

# Ross win ends district drought

By MICHAEL BOSI  
Staff writer

**WILLARD** — It's nearly springtime. The smell of baseball is in the air. The days are getting longer, the shadows getting shorter.

And the Fremont Ross boys basketball team is still playing.

Sounds kind of nice, eh?

What has an even nicer ring to it is "sectional champions."

That's what the Little Giants (14-7) are calling themselves after riding the 20-point effort of Joell Heidelberg and using their bench depth to suffocate Tiffin Columbian, 62-50, Friday night.

In the City of Blossoms, the Little Giants earned their first trip to the Bowling Green State University district semifinals since George Bush was president and Pat McGhee first roamed the sidelines, 1987.

"It feels great," said Derrick Hershey, one of eight Ross seniors. "It's been one of my dreams to go to Bowling Green all my life. I'm just excited and I feel good for the whole team. Hopefully, we can go farther."

Findlay, which edged Celina, 63-62, will have something to say about that Thursday (8:30 p.m.) when the teams tangle at Anderson Arena.

Ross senior Rob Liggins was the only other Little Giant in double figures, but eight different players scored. Sam Root was again a do-it-all point guard, scoring six points, dishing eight assists and making four steals.

Harry Liggins had five rebounds and Reggie Jones had

## Friday

Fremont Ross .....62  
Tiffin Columbian .....50

## Thursday

Fremont Ross vs. Findlay  
Division I district semifinal at  
Bowling Green State University  
8:30 p.m.

four.

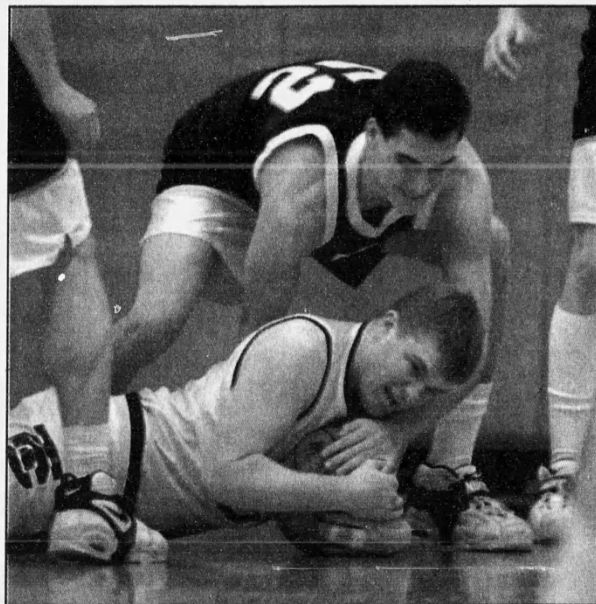
"We now have a championship here," beamed Ross coach Mark Gedeon. "It was definitely the goal going into the beginning of the year. To win the Great Lakes League would have been nice, we were five points short there (against Whitmer), but it just goes to show what happens when you have a group of kids who dedicate themselves year-round to play together as a team."

"We could not have won if it were not for all 10 of our players. We're not physically big and we need to play all 10 to play the style that we need."

That must be why the coach ensured all 10 players got a crack at the ceremonial scissor-snipping of the hoop. But you could tell Ross is new at this championship stuff; some of the players weren't sure how to go about the celebration.

"It feels great, it's the first time in a long time," said Rob Liggins.

Tiffin Columbian was not the same team Friday night that the Little Giants had come to know and love when they barreled over the Tornados, 84-74, Jan. 25 at the Purple Pit. The Tornados regained the services of 6-foot-7 sophomore Beau Carmen and 6-3 senior Chris Hill, who followed



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

**KEVIN MOSSER** of Fremont Ross attempts to tie up Tiffin Columbian's Nate Hoerig during the first half of the Little Giants 62-50 win Friday at Willard.

his 18-point effort against Sandusky with a 14-point, 12-rebound performance.

Columbian was also without star Kaene Runion, who was kicked off the team for drug use.

Still, observed Liggins, "They got better."

Eric Slosser is one Tornado who has picked up his game. Slosser, who Gedeon previously referred to as "the roly-poly one," scored 13 points, with a pair of 3-pointers.

The Tornados took the high

road to disaster in the first half, turning the ball over 14 times as Ross jumped to a 36-21 lead. At one point in the first quarter, Columbian had more turnovers than points, as Heidelberg gave Ross a five-point lead, 11-6, with 1:14 left.

The speedy Heidelberg, who had only attempted six 3-pointers in the first 20 games, hit four triples in the first half and had 14 points.

**See ROSS, B4**

# Ross reaches districts

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Heidelberg followed a John Overberg 3-pointer with a trifecta of his own 1:19 into the second quarter to give Ross a double-figure lead, 20-10. Ross nursed that cushion throughout the quarter and took a 13-point lead, 34-21, on another 3-pointer from Heidelberg with 34 seconds left.

"I came in here hoping we could execute, and they left me open and I just shot the ball," Heidelberg said.

Columbian stayed in the game with a 16-6 rebounds advantage in the first half (they had a 35-30 overall advantage), with Hill snagging six of them and scoring six points.

