

2011-2012 Season Review

HS BASKETBALL: ROSS 62, TOLEDO WAITE 50

Little Giants win in second half

By Nick Marlow

News-Messenger sports correspondent

FREMONT — Ross was one-dimensional early in its season opener against Toledo Waite on Saturday. But the Little Giants would settle in during the second half, using an inside offense to pull away en route to a 62-50 non-conference win.

The Little Giants had 15 points from free throws to Waite's three, and went to the line 15 more times than the Indians (0-1).

"We only had one post feed as a team in the first half," Ross Coach Mark Gedeon said. "The second half we had more post feeds, and that allowed some more scoring opportunities whether we drew fouls, whether we got layups or whether we got reversal threes."

Ross guard Diante Pettiford led the team with 14 points, with Alex Metcalf and Jack Gedeon — coach Gedeon's son — adding 13 and 12 respectively.

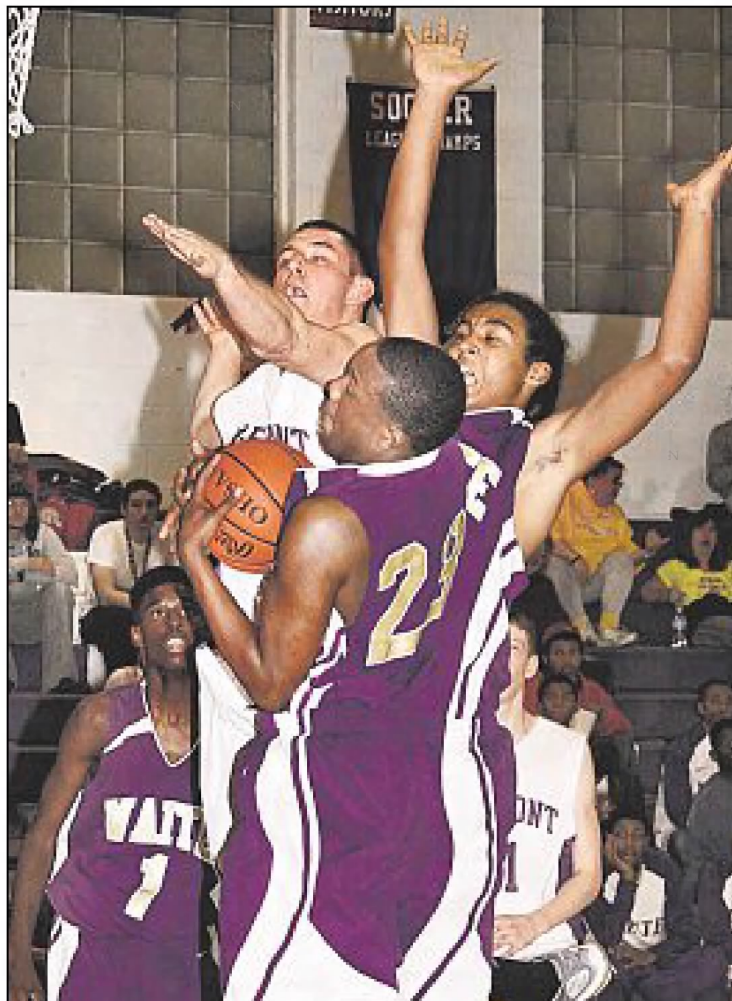
Waite guard Eric McNair led all scorers with 17 points and Travon Howard had 12.

Waite lived by the three Saturday night, recording 27 points from behind the arc. Ross' zone kept the Indians out of the paint most of the second half, and limited success from the outside was not enough to surmount the Indians' 12 turnovers.

"We have to learn that we can't just stand out and fire up the threes and jumpers," Indians coach Dave Pittsenbarger said. "We have to look to penetrate and get the ball inside once in a while."

With the score tied at 25 at half, the Little Giants came out in the third quarter and used a full court press to force the Indians to turn it over on three of their first four possessions.

Waite fell behind by six in the



Marquan McDonald blocks Waite's Rashawn Hampton during Saturday's game at Fremont. JENNIFER YOUNG-BOWER/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

third, as an anxious will to close the gap, along with its apparent frustration with the Ross press, quickly turned Waite's three early turnovers into 12.

"They put a different press on us (in the second half)," Pittsenbarger said. "We didn't have a press breaker to answer it. We tried to draw it up on the board, but really didn't practice it so we were having some problems."

"It's a lack of experience as a team. We have five guys on var-

sity that don't have any experience playing organized basketball. It's a matter of staying focused for an entire game and not being satisfied with one half."

Ross' increased penetration and feeds to center Nick Streaker in the paint put several Indians in foul trouble. Pittsenbarger was forced to pull Howard early in the third quarter when he recorded his third foul.

See GIANTS, page 7

Giants

Continued from Page 6

He returned three minutes later with Ross ahead by six.

Streaker had his eight points in the second half to go along with seven rebounds and two steals.

“He’s (Streaker) going to be one of our go-to players throughout the year,” Gedeon said. “The first half I thought he worked very hard and we didn’t reward him by getting him the ball when he had position. Second half, I thought our players did a much

better job getting him the ball.”

As Ross established an inside presence with Streaker, it forced the Indians to drop two men down low, giving Metcalf, Pettiford and Gedeon good looks from outside.

Gedeon led Ross with nine points in the second half, including a key three halfway through the fourth quarter that put the Little Giants up by 12.

“For a sophomore in his first varsity game to come through with a game like that is beyond my belief,” said Gedeon about his son’s performance. “It’s nice to see him have that success. He’s put a lot of time into the game.”

Boys Basketball

**Fremont Ross 62,
Toledo Waite 50**

Waite	16	9	14	11	—	50
Ross	13	12	20	17	—	62

WAITE (50)

Travon Howard 4-0-12, Kevin Carter 3-1-8, Eric McNair 7-0-17, Rashawn Hampton 2-1-5, Kerron Merriweather 1-0-2, De'Sanchez Alfred 1-1-3, DeVonte Tompkins 1-0-3. Totals 19-3-50.

ROSS (62)

Diante Pettiford 4-6-14, Jarrett Koonce 2-0-4, Skylar Reffner 2-1-5, Alex Metcalf 5-1-13, Marquan McDonald 1-0-2, Jay Carnicom 1-0-2, Jack Gedeon 4-2-12, Jarvis Jones 1-0-2, Nick Streacker 2-4-8. Totals 22-14-62.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Ross 4 (Metcalf 2, Gedeon 2); Waite 9 (Howard 4, McNair 3, Tompkins, Carter). Rebounds — Ross 21 (Streacker 7); Waite 23 (Hampton 6); Turnovers — Ross 9, Waite 14. Next — Ross vs. Clay, Friday.

Giants hustle for narrow win

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Chalk this one up to hustle.

When Fremont Ross needed a stop or to make a play during Friday night's 61-60 Three Rivers Athletic Conference victory over Oregon Clay, it got it done with some extra effort.

Trailing by five with just over three minutes remaining, Ross' Alex McNair ran at full speed nearly 60 feet to make a block on a breakaway lay-up by Clay's Derek Belkofer. Then, two Eagle possessions later with the deficit at 54-53, Skylar Reffner made a quick move to get in front of Belkofer and draw a charge.

"That's one of the things I think you can label a lot of our players with, is they make great hustle plays," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said. "These kids work extremely hard. We were able to force some turnovers with our pressure and when you do that you have to have guys flying all around the floor for you."

Meanwhile, all the Little Giants (2-0, 1-0) did on offense down the stretch was find a way to get points. Ross scored on all of its final nine possessions, offsetting four fourth-quarter 3s by the Eagles (1-1, 0-1).

Clay led 41-40 entering the final eight minutes, while it held leads of three points or more in the quarter on six occasions, mostly due to its outside shooting.

The Eagles finished 10-for-15 from beyond the arc.

"Outside the one bank shot, it was nothing but the bottom of the net for them," Gedeon said. "We knew that they could really shoot it and that they had multiple shooters."

Ross forced key turnovers when it needed them.

"I thought we got the stops, we just had bad possessions," Eagles coach Rob Belegren said. "When we took that five-point lead, we needed to be tight with the ball, run our stuff and keep getting good looks. But we got loose with it a few times."

Ross' pressure and poise was part of it.

"We stayed with what we wanted to do, and we didn't panic," Gedeon said. "That was a huge charge taken by Skylar. I thought it was a big momentum switch there. Instead they possibly getting two points, we get a foul and get to go down



Ross's Nick Streacker puts up a shot over the Clay defense. DOUG HISE/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

and score and take the lead."

Two fouls shots by Jarrett Koonce gave the Little Giants a 55-54 edge, which grew to three points on Diante Pettiford's basket inside with 1:50 left.

But a 3-pointer from Patrick Booth — one of six for him on the night — evened the game at 57 with 1:38 remaining. Jay Carnicom and Koonce then went a

combined 3-of-4 from the line on the next two trips upon drawing contact inside, as the Little Giants led 60-57 with 42 seconds left.

"Fourth quarter, we got a little more aggressive attacking the paint," Gedeon said. "I thought our guards were passive in the third quarter, mostly going from station to station,

and we had eight turnovers that quarter. But we attacked the baseline in the fourth."

