturday afternoon.

"In crunch time, I always want the ball in my hands," said Croft, who nailed six three-pointers, three from exceptionally long range in the fourth quarter, and scored 32 points in Amityville's 62-61 victory. "I'm a finisher."

In a pulsating Suffolk League VI boys basketball contest, he finished off Glenn in the cruelest way imaginable. After Amityville's Dejuhon Gray rebounded a missed free throw by Glenn with 11 seconds remaining, Croft received a pass in the backcourt. He dribbled his way through a maze of defenders, finally executing a spectacular up-and-under layup off a jump stop for the winning points.

Tony McGee, who led Glenn with 20 points, missed a desperation heave from beyond midcourt at the final buzzer to end a game in which Glenn (5-5, 3-3) led for all but 69 seconds.

Amityville (7-3, 5-1) opened with a trey by C.J. Durrant before McGee answered with a layup and a three to give Glenn the lead 1:15 into the first quarter. The Knights remained in front until the bitter end, building leads of nine points twice, including 46-37 on a free throw by Roshawn Polight (16 points) early in the fourth quarter.

That's when Brian Kretz made a major contribution, hitting a pair of treys and scoring all the points in an 8-0 run by Amityville that cut the deficit to one. But Ryan McNiff answered with 10 of Glenn's next 12 points, including a trey that put his team ahead 58-51 with 2:48 left.

"We had them just where we wanted them," Warriors coach Jack Agostino joked, mindful of the fact that his team had won at Glenn on its final possession in three of four previous visits.

Croft's theatrics helped make it four such final acts and gave Agostino career victory No. 398. Croft sank a three-pointer under duress to make it 58-57. He drained another from NBA three-point range to make it 61-60 with 47 seconds left.

The first of two costly Glenn misses in late one-and-one opportunities allowed Croft to make one more long-distance call. No answer. His deep jumper barely rimmed out with 12 seconds left, but another missed free throw gave Croft another shot. This time his compass was pointed due rim.

"I saw there was one man left to beat, so I took it strong to the basket," said Croft, who had 19 second-half points, 11 in the fourth quarter. "No way was I pulling up. I was going all the way. I kept my cool."

Mostly, Croft was on fire. "He was tremendous, especially making contested shots," Knights coach Kevin Carpenter said. "He's 6 to 7 feet behind the line, with a hand in his face, and he hits them. We tried to simulate those long shots in practice, but you can't simulate what he did today."

It was a case of fine Croftmanship.