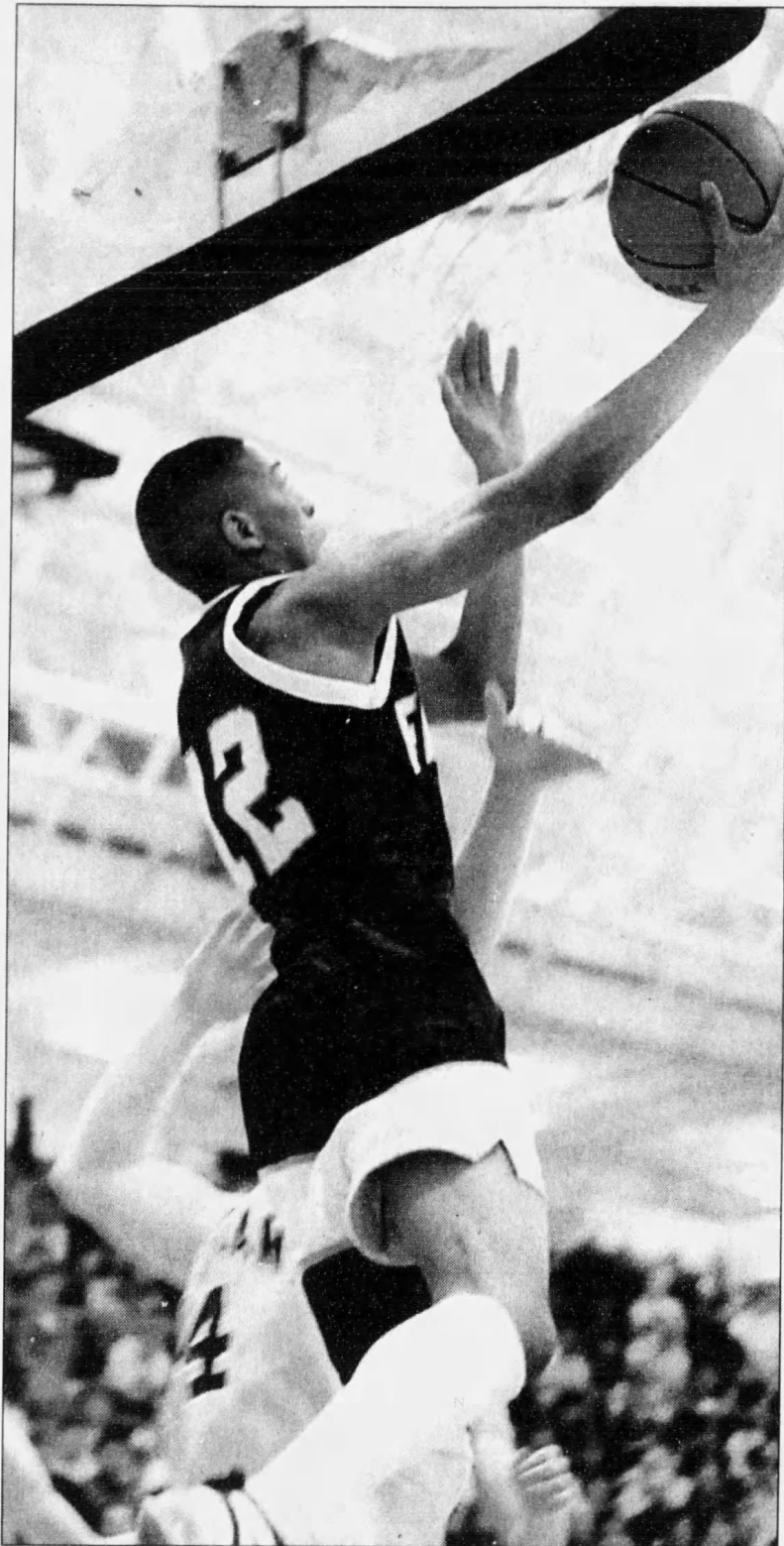
Ross's now trademark defensive intensity also was present, no more so than when Jones swatted down a Hill attempt on the baseline in the second quarter.

"I was worried fatigue was going to be a factor after playing so hard Tuesday," said first-year Columbian coach Matt Hutchinson. "And we had some guys who were pretty dead early."

The Little Giants sprung an 11-2 run to inflate their lead to 15 points, 36-21, at the end of the third quarter.

Columbian showed some survival instinct, starting the fourth quarter with an 8-2 run to close within 51-43 and forcing Ross to call timeout.

But David Losey missed an ill-advised 3-point attempt from the next time zone, and Rob Liggins followed with a 3-point play to put Ross back in control, 54-43.



**JOELL HEIDELBURG** of Fremont Ross goes up for two of his 20 points Friday against Tiffin Columbian. News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

# High Schools

## Boys Basketball

**Ross 62, Tiffin Columbian 50**

**DIV. I SECTIONAL FINAL**

**At Willard**

**FREMONT ROSS** — Sam Root 1-4-6, Joell Heidelberg 7-2-20, John Overberg 2-1-7, Harry Liggins 1-2-4, Kurt Snyder 0-1-1, Rob Liggins 4-2-11, Derrick Hershey 4-1-9, Kevin Mosser 1-0-2. Totals 20-13-62.

**TIFFIN COLUMBIAN** — Josh Zirger 2-0-5, Dave Losey 2-2-7, Chris Hill 7-0-14, Nate Hoerig 1-4-6, Rob Price 1-1-3, Beau Carmon 1-0-2, Eric Slosser 5-1-13. Totals 19-8-50.

<b>Fremont Ross</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Columbian</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>50</b>

**3-PT FGs** — Fremont Ross 7-17 (Root 0-1, Heidelberg 4-4, Overberg 2-4, H. Liggins 0-1, Snyder 0-3, Peters 0-1, R. Liggins 0-1), Columbian 4-16 (Zirger 1-5, Losey 1-5, Price 0-2, Slosser 2-6).

**TURNOVERS** — Ross 17, Columbian 20. **REBOUNDS** — Ross 30 (H. Liggins 5), Columbian 35 (Hill 12). **TOTAL**

**FOULS** — Ross 17, Columbian 16.

**FOULED OUT** — Price. **RECORDS** — Ross 14-7, Columbian 12-10.