Booth got a look at a tying 3-pointer as did Ross Achter, whose miss was smothered by Koonce.

Pettiford then went to the line to ice the game with 6.5 seconds

See GIANTS, page B2

Giants

Continued from Page B1

on the clock. He missed the first, but sank the second.

Good thing, because Booth sank a three just as time expired.

"I was nervous," Pettiford said, who had a team-high 18 points and had six rebounds and five steals. "I had a similar situation last year against Waite where I went up to the line like that and knocked down two free throws.

"But for some reason foul shots aren't my thing is year. I was 6-of-9 last game, and I missed five this game."

Pettiford did a nice job throughout the game of creating shots for those around him, and at getting a few second-chance opportunities for himself.

"We have to be fast and be up to pace and take every advantage that we can get," Pettiford said. "We definitely need to be a team that hustles with our lack of size."

Pettiford assumed the role as the team's main scorer most the

season as a junior.

"I've stepped up as a leader this year," he said. "I think I'm playing the role pretty good. I'm telling guys what to do, what plays we're running and what defense we need to be in. I'm talking on the court and just making sure everyone is doing their part."

Carnicom had 11 points for Ross to go with six boards. His 25-foot 3-pointer to beat the first-half buzzer gave the Little Giants a 31-29 halftime edge.

Koonce had 10 points and four steals, while Nick Streacker had

10 points and nine rebounds.

Booth's 25 points paced the Eagles, who got 17 from Belkofer, including four more 3-pointers.

The game was the first TRAC game for both squads.

"It was an exciting atmosphere," Gedeon said. "I thought our fans got their money's worth and I thought the student body was wonderful tonight. They had great chants and lots of positive energy, and our kids fed off it."

Email Kevin Shields at KShields@gannett.com.

Fremont Ross 61, Oregon Clay 60

Clay	13	16	12	19	—	60
Ross	13	18	9	21	—	61

CLAY (60)

Derek Belfkofer 6-1-17, Patricc Booth 9-1-25, Jack Nagy 2-4, Anthony Ramirez 2-4, Ross Achter 306, Collin Carter 2-4. Totals 24-2-60.

ROSS (61)

Diante Pettiford 6-5-18, Jarrett Koonce 3-4-10, Skylar Reffner 1-2, Alex Metcalf 2-4, Jay Carnicom 3-4-11, Jack Gedeon 1-2, Jarvis Jones 1-2, Drew Solander 1-2, Nick Streacker 4-2-10. Totals 22-15-61.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Ross 1 (Carnicom); Clay 10 (Booth 6, Belkofer 4). Rebounds — Clay 26 (Carter 8); Ross 31 (Streacker 9, Carnicom 6). Turnovers — Clay 18; Ross 20. Records — Ross 2-0 (1-0 TRAC); Clay 1-1 (0-1 TRAC). Next — Ross at St. John's Jesuit, Friday. JV — Ross 49-31.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Titans tower over Little Giants

By Chris Graber

News-Messenger correspondent

TOLEDO — A strong height disadvantage and a slow start hampered the Fremont Ross boys basketball team in a Three Rivers Athletic Conference loss Friday at St. John's Jesuit, 77-53.

The biggest threat to the Little Giants defense came from the Titans' 6-foot-8 junior Marc Loving, who has committed to Ohio State. He contributed 20 points and 11 rebounds and combined with 6-7 junior Dilyn Good for six first-quarter blocks as Fremont fell to an early 24-6 deficit.

"The first quarter, the first half, those were disappointing," said Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon. "At one point last season, (St. John's) was ranked as high as fourth in the state and we cannot expect to compete with the lack of energy we came out with."

The Titans (3-1, 1-1) outscored the Little Giants 21-11 in the second period, capped off by St. John's point guard Austin Gardener's behind-the-back pass to Loving for a right-handed slam dunk as time expired to give the Titans a 45-17 lead at the half.

"We needed to make some adjustments to our offensive, defensive, and rebounding intensity in the second half," Gedeon said. "Our style of play is to use all 84 feet of the court and create space."

"We did a much better job of that in the second half."

Ross (2-1, 1-1) jumped out to a 9-4 run from the start of the third quarter, which was capped by a 3-pointer from Diante Pettiford at the 5:01 mark. The Little Giants connected on three of those field goals from fast break opportunities.

St. John's called a timeout after the trey from Pettiford, but Fremont continued to push the run to 19-7 with a host of fast break points, including a slam dunk from Jay Carnicom with 3:01 remaining.

Titans coach Ed Heintschel said Ross did a great job of attacking the basket in the second half.

The Little Giants "are fast and they played hard the entire game," Heintschel said. "In the second half, we lost a lot of defensive intensity when we switched to a (man-to-man defense)."

The Titans trapped the ball on many occasions and forced Fremont into 10 turnovers in the first half, while St. John's compiled



Fremont Ross' Alex Metcalf lays in a shot against St. John's Jesuit's Dilyn Good during a game at St. John on Friday. LEE WELCH/NEWS-MESS-
GER CORRESPONDENT

ST. JOHN'S 77
FREMONT ROSS 53

Three Rivers Athletic Conference

six. In the second half, the Little Giants only managed five turnovers compared to 10 by the Titans.

Fremont continued to try to claw back into contention bringing the score to as close as 67-45 with 2:27 remaining in the final period. St. John's senior Tarvis Malone responded with 10 of his 12 fourth quarter points with

fewer than three minutes remaining in regulation to close the game with a 20-8 run in favor of the Titans.

Malone scored a game-high 22 points, while Gardener added nine points and a game-high 13 assists.

Carnicom contributed six points and seven assists for the Little Giants, who were led in

scoring by Pettiford's 12, while Skylar Reffner and Jack Gedeon each chipped in seven.

The road will get no easier for the Little Giants, who will host Toledo Start in a non-league game tonight. The Spartans are led by DeMond Crisp, a player Coach Gedeon said was one of the fastest point guards in the state.

Boys Basketball

St. John's Jesuit 77, Fremont Ross 53

Ross	6	11	22	14	—	53
St. John's	24	21	12	20	—	77

ROSS (53)

Diante Pettiford 5-1-12, Jarrett Koonce 2-4, Skylar Reffner 3-1-7, Alex Metcalf 4-8, Jay Carnicom 3-6, Jack Gedeon 3-7, Jarvis Jones 1-1-3, Drew Solander 0-2-2, Nick Streacker 2-4. Totals 23-5-53.

ST. JOHN'S (77)

Alex Carter 4-8, Austin Gardener 3-3-9, Jarvis Malone 8-2-22, Tyler Thompson 1-1-3, Anthony Glover 3-7, Marc Loving 8-2-20, James O'Shea 1-1-3, Chris Stearns 1-3, Dilyn Good 1-2. Totals 30-9-77.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Ross 2 (Carnicom, Pettiford); St. John's 8 (Malone 4, Glover, Stearns, Loving 2). Rebounds — Ross 27 (Koonce 6); St. John's 39 (Loving 11). Turnovers — Ross 15; St. John's 16. Records — Ross 2-1 (1-1 TRAC); St. John's 3-1 (1-1 TRAC). Next — Ross vs. Toledo Start, today.

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL » START 64, ROSS 57 OT

Ross falls after pushing Start to OT

By Yaneek Smith

News-Messenger correspondent

FREMONT — After staging a furious second-half rally and sending the game into overtime on a runner from Jay Carnicom with less than a minute left in regulation, Fremont Ross fell to Toledo Start 64-57 in non-conference action Saturday.

The Spartans took the lead for good at 56-55 on a three-point play from guard Demond Crisp with 2 minutes, 33 seconds remaining in the extra session. Start outscored Ross 8-2 the rest of the way.

"We talked with our players a lot about how a couple of possessions can make a big difference in the game and, unfortunately, we came up on the wrong side there," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said. "You only get so many

opportunities."

The third quarter saw Start (3-1) take control early, but the Little Giants rallied to get back into the game.

After a three-point play by Javon Ruffin gave Start a 43-33 lead, the Little Giants scored five straight points in the final 13 seconds of the third quarter to cut the deficit to five. Diante Pettiford scored on a drive and a layup for Ross (2-2) before Jarrett Koonce stole the ball and converted a three-point play with 6.5 seconds left.

"Those last two possessions of the third quarter gave us new life," Gedeon said.

Koonce later tied the game at 45-45 with 4:53 remaining in the fourth quarter when he completed another three-point play. Koonce scored 12 points in

the game.

Center Nick Streaker gave Ross its first lead of the second half at 49-47 when he scored inside with 3:35 left. Streaker led all scorers with 19 points.

"He was definitely a presence for us," Gedeon said of Streaker. "Our guards did a nice job of feeding him down low."

The Spartans responded, however, as Robert Wietrzykowski tied the game with a layup and Start reclaimed the advantage on a drive by Ruffin.

The game was tied 14-14 after one quarter and 27-27 after two.

The Spartans were led by Crisp and fellow guard Dion Ivery, who scored 17 points apiece. For much of the second half, Crisp and Ivery were able to penetrate the Little Giants' defense.



Diante Pettiford of Fremont Ross drives to the basket against Start's Demond Crisp, 12, and Javon Ruffin. Start won, 64-57. DOUG HISE/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

Right man, right time



Fremont Ross' Skylar Reffner drives through the Lima Senior defense during Tuesday's Three Rivers Athletic Conference game at the Purple Pit. Reffner, who scored 28 points in the game, found Nick Streacker for the game-winning basket with eight seconds left in the Little Giants' 71-70 victory. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Little Giants top Lima Senior on Streacker's late jumper

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Skylar Reffner had a career night for Fremont Ross on Tuesday, scoring a new personal-best 28 points.

However, it was his look to Nick Streacker with eight seconds remaining in the fourth quarter that created the two biggest points of the game for the Little Giants.

Streacker's eight-foot baseline jumper helped Ross top Lima Senior, 71-70, earning the Little Giants a big Three Rivers Athletic Conference home victory.

"I was actually looking for the guards up top, but the post was wide open because (Streacker) was one-on-one," Reffner said. "So I gave it to Nick because I have trust in him. He caught it and made a huge play."

Jarrett Koonce took a charge on the other end with 2.7 seconds left to seal the win. A win the Spartans (2-3, 1-2) nearly stole from Little Giants' grasp after Ross (3-2, 2-1) had led by six with 58 seconds left.

Devon Allen's three had cut Lima's deficit to 69-66. Following a Ross turnover, Divante Hall then cut it to one, knocking down a pair at the foul line, just before Tyler White's layup off a steal at mid-court gave the Spartans a 70-69 advantage — their first of the game — with just 21.1 seconds left.

The Spartans outscored Ross 29-16 in the final eight minutes, scoring on nine of their final 10 trips.

FREMONT ROSS 71
LIMA SENIOR 70
Three Rivers Athletic Conference

"We told our kids during that timeout, you got to find a way to find a way," Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon said. "We wanted to focus on the now, we couldn't focus on what already happened."

"We knew that no matter what happened, we were going to get a chance to tie it. Obviously, we were looking to foul, get a five-second call or try to get a steal or turnover somehow."

It was the latter of those scenarios that gave Ross a chance, as Lima's

Jerry Hutchins fighting with Jack Gedeon out of the in-bounds play, fell to the floor backwards and was whistled for a traveling violation.

"Our guards did a great job on that play," Gedeon said. "We put Dylan Starks in and we assigned him to Tyler White and Jack did a good job bumping out on the guy going to the backcourt and forced a turnover."

Ross then got the ball into Reffner's hands and Streacker did the rest.

"We took another timeout to execute a play and we gave the players several options," Gedeon said. "But I thought Skylar made a great read, getting the ball to Nick

and Nick did exactly what we told him to do. Go attack the basket and he hit a big shot."

It was a shot the Spartans didn't mind seeing Ross's 6-foot-6-inch center taking.

"Nick Streacker made a good shot, but that's a shot we want him to take from that distance," Lima coach Shawn Allen said. "It wasn't something where we had a breakdown."

"Then we still had the ball in our best guy's hands coming down and just turned it over. So we fought all the way back, except the last 21 seconds we're still a young, inexperienced team and our guys don't know what to do in that situation yet."

Streacker finished with 15 points for the Little Giants who attacked the paint with a fury, scoring 54 (76 percent) of their points inside the key.

Reffner had 13 baskets inside. He and Streacker scored all 19 of Ross's 19 first-quarter points.

"We knew we had a height advantage on them, and I just came in the game thinking I had to help my team with scoring," Reffner said. "It seems when I score, we get going faster and my team really fed off of me."

Ross held double-digit leads for most of the game, leading by as much as 16 in the third quarter.

Finding Reffner and Streacker inside was Jay Carnicom, who tallied a game-high eight

See ROSS, page 9

Ross

Continued from Page 8

assists. Diante Pettiford added 15 points and four assists, while Koonce had three assists.

“Jay made some huge assists,” Reffner said. “I give a lot of my points and the credit to him, he was dishing out there.”

Ross led 19-13 after one quarter and 32-22 at halftime, taking a 55-41 lead to the fourth quarter.

The Little Giants had 26 of their 32 first-half points come in the paint.

“You don’t usually see that from our team, but it was definitely part of the game plan tonight,” Gedeon said. “I thought Jay Carnicom did a nice job distributing the basketball and I felt we were a little more patient than we were against Toledo Start last Saturday.

“Skylar did just a great job of getting to the right place to finish. I can’t say enough about the quality of game he had all the way around for us.”

White’s 18 points paced the Spartans, who also got 16 points from Hutchins and 14 points from Isiah Simpson.

Email Kevin Shields at kshields@gannett.com.

Boys Basketball^N

Fremont Ross 71, Lima Senior 70

Lima Sr.	13	9	19	29	—	70
Ross	19	13	23	16	—	71

LIMA SR. (70)

...Tyler White 7-2-18, Devon Allen 2-1-6, Isiah Simpson 6-1-14, Divante Hall 3-3-9, Jerry Hutchins 7-1-16, Isaiah Stinson 3-1-7. Totals 28-9-70.

ROSS (71)

Diante Pettiford 5-4-15, Jarrett Koonce 2-4, Skylar Reffner 13-2-28, Jay Carnicom 3-1-7, Jack Gedeon 1-2, Nick Streacker 7-1-15. Totals 31-8-71.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Lima Sr. 4 (Hutchins 2, Simpson, White); Ross 1 (Pettiford).

Rebounds — Lima Sr. 31 (Hutchins 8); Ross 30 (Streacker 11, Reffner 5).

Turnovers — Lima Sr. 18; Ross 22.

Records — Lima Sr. 2-3 (1-2 TRAC); Ross 3-2 (2-1 TRAC). Next — Ross vs. Findlay, Friday. JV — Lima Sr. 44-30.

Little Giants are overwhelmed

Findlay comes to town and shows off its interior offense

By Nick Marlow
News-Messenger correspondent

FREMONT — Ross ran into a freight train of an interior offense Friday night at home, as Findlay's 6-foot, 11-inch senior C.J. Gettys was able to do pretty much whatever he wanted inside in a 57-42 Trojans victory.

Coach Mark Gedeon knew he had his work cut out for him entering the bout, and Little Giants center Nick Streaker's 6-inch height dis-

advantage proved to be critical, with 18 of Gettys' game-leading 20 points coming in the paint.

"He's a very talented player," Gedeon said of Gettys. "He's improved every year and has a great presence on the inside, not only as a scorer, but also as a distributor."

Gettys and forward Joseph Davidson kept the Little Giants out of the paint for nearly the entire first half, and Ross was forced to settle for 15-foot plus jumpers all night long — a credit to its 41 percent shooting from the field.

Meanwhile, everything was working for the Trojans. They were able to establish an efficient inside-out offense. After the first quarter Gettys began drawing double and

triple teams in the post, which led to persistent wide-open looks from behind the arc for Findlay's Boston Ballmer, who led the team with three triples.

"We obviously wanted to get the ball inside," said Findlay head coach Jim Rucki. "We got a weapon in there that we have to take advantage of and we were able to do that ... We have guys that can make shots from outside if their (opponent's defense) is collapsing too much inside, but we're going to go with our bread and butter first."

"We had a couple kick-outs for threes, and

See GIANTS, page B2

Giants

Continued from Page B1

as long as we're able to do that we can keep them honest."

The Trojans were 57 percent from the field, 23-for-40, juiced heavily by Gettys' 9-for-12 effort.

"The coaches just kept telling me to get the ball down low and get some points," Gettys said.

Gettys came out like an assassin, scoring eight of Findlay's 10 points, in a competitive first quarter which ended with the score tied at 10.

Findlay dialed up the pressure early in the second quarter. Six turnovers from Ross in the first five minutes would feed a 12-4 Trojans run, highlighted by two triples from Ballmer on cross-court dishes from Gettys and

Michael Clark.

The Trojans outscored Ross 16-9 to take a 26-19 lead at half.

Ross came out stifling in the third, scoring 10 points in the first 2:09 to take its first and only lead of the game at 29-28, but Findlay outscored the Little Giants 13-7 in the final four minutes of the quarter and surged to a 41-36 lead.

"Boy, we had a great start to open up the third quarter," Gedeon said.

"We became the aggressor and forced a couple turnovers by varying our traps and pressure, and then we hit that dry spell there."

"I think we had one made field goal in maybe 11 possessions, and that allowed Findlay to get that tempo exactly where they wanted it to be."

Ross guards Diante Pettiford and Jay Carnicom recorded seven and six points, respectively, in the third frame. Each finished with 13 points.

The Little Giants tried to kindle their interior offense to begin the fourth, feeding Streaker in the post on three of their first four possessions. Unfortunately, Streaker went 0-for-4 from the free throw line and was having trouble getting a shot off over Gettys and Davidson.

Ross would not record a field goal until the 3:39 mark, and shot itself in the foot with another five turnovers that enabled Findlay to score the first 10 points of the final frame, one resulting in a two-hand stuff from the 6-foot-7 Davidson on an outlet pass from Ballmer.

Findlay 57, Fremont Ross 42

Findlay	10	16	15	16	—	57
Ross	10	9	17	8	—	42

FINDLAY (57)

Danny Todd 1-2, Michael Clark 1-3-6, Adam Twinning 2-4, Joseph Davidson 3-6, Austin Guitling 2-4, Daniel Peak 1-2-4, Boston Ballmer 4-11, CJ Gettys 9-3-21. Totals 23-7-57.

ROSS (42)

Diante Pettiford 5-2-13, Skylar Reffner 1-2, Marquan McDonald 1-2, Jay Carnicom 5-1-13, Jack Gedeon 1-2, Drew Solander 1-2, Nick Streaker 4-2-10. Totals 18-6-42.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Findlay 4 (Ballmer 4, Clark); Ross 3 (Carnicom 2, Pettiford). Rebounds — Findlay 25; Ross 17. Turnovers — Ross 17; Findlay 10.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Late Sandusky run dooms Little Giants

By Matthew Horn
Sports writer

Fremont Ross had a chance to extend its lead to two possessions with 30 seconds remaining but failed to convert from the free throw line before Sandusky scored the final five points to top the Little Giants 57-54 in a non-conference matchup.

Skylar Reffner of Ross drew a charging foul before Jarrett Koonce canned a jumper to tie the game at 52 with 1 minute, 30 seconds left in the fourth quarter. Jay Carnicom then faked a 3-pointer and drained a pull-up off the dribble after a Blue Streaks turnover.

SANDUSKY	57
FREMONT ROSS	54

Sandusky's Xavier Turner missed a shot to Carnicom and Jack Gedeon was fouled with about 30 seconds to go.

Gedeon, however, missed the front end and the Blue Streaks (2-4) pushed the ball as Dameyion Smith finished a three-point play for a 55-54 advantage with 25.2 remaining.

"They made more plays than we did," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said. "You know when you go against Sandusky you have to re-

bound and stop them in transition. We did a poor job taking away two of their strengths.

"It went back and forth. If we could have executed (to make it a two possession game) it could have put us over the top. We never got in that comfort zone."

The Little Giants (3-4) turned the ball over and fouled Jalen Gordon, who capped the scoring with 6.4 seconds remaining. Carnicom then missed a 3 as time expired.

"They were the more aggressive team whether it was offensive rebounds or attacking in transition," Coach Gedeon said. "We made mistakes taking care of the basketball. You can't give a quali-

ty opponent extra chances."

Carnicom sandwiched two 3-pointers to re-establish leads for Ross around another from Gedeon for a 43-40 advantage after three quarters. Carnicom, who twisted through two defenders before wiggling for a layup and 26-21 lead after two quarters and soared for a tough bank shot and 47-44 advantage in the fourth quarter, finished with a game-high 22 points.

"We need him to score," Coach Gedeon said. "When (Dante) Pettiford fouled out he played the point. He's got nice instincts. We saw the whole wide range of his game — both positive and negative."

Sandusky coach Steve Keller

switched Smith onto Carnicom in the fourth quarter in an effort to limit his dribble penetration.

Koonce scored seven of his 10 points in the second quarter, including a tough runner across the lane that went in off the high glass.

"He's a high energy player," Coach Gedeon said of Koonce. "That's something we expect of all our players. Our energy was down compared to the rest of the year."

The rivalry is still important to both teams, but the dynamic has evolved with each school in a new league.

"In some aspects it's changed,"

See GIANTS, page B5

Giants

Continued from Page B1

Coach Gedeon said. "We won't play them twice, and we won't be at the same sectional. This was a one-time deal. We told the kids to focus on Fremont Ross basketball.

"It was a great atmosphere."

Turner and Smith each scored 20 points for the Blue Streaks. Smith exploded with six straight points aided by an offensive rebound for a 50-47 lead with just less than three minutes to play and Turner added a game-high 10 rebounds.

"The biggest thing was we got stops on defense," Turner said. "Stops led to offense and allowed us to score in transition."

Ross played without Alex Metcalf and Drew Starks because of injuries and Dylan Starks played sparingly returning from one of his own. Nick Streacker missed the game on vacation and the Little Giants were outrebounded 41-32.

Email Matthew Horn at mhorn@gannett.com

BOYS BASKETBALL: ROSS 67, PORT CLINTON 50

Ross ups tempo for win

By Matthew Horn
Sports writer

PORT CLINTON — Fremont Ross won with flair as well as substance Saturday.

Diante Pettiford and Skylar Reffner supplied the athletic glitz and Drew Solander added a healthy measure of fundamentals as the Little Giants toppled Port Clinton 67-50 in a non-conference matchup.

Jay Carnicom snaked through several defenders with his dribble before finding Solander for a bucket underneath as Ross took the lead for good early in the third quarter. Solander blocked a shot that led to a basket from Reffner off an assist from Pettiford. Reffner converted a three-point play after a steal by Pettiford, and Pettiford scored following his own theft to cap an 11-0 run for a 36-26 advantage.

"That makes us better as a team," Pettiford said of pushing the tempo. "Transition buckets make it easier on us. It's just being in the right spot and hard work."

Pettiford and Reffner each had two steals and Drew Starks added one as Reffner scored six points in a 12-0 spurt to begin the fourth quarter. Reffner stole the ball while facing his own basket, fell to a sitting position on the court and perfectly timed a dish to Starks, who was running in full stride the other way to complete the burst for a 58-36 lead.

"We feed off that," Reffner said of blood in the water. "We like to run and get baskets fast. That's a big part of our game. We're faster than most teams and we have finishers."

The Little Giants (4-5) scored on seven straight possessions in the third quarter and forced turnovers on seven consecutive trips bridging the third and fourth quarters.

"Our personnel," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said of what can facilitate positive frenzied stretches for his team. "We're still missing three starters who didn't play. This team has been working very hard. They stay together."

"In the third and fourth quarters we played hard, and hustle plays lead to good things."

Alex Metcalf returned Friday but re-injured his knee, and Jarrett Koonce and Nick Streacker also didn't play Saturday.

Reffner had a steal and passed to Pettiford for a bucket to cap a 9-0 run in the first quarter Saturday.

"The first half was frustrating with 12 turnovers and shooting 3 of 10 on free throws," Gedeon said. "We didn't play with the urgency and intensity we needed, and offensively and defensively we were fortunate to be up 2."

"In the second half our intensi-



Ross' Diante Pettiford looks for a shot against Port Clinton. DOUG HISE/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

ty defensively, which is where I thought we had an advantage coming in, improved and our guards' pressure did a nice job of forcing turnovers."

Pettiford had a game-high 20 points and matched Reffner with six steals Saturday.

"He's a complete player," Gedeon said of worth ethic, defense, leadership, a positive attitude, making his teammates better, and the ability to hit jumpers

and attack the basket. "He played a complete game. We've been talking about that since the summer. He played the point (Saturday). He does it all willingly."

Reffner added 17 points and Carnicom, who is also an explosive scorer at times and finished with 14 points, was often more of a distributor Saturday.

"It was nice to see him come back after struggling last night and against Sandusky," Gedeon

said of Reffner. "He got down on himself. We had a nice conversation and I told him to enjoy the game."

"He gave us a spark with his defensive intensity and ability to finish around the rim."

Solander, who had nine points and five rebounds, will not blow you away with athletic exploits but he will gladly set a screen, grab a

See ROSS, page 7

Ross

Continued from Page 6^N

rebound or drift to open space to take a pass.

“Drew represents a little of what we are,” Gedeon said. “He’s not flashy, but he’s hard working and he’s in the right position playing to the best of his ability. He gives us an option inside.”

Solander said his defense is a work in progress but he forced three turnovers and blocked two shots Saturday. “I don’t change my mentality. If I make a turnover or miss a shot I go right back to where I was. I can get to the open spot and anticipate where to be for the pass.”

There are those who make flashy plays look simple and those who simply make fundamental plays consistently. Ross had both for a winning formula Saturday.

*Email Matthew Horn at
mhorn@gannett.com.*

Boys Basketball

Fremont Ross 67, Port Clinton 50

N

Ross	11	12	23	21	—	67
PC	7	14	15	14	—	50

ROSS (67)

Diante Pettiford 8-3-20, Skylar Reffner 8-1-17, Jay Carnicom 6-1-14, Jack Gedeon 1-0-3, Drew Solander 4-1-9, Drew Starks 1-0-2, Jarvis Jones 1-0-2. Totals 29-6-67.

PC (50)

Kalib Shiets 0-2-2, Brandon Stubblefield 2-0-5, Kelly Freimark 3-2-9, Alex Greene 3-0-6, Aaron Mier 7-2-19, Chase Minnear 1-0-2, Jason Mueller 3-0-7. Totals 19-6-50.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Ross 3 (Pettiford, Carnicom, Gedeon); PC 6 (Mier 3, Stubblefield, Freimark, Mueller). Rebounds — Ross 14 (Solander 5); PC 27 (Mier 11). Turnovers — Ross 15; PC 27. Records — Ross 4-5, PC 4-6. Next — Ross at St. Francis de Sales, Friday; PC vs. Clyde, Friday.

Close game goes to Little Giants

By Nick Marlow

News-Messenger correspondent

TOLEDO — On the strength of a superhuman fourth-quarter scoring bonanza from Ross' Jack Carnicom, the Little Giants were able to surmount a 13-turnover first half and snatch a Three Rivers Athletic Conference victory from St. Francis 56-51 on Friday.

Trailing 39-34 after three, Carnicom scored eight points in the first 2:08 of the final frame to give the Little Giants their first lead since the 3:00 mark in the first quarter, which they would ride out until the final horn.

"I don't even remember much, I was just playing," Carnicom said.

The guard would keep the scoring party going with another five points on his team's next two possessions, representing every bucket in a Little Giants 12-4 run which gave them a 46-43 edge with four to play.

"We just didn't stop them," said Knights coach Brad Britton. "Whether it was our lack of defense or their offensive execution, we didn't do a very good of stopping them in the fourth quarter. They scored just about at will."

Carnicom would add a free throw down the stretch to give him 13 points in the quarter and a game-high 22 on the night.

After the run, Ross would close the door on the Knights with a field goal from Skylar Reffner and eight free throws.

The Little Giants were 9-for-12 from the line during crunch time.

"It's one thing to get easy points from the free throw line," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon. "It's another thing when they mean so much at the end of the ball game when you get your execution. If they foul us and they don't make the one-and-one or the two-shot foul, it's just like a turnover."

The Little Giants outscored St. Francis 22-12 in the fourth.

"They just wanted it more," Britton said.

After a sloppy first half, Ross only surrendered five turnovers in the second while forcing the Knights (0-9, 0-6) into nine. Twelve of Ross' 38 second-half points came on transition buckets after steals.

The Little Giants (5-5, 3-3) also put on a rebounding clinic on both ends of the floor, bodying the Knights religiously throughout the night to take a 29-14 edge - 10-2 in the offensive brand.

"They went after the ball harder than we did," said Knights coach Brad Britton. "It wasn't even a matter of position as much as it was they just went after it. We were a step slow and a bit slow."

Skylar Reffner led with nine, six offensive, to go with his 12 points.

After trailing 26-18 at half, Ross went on an 8-0 run to open the third quarter, all coming on St. Francis turnovers, and tied it up. Ross' stymying defense held St. Francis to just eight field goal attempts.

"We talked about playing Fremont Ross basketball (at half-

Ross

Continued from Page 1B

time),” Gedeon said. “Turning up our defensive pressure so we’re more fundamental with our feet and not so much with our hands.”

St. Francis would outscore the Little Giants 13-8 thereafter and head into the final frame with a 39-34 advantage.

Ross’ second-half surge was especially impressive considering its difficulties in the first two quarters. In addition to the turnovers, Ross was just 7-for-19 from the field.

“We can say it’s definitely a tale of two halves,” Gedeon said. “We didn’t not play Fremont Ross basketball the first half the way we wanted to do it. I thought our offensive execution was poor, to say the least.

“We didn’t reverse the basketball, a lot of careless passes. Give credit to St. Francis’ defense for sticking to their defensive gameplan.”

It would finish at 20-for-42 on the back of a 9-for-14 effort from Carnicom.

Cameron White led the Knights with 17 points.

Fremont Ross 56, Toledo St. Francis 51

Ross	9	9	16	22	—	56
St. Francis	10	16	13	12	—	51

ROSS (56)

Diante Pettiford 3-3-9, Skylar Reffner 5-2-12, Dylan Starks 0-4-4, Marquan McDonald 1-3, Jay Carnicom 9-3-22, Jack Gedeon 1-2, Nick Streacker 1-2-4. Totals 20-14-56.

ST. FRANCIS (51)

Jake Young 1-2, Trent Morrissey 2-5-9, Tyrin Rome 2-4, Cameron White 6-5-17, Nathan White 3-2-9, Josh Porter 1-2, Jameson Sheely 2-1-5, Andrew Villolovos 1-1-3. Totals 18-14-51.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Ross 2 (McDonald, Carnicom); St. Francis 1 (White). Rebounds — Ross 29; St. Francis 14. Turnovers — Ross 18; St. Francis 15. Records — Ross 5-5 (3-3 TRAC); St. Francis 0-9 (0-6 TRAC). Next — Ross vs. Toledo Whitmer, Friday.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Ross falls short

WHITMER 56
FREMONT ROSS 55
Three Rivers Athletic Conference

Giants one point from knocking off 1-loss Whitmer

By Nick Marlow
 News-Messenger correspondent

FREMONT — If there was ever a time for Ross' starting center Nick Streacker to roll his ankle, the Little Giants would certainly not have had it happen heading into a game with Toledo Whitmer, with three players standing at least 6-foot-7.

Streacker sidelined in shirt and tie notwithstanding, Ross almost took down a one-loss Whitmer team with a resounding will to win that ended with the Little Giants coming up a point short in a 56-55 Three Rivers Athletic Conference loss on Friday.

"Our effort was outstanding," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon. "Our execution I thought was very, very good."

Trailing 28-23 at half, Ross edged Whitmer 32-28 the rest of the way.

"We scrapped, we played hard, we played together. We were very balanced offensively. Extremely pleased right now with being one possession short."

With 3.4 seconds left on the clock and Ross trailing by a point, Whitmer's Tyler Klem inbounded the ball to leading scorer Nigel Hayes, who tossed the ball the length of the court before the Little Giants could foul the 6-7 guard and watched the final seconds tick away.

"I was just hoping Skylar (Reffner) would catch the ball



Ross' Dylan Starks drives to the basket past Whitmer's Ray Rublaitus. DOUG HISE/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

See ROSS, page 2B

Ross

Continued from Page 1B

and try and score with it, but he missed it, and the game was over," said Little Giants guard Drew Starks, who finished with 10 points.

Starks scored two huge buckets down the stretch to keep Ross alive.

Down 56-53, Reffner was fouled by Hayes with 13.7 seconds left. After missing the first of two free throws, Reffner rimmed out the second before Starks leapt over Hayes and eventually laid it in — on another offensive rebound after a Reffner miss — for two with 3.4 seconds to go.

Just 20 seconds earlier, Starks pulled the Little Giants within three when he slashed to the bucket from the right wing and laid it up for a deuce.

The guard recorded three offensive rebounds against Whitmer's colossal front court.

"We're a little faster than them," Starks. "They're a little taller, but they're also a little slower."

While Whitmer (12-1, 6-1) ended up edging the Little Giants on the offensive glass, it was only by three, 11-8.

The Little Giants fell behind by as much as seven points in the fourth quarter, but used an old fashioned three-point play from Jay Carnicom, another layup from the guard and a three-pointer from Jack Gedeon in the left corner to get the score back to 50-49 with 4:27 left.

Carnicom tallied five of his team-high 13 points in the fourth quarter, while seniors

Reffner and Diante Pettiford each had four.

Pettiford would finish with 12.

Out of a 2-3 zone, Ross made up for its height disadvantage by besetting Chris Wormley and Storm Norton with three guys each time they received the ball in the paint, which seemed to work.

Ross went toe to toe with Whitmer in the interior all night long and evened the Panthers in blocks with three — two from Carnicom. The guard would climb the stairs once in the first quarter to block Norton, and again to reject Wormley from behind midway through the third quarter.

"I thought we competed very well," Gedeon said. "We were definitely giving up a lot of inches and pounds in the paint."

"They're very experienced and seasoned ball players ... So of course you're going to give up some, but our kids never backed down from the battle."

While Wormley paced the Panthers with a game-high 14 points, he was held scoreless in the fourth quarter. Norton had only six points.

When it was all said and done, Ross had bested the Panthers 30-22 in points in the paint.

Battling a stomach virus during the game, Hayes played passively on offense, recording nine points on just six field goal attempts.

"I don't know (why Hayes deferred to his teammates the majority of the night)," said Whitmer coach Bruce Smith. "I'm just going to be honest with you. Somebody said he was under the weather but I can't really answer that because I don't know."

Boys Basketball

Toledo Whitmer 56, Fremont Ross 55

Whitmer	11	17	16	12	—	56
Ross	11	12	16	16	—	55

WHITMER (56)

Ricardo Smith 4-3-12, Tyler Klem 1-2-5, Jon Ashe 1-3, Nigel Hayes 3-3-9, Shaquille Clemons 0-1-1, Storm Norton 2-2-6, Chris Wormley 6-2-14, Chris Parker 2-2-6. Totals 19-14-56.

ROSS (55)

Diante Pettiford 5-2-12, Jarrett Koonce 1-2, Skylar Reffner 2-4, Drew Starks 4-2-10, Jay Carnicom 5-3-13, Jack Gedeon 1-3, Drew Solander 4-3-11. Totals 22-10-55.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Whitmer 3 (Smith, Klem, Ashe); Ross 1 (Gedeon). Rebounds — Whitmer 25, Ross 20. Turnovers — Whitmer 25, Ross 20. Records — Whitmer 12-1 (6-1 TRAC) Ross 5-6 (3-4 TRAC).
Next — Ross at Oregon Clay, Thursday.

Fremont Ross win sends a message

By Nick Marlow

News-Messenger correspondent

OREGON — Fremont Ross made a statement to Three Rivers Athletic Conference opponents Tuesday night with a comprehensive 66-55 win over Clay.

After a disheartening one-point loss to Whitmer over the weekend, Ross came out with the same vitality displayed against the Panthers to complete the season-sweep vs. the Eagles.

While it wasn't the most pristine show — with Ross and Clay committing 16 and 15 turnovers, respectively — Ross showed what kind of depth it has when healthy.

Eight players posted at least a field goal for Ross in a 26-for-47 (55 percent) night from the field, compared to only four from Clay.

"It helps that we're finally getting players back," Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon said. "The kids are fighting for minutes, we can rotate people through. Earlier in the year, we didn't have the depth that we have now, and I think you're seeing that now, whether it's wearing the other team down or just allowing us to

HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP

Double winners spark Oak Harbor swim team

News-Messenger reports

Oak Harbor's Felisha Lazenby won the 200 and 500 freestyles for the girls swim team Tuesday while the Rockets' Tyler Schmidt took the 100 breaststroke and 500 freestyle for the boys.

Oak Harbor's boys defeated Tiffin Columbian 119-52, Tiffin Calvert 148-0, and St. Joseph Central Catholic 146-19. The Crimson Streaks topped Calvert 60-0 but fell to Columbian 80-37.

The Rockets' girls beat Columbian 108-68, Calvert 146-12 and SJCC 125-48. The Crimson Streaks defeated Calvert 108-17, but lost to Columbian 100-64.

Oak Harbor's Michael Cervantes won the 200 IM, Ben Dresser the 50 freestyle and Devon Griffin the 1-meter diving competition for the boys. Eli Boldt won the 100 butterfly, Ayron Wiegand the 100 freestyle

The Rockets' Jordan Thorp won the 1-meter diving competition for the girls.

Emily Ronski won the 50 freestyle and Brigitte Fulwider the 100 breaststroke for SJCC's girls.

Oak Harbor's boys won the 200 and 400 freestyle, and 200 medley relays.

The Rockets' girls won the 400 freestyle and 200 medley relays.

The Crimson Streaks' girls won the 200 freestyle relay.

GIRLS BASKETBALL Mohawk 69, Lakota 31

Stephanie Miller scored 10 points but Lakota fell in the Midland Athletic League.

Jessica Hoffman had seven rebounds for the Raiders.

play with a high-level intensity, which is what we take pride in."

Nick Streacker had to sit out the first game against the Panthers with an ankle injury, and Dylan and Drew Starks each sat

out the first three weeks of the season due to injuries suffered during football.

But it was Jay Carnicom and Diante Pettiford who paced the offense Tuesday for the Little Giants.

Though sloppy turnovers sped up the rate of play at times, Carnicom and Pettiford showed their maturity out of Ross's half-court

See ROSS, page 7A

Ross

Continued from Page 6A

sets with a sense of control and patience that allowed the two seniors and the rest of the Little Giants to work the ball around several Clay defensive schemes and get high-percentage looks.

Carnicom led the team with 19 points and Pettiford had 18 on combined 15-for-25 shooting.

After eight attempts from three-point range in the first half, Ross settled for just two after the break. The Little Giants were 3-for-9 on the night.

Trailing 34-21 at the half, the Eagles had a third-quarter surge during which Patrice Booth had 10 points, and another in the fourth with 14 from forward Ross Achter, but the Eagles never got within seven points of the Little Giants.

Booth finished with a game-high 21 points and Achter 16. Before the 14-point spurt in the final frame, Achter had not recorded a field goal since the 6 minute mark in the first.

"When you got Booth coming off the screen and they know he can shoot we run that play," Eagles coach Rob Belegirin said. "Where we post Ross (Achter) up and give Booth the option to shoot ... They were playing over the top of Ross and (Derek) Belkofer was making good passes down to him and he was getting easy layups out of it."

Clay's main interior presence, 6-foot-8 center Collin Carter, was held to just two points on account

of solid defensive efforts from Skylar Reffner and Streaker.

After a first quarter in which both teams struggled to establish half-court offense — combining for 11 turnovers — Ross was able to expose a hole in the Eagles' zone in the second.

With Clay trapping Ross on the perimeter, Gedeon had his guards work it to Carnicom in the high post. Carnicom found himself wide open in the middle of the court for midrange looks.

Carnicom knocked down three straight shots from around the free-throw line on consecutive Ross possessions and amassed 12 points during the quarter.

"Carnicom is a great talent," Belegirin said. "I'll talk about him all night because I just like the way he's got good wiggle."

"He gets into that seam and he's a great mid-range shooter. And that's an art that you don't see as much in high school basketball."

In the third, Clay cut the deficit to nine by the 2:52 mark with a 12-8 run — 10 coming from Booth — but Ross spiked the lead back to 12 with two lay-ins from Pettiford and Jarett Koonce, and a triple from Dylan Starks as time ran out.

Back-to-back layups from Achter put the score at 60-53 with 1:37 left in the fourth, but an Eagles turnover aided a 6-2 Ross spurt for the final margin.

"We have a lot of different defensive sets and we were just trying to switch it up every time," Carnicom said.

High School Boys Basketball

Fremont Ross 66, Oregon Clay 55

Ross	16	18	13	19	—	66
Clay	10	11	14	20	—	55

ROSS (66)

Diante Pettiford 7-3-18, Jarett Koonce 5-10, Skylar Reffner 2-3-7, Dylan Starks 1-3, Marquan McDonald 1-2, Jay Carnicom 7-4-19, Drew Solander 1-2, Nick Streacker 2-1-5. Totals 26-11-66.

CLAY (55)

Derek Belkofer 0-2-2, Patrice Booth 9-1-21, Jack Nagy 7-14, Ross Achter 7-2-16, Collin Carter 1-2. Totals 24-5-55.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Ross 3 (Carnicom, Pettiford, D. Starks); Clay 2 (Booth 2). Records — Ross 6-6 (4-4 TRAC); Clay 5-7 (2-6 TRAC). Next — Winner, Loser. JV — .



Fremont Ross's Nick Streacker lines up a foul shot Friday during a home game against St. John's Jesuit. BRENDA SOULE/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

Little Giants come up short

Ross loses ground in race for TRAC crown

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Ross came up just short again of making a big statement in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference on its home court.

This time, St. John's Jesuit narrowly escaped the Purple Pit on Friday with a 54-50 win.

In the process the Titans (10-4, 7-2) stayed tied atop the TRAC standings with Whitmer (12-2, 7-2) and Central Catholic (11-3, 7-2). The Little Giants (6-7, 4-5), meanwhile, let another opportunity to stay in the race slip through their hands. Whitmer left Fremont with a 56-55 win Jan. 20.

Down 52-50 with nine seconds to go, Ross inbounded the ball. Drew Starks drove to the left side, where he found Diante Pettiford. With a player in his face and jumping backwards, Pettiford let a 3-pointer loose from the left wing that bounced off the front of the rim. The rebound went into the hands of St. John's Tarvis Malone, who was fouled and sank two foul

shots with 0.5 seconds remaining.

Malone's shots completed what was a 32-19 run for the Titans, erasing a 31-22 third-quarter deficit. Most of that was taken care of in the third quarter, when St. John's had a 9-3 run, just prior to a 9-0 run to take a 40-37 lead in the final minute of the quarter.

Jay Carnicom's three for Ross tied the game at 40 entering the final quarter.

"We knew they were going to have several runs, we were just fortunate there was really one big run," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said. "And even though it was tied going into the fourth quarter, it really did swing some of the momentum because we played so well for so long."

Thanks in large part to the play of Nick Streacker, the Little Giants led 14-10 after one quarter. Streacker, who didn't play in the first matchup — a 77-53 Titans' win — and who has been hampered by an ankle injury, finished tied for a team high with 13 points, including eight in the opening quarter. He finished with seven boards and seven second-chance points.

See GIANTS, page 2B

Giants

Continued from Page 1B

"Nick played a great first half," Gedeon said. "He gave us something we've been looking for, a little inside presence. It was nice to see him start to round back in."

A three from Pettiford gave Ross a 21-13 lead in the second quarter. St. John's cut the deficit to 27-22 at the break. But the Titans still weren't getting the contributions they were looking for out of their inside guys.

Marc Loving, a 6-feet, 8-inch junior committed to Ohio State, was held to 11 points and just 19 for the game to go with just three rebounds. Dilyn Good, at 6-7, went scoreless.

"Our initial gameplan was to pound it inside, but that never developed," St. John's coach Ed

Heintschel said. "(Ross) got the lead and I think they could kind of dictate a little better what they were doing defensively."

Guard D.J. Bonds stepped up in their places, scoring 12 of his 16 points in the second half.

Bonds picked off a Ross pass and laid it in for a 46-43 lead with six minutes left, then canned a 3-pointer for a 49-45 lead. He also contributed some big lay-ups during the Titans' third-quarter runs.

"D.J. was very good," Heintschel said. "He had a couple drives where I didn't think he'd be able to slice his way in there."

Ross trailed 51-50 with 54 seconds left following a basket inside by Pettiford. Malone hit one of two foul shots with 35 seconds left. Carnicom then missed a tough shot inside that would have tied the game, before Caleb Wallace went 0-for-2 at the line with 12 seconds

left to set up the final possession.

Carnicom and Pettiford each finished with 13 points, tying with Streacker for the team high.

"I'm extremely proud of my kids, that was the first thing I told them when I went in the locker room," Gedeon said. "To play two of the best teams in Ohio that close in back-to-back weekends says something about those kids we have."

Ross had won four of its last five coming in.

"I was really impressed with the bounce they had and the way they attacked us ... they played with such confidence," Heintschel said. "Mark does a great job. They really work hard and he told me he likes this team a lot and I can see why."

*Email Kevin Shields at
kshields@gannett.com.*

St. John's Jesuit 54, Fremont Ross 50

SJJ	10	12	18	14	—	54
Ross	14	13	13	10	—	50

ROSS (50)

Diante Pettiford 5-1-13, Jarrett Koonce 1-2, Skylar Reffner 1-2, Drew Starks 1-3, Jay Carnicom 5-13, Jack Gedeon 1-2, Drew Solander 1-2, Nick Streaker 6-1-13. Totals 21-2-50.

ST. JOHN'S (54)

Alex Carter 1-2, Tarvis Malone 1-3-6, DJ Bonds 6-3-16, Tyler Thompson 1-2, Marc Loving 7-4-19, Caleb Wallace 4-1-9. Totals 20-11-54.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — SJJ 3 (Bonds, Malone, Loving); Ross 6 (Carnicom 3, Pettiford 2, Starks). Rebounds — SJJ 24 (Wallace 8); Ross 25 (Streaker 7). Turnovers — SJJ 16; Ross 14. Records — SJJ 10-4 (7-2 TRAC); Ross 6-7 (4-5 TRAC). Next — Ross at Lima Sr., Friday. JV — Ross 40-39.

ROUNDUP

Little Giants get first ever win at Lima

News-Messenger reports

LIMA — Jarett Koonce scored 10 of the Little Giants' last 11 points, leading Fremont Ross' boys basketball team to a 71-65 victory over Lima Friday night.

"Jarett down the stretch was amazing," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon. "Just ice water in his veins."

Koonce led the Little Giants (8-7, 5-5) with 21 points. Diante Pettiford added 13, and Nick Streacker and Jay Carnicom each had 11. Streacker led Ross with nine rebounds.

Tyler White led the Spartans (3-11, 2-7) with 21 points. The Little Giants' win was their first ever at Lima.

Boys Basketball

Fremont Ross 71, Lima Senior 65

Ross	N	17	14	14	26	—	71
Lima Senior		9	17	21	18	—	65

ROSS (71)

Diante Pettiford 5-3-13; Jarett Koonce 6-9-21; Skylar Reffner 5-0-10; Drew Starks 1-3; Jay Carnicom 5-11; Drew Solander 1-2; Nick Streacker 5-1-11. Totals: 28-13-71.

LIMA SENIOR (65)

Tyler White 7-7-21; Devon Allen 5-2-12; Taryn Hutchinson 1-1-3; Jerry Hutchins 8-1-17; Dominique Ward 2-5; Isiah Stinson 3-1-7. Totals: 26-12-55.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Ross 2 (Starks, Carnicom); Lima Senior 1 (Ward). Rebounds — Streacker 9. Turnovers — Ross 12. Records — Ross 8-7 (5-5 TRAC); Lima Senior 3-11 (2-7 TRAC). Next — Ross at Findlay, Friday. JV — Lima 60, Ross 52.

BOYS BASKETBALL »
FINDLAY 68,
FREMONT ROSS 58

Ross falls late to Findlay

Trojans senior
Gettys makes big
impression in win

By Nick Marlow

News-Messenger correspondent

FINDLAY — After three quarters of close-knit basketball, a fourth-quarter implosion from the Little Giants led to a 68-58 loss to the Findlay Trojans in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

Taking a 51-47 edge into the final frame, Findlay senior C.J. Gettys scored the Trojans' first seven points. The Little Giants shot 2-of-9 from the free-throw line in the fourth quarter.

Six-foot, 11-inch University of North Carolina-Wilmington commit Gettys paced the Trojans (10-5, 6-4) with 28 points, using a domineering performance inside, to which the Little Giants had no response.

Playing against double and triple teams throughout, Gettys (12-of-17) looked like a man among boys. Putting the ball high above his head immediately after receiving post feeds, Gettys tossed in myriad indefensible shots against the Little Giants' Nick Streacker (6-5) and Drew Solander (6-2) all night long.

He also led the team with eight rebounds.

"I'm 6-11 and they really don't have much size," Gettys said. "My guards were able to get me the ball inside and I was able to make some moves and get some points, and I dished it out to them (when the inside was blocked) and they hit some threes."

Michael Clark and Boston Ballmer were the beneficiaries of Gettys' kick-outs off the double teams, representing all four of the Trojans' triples. Clark finished with 15 points and Ballmer 11.

Findlay used the daunting size advantage to hold a 24-14 edge on the boards. Gettys and fellow forward Joseph Davidson notched

See ROSS, page 2B

Ross

Continued from Page 1B

seven of the 12 Trojans offensive rebounds, while Ross was only able to harness four.

Ross surmounted the lopsided rebounding margin with its suffocating defense. An unremitting full-court press allowed the Little Giants to own a 10-7 turnover edge through the first three quarters.

"We knew for us to be successful in this game it was going to come from our defensive pressure," said Ross head coach Mark Gedeon. "Findlay executes so well, so if they're able to execute what they want to do they're going to pick you apart. We tried to scramble and we expended a lot of energy doing that."

Diante Pettiford led the defensive strike. The senior guard

picked the pockets of Clark and Ballmer in the backcourt three times and scored four of his team-high 16 points on two fast breaks in transition.

Jay Carnicom (11) and Streacker (12) were the other two Little Giants with double-digit scoring efforts.

Findlay dominated the glass straight out of the gate, producing six second-chance points off three offensive boards in the first quarter. But eight points off five Findlay turnovers and a 3-pointer from Carnicom off the glass as time expired allowed the Little Giants to stay within one point, 18-17, heading into the second.

Pettiford scored nine points in the opening frame and Gettys had eight. Play was stopped at 5:16 after Gettys scored to honor the center's 1,000th point as a Trojan.

The lead changed six times in the second quarter, but Clark took advantage of the double teams in

the interior and notched nine points to boost the lead to 34-30 at intermission.

After draining two field goals from outside 20 feet, Clark got Carnicom to bite on a shot fake before flitting to the rack and laying in a basket uncontested to spark a 6-2 run to close out the half.

Ross' field goal during the Trojans' run came on a 10-foot jumper from Streacker, assisted by Drew Starks, just inside the free throw line as time expired.

Ross' four turnovers in the final frame were more than it committed in any other frame, but Gedeon cannot complain about the effort he received from his Little Giants on Friday.

"It's a tribute to the kids," he said. "It's something that started this summer ... I got a group of men who really believe in each other and know we're better collectively than we are individually."

Findlay 68, Fremont Ross 58

Ross	17	13	17	11	—	58
Findlay	18	16	17	17	—	68

ROSS (58)

Diante Pettiford 7-1-16, Jarett Koonce 1-2-4, Skylar Reffner 2-4, Drew Starks 3-9, Jay Carnicom 4-11, Jack Gedeon 1-2, Nick Streacker 6-12. Totals 24-3-58

FINDLAY (68)

Michael Clark 4-6-14, Adam Twining 2-4, Joseph Davidson 2-1-5, Austin Gutting 0-1-1, Daniel Peak 1-2-4, Boston Ballmer 4-11, CJ Gettys 12-4-28. Totals 25-14-68.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Ross 7 (Starks 3, Carnicom 3, Pettiford); Findlay 4 (Ballmer 3, Clark).

Rebounds — Findlay 24; Ross 14. Turnovers — Findlay 12; Ross 11. Records — Findlay 10-5 (6-4 TRAC); Ross 8-8 (5-6 TRAC). Next — Ross vs. Central Catholic, Tuesday.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Toledo Central Catholic stifles Little Giants

By Nick Marlow

News-Messenger correspondent

FREMONT — The Little Giants did not look like themselves Tuesday night against Toledo Central Catholic at the Purple Pit.

After a first half where it forced more turnovers than it gave up in points, Central razed Ross 66-45 and looked every bit like the first place team in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

Central (15-3, 10-2 TRAC) pressed the Little Giants (8-9, 5-7 TRAC) for four quarters without respite, forcing Ross to turn the basketball over 21 times which led to abundant transition layups for the Irish.

"We really got them funneling towards the corners, and they couldn't get the dribble drive they wanted towards the center of the floor," Central coach Jim Welling said. "All of a sudden we're getting a steal here and a steal there and converting our defense into offense and that obviously equated into points. That's how it all gets going."

And it wasn't one player carrying the load for Central, as four players finished in double figures and 10 scored at least a point.

Keith Towbridge and Deontae Cole paced the effort with 13 points apiece while Danielle Turner II and DeShone Kizer each had 10.

Speedy point guard Gaylon Hughes ran the Irish's transition offense to perfection. Four times the senior darted to the goal and drew the attention of Ross' forwards before dumping the ball off to one of his big men.

"We play good solid team basketball," Welling said. "We don't have a big time superstar on our team. We got guys that want to share and want to win."

Ross was never able to retort with any defensive pressure of its own, as Hughes and his teammates made sure to get the ball across half court within seconds of a Little Giants score.

In a barren first half for Ross, guard Diante Pettiford was the lone flower among the weeds. Pettiford scored eight of the team's 13 first-half points and was the only Little Giants guard able to get any form of penetration against Central's perimeter defense.

But Pettiford would not score in the second half and only took two shots.

Toledo

Continued from Page 6A

Aside from a third quarter in which the two combined for 13 points, Pettiford's fellow offensive catalysts Jay Carnicom and Drew Starks were held unproductive. Finishing with seven and six points, respectively, Carnicom and Starks did not score in any other quarter.

But Carnicom found other ways to get involved in the offense, as on three occasions the senior forced Towbridge to divert his attention from forwards Nick Streaker and Drew Solander before dishing it to one of the two for an easy bucket. Streaker led Ross with 12 points and Solander had two 2-point buckets — both assisted by Carnicom. But it wasn't enough. Central's offense never broke stride and scored at least 14 points in every frame.

After yielding a 14-7 lead to the Irish in the opening period, disaster struck the Little Giants in the second. Ross began the second quarter with four straight turnovers which fed an 8-0 run by Central.

After Ross scored its only five points of the period between the 4:19 and 3:07 marks, Towbridge scored the final five points of the half.

After splitting a pair of free throws, Towbridge intercepted a crosscourt pass from Ross' Jarrett Koonce which set the 6-foot, 4-inch forward up for a one-handed jam on the other end with 47 seconds left. He then scored again with 6 seconds remaining on a dish from Cole which allowed Irish to take a 27-13 into the break.

Ross turned the ball over 15 times in the first half, including 10 in the second.

Ross coach Mark Gedeon made some adjustments at the break, and the Little Giants put together a 21-point third quarter. "We were able to get a little bit more flow in outscoring them," Gedeon said. "It was at least a sign in the right direction."

But the defense did not match the offense's tumult, yielding another 18 points to the Irish to hardly put a dent in the halftime deficit.

"We had so many times where we could have cut it to a nine-point lead or a 10-point lead," Gedeon said. "But those possessions when we really needed to do something unfortunately we failed."

"And therefore then our defense let us down there on the other end and against good teams you can't do that."

Central would go on to outscore Ross 18-10 in the fourth. Six of Ross' points in the final frame came from Streaker, who finished with a game-high six rebounds.

"When I see someone bigger than me I just try to jump as high as I can to get it," Streaker said. "And when I do I make sure to go back up strong."

See TOLEDO, page 7A

Boys Basketball

Toledo Central Catholic 65, Fremont Ross 44

Central Catholic	14	15	18	18	—	65
Ross	7	5	21	19	—	44

TOLEDO CC (65)

Gaylon Hughes 2-4, Dexter Johnson 2-4, Cliff Bussey 3-4-10, Nathaniel Harris 0-1-1, Danielle Turner 5-10, Deontae Cole 6-11, Christopher Walker 1-2, Alexander Grau 0-2-2, Keith Towbridge 6-1-13. Totals 28-8-65.

ROSS (44)

Diante Pettiford 3-2-8, Jarrett Koonce 0-1-1, Drew Starks 2-6, Dylan Starks 1-2, Jay Carnicom 3-7, Jack Gedeon 1-2, Jarvis Jones 0-2-2, Drew Solander 2-4, Nick Streacker 6-12. Totals 18-5-44.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Ross 3 (Dr. Starks 2, Carnicom); Central (Cole). Rebounds — Central 11; Ross 15. Turnovers — Central 11; Ross 21. Records — Ross 8-9 (5-7 TRAC); Central 15-3 (10-2 TRAC). Next — Ross vs. St. Francis, Friday.

Take lead, don't look back

Little Giants' first quarter tear sets tone in beating De Sales

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Seniors Diante Pettiford, Skylar Reffner and Jay Carnicom combined for 44 points, including 27 in the second half Friday as Ross defeated St. Francis De Sales 63-51 in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference on Senior Night at the Purple Pit.

"We were ready to go," Pettiford said. "Feels good to win that final home game."

After falling down 4-0 in the first minute, the Little Giants (9-9, 5-7 TRAC) went on a 17-3 run to end the first quarter. Most of that success came at the expense of the Knights (1-17, 1-12), who ended the quarter with eight turnovers.

Pettiford had six of his game-high 16 points in the quarter. His steal at mid-court and ensuing layup gave Ross a 9-4 lead near the mid-way point of the quarter. Senior Marquan McDonald then ended Ross' 12 unanswered points with a 3-pointer from the right corner.

Ross's half-court traps and quickness gave the Knights fits, holding them scoreless on eight straight possessions. De Sales ended the first with only eight shot attempts.

"One of the things we talked about was trying to establish tempo early," Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon said. "The first time we played them, (De Sales) was able to establish the tempo early and had an eight-point halftime lead. And for us to come out and get that 10-point lead after the first quarter, I thought it was very important for what we wanted to con-

See GIANTS, page 2B

FREMONT ROSS 63
DE SALES 51

Three Rivers Athletic Conference



Fremont Ross' Diante Pettiford drives to the hoop during the first half against St Francis De Sales on Friday.
JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Giants

Continued from Page 1B

tinue to do.”

That aggressiveness on defense carried over to the offensive end. The Little Giants executed post feeds, got dribble penetration and had guys scoring on cuts, tallying 30 total points in the paint. And six of Ross’ second-quarter points came at the foul line.

“When you don’t have a team with great height, finding multiple ways to get points in the paint is key,” Gedeon said. “We were able to draw fouls too. We got to the foul line a lot, and we couldn’t do that against either Central Catholic or Findlay.”

The Little Giants opened up a 30-17 halftime lead.

Ross’s advantage was 41-32 after the third quarter as the Knights never got closer than eight in the second half. Nathan White’s second-chance basket brought De Sales’ deficit to 42-34 with seven minutes remaining in the fourth.

It was a tightly called contest, making it tough for the game to have any sort of flow or pace.

“That made it tough,” Pettiford said. “But I was just kept shooting it and trying to get my teammates involved.”

The teams combined shot 49 foul shots. The Little Giants finished 16-of-30 from the charity stripe, while De Sales was 13-of-19.

One thing Ross did avoid was complacency on defense. In losses to Central Catholic (66-45) and Findlay (68-58) in the last week, the Little Giants struggled to make stops.

“Against Central, we didn’t get consecutive stops at all, and

that was really causing us some problems,” Gedeon said. “Tonight was a tribute to our kids. They worked hard offensively and defensively on Wednesday and it was rewarding for me as to see it pay off for them on a Friday night. And the players are seeing the positive results of their efforts too.”

Shooting was another positive from Friday. The Little Giants finished 22-of-48 (45 percent) from the field.

“Shooting and turnovers have killed us,” Pettiford said. “We just didn’t come out ready to play against Central.”

Ross did have 21 turnovers Friday but forced 21 as well.

Reffner had 15 points and five boards. Carnicom had 13 points and three steals, while Pettiford added 10 rebounds and three assists. Nick Streacker added nine boards.

De Sales was buoyed by 10 points each from Jameson Sheely and Cameron White.

With a win against Tiffin Columbian today, Ross will have a chance to post its first winning season since 2005-06 when it finished 16-6. The Little Giants finish the year at Whitmer on Friday. They finished 2008-09 with an 11-11 record and were 9-12 a year ago.

“The kids’ attitude, work ethic and their ability to work well together have made them a special group,” Gedeon said. “We might not have some of the wins we’d like to have, but a lot of our losses are to state-ranked teams.

“But this group doesn’t want the season to end, and they’ve done a nice job.”

*Email Kevin Shields at
KShields@gannett.com.*

Fremont Ross 63, De Sales 51

St. Francis	7	10	15	19	—	51
Ross	17	13	11	22	—	63

ST. FRANCIS (51)

Nolan Gladieux 2-5, Trent Morrissey 3-3-9, Cameron White 4-2-10, Joe White 1-2, Pat Szenderski 2-4, Nathan White 2-4-9, Josh Porter 1-2, Jameson Sheely 3-4-10. Totals 18-13-51.

ROSS (63)

Diante Pettiford 6-4-16, Jarrett Koonce 1-3-5, Skylar Reffner 6-3-15, Drew Starks 1-2, Dylan Starks 0-1-1, Marquan McDonald 1-3, Jay Carnicom 5-1-13, Jack Gedeon 0-1-1, Nick Streacker 0-3-3, Jared Ballenger 1-2, Dylan Jagodzinski 1-2. Totals 22-16-63.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Ross 3 (Carnicom 2, McDonald); St. Francis 2 (Gladieux, N. White). Rebounds — Ross 41 (Pettiford 10, Streacker 9); St. Francis 31 (Jay Snell 7, C. White 6). Turnovers — Ross 21; St. Francis 21. Records — Ross 9-9 (5-7 TRAC); St. Francis 1-17 (1-12 TRAC). Next — Ross at Whitmer, Friday. JV — Ross won.

ROUNDUP

Ross wins 10th

News-Messenger reports

Diante Pettiford poured in a game-high 18 points and Ross withstood a late second-half push by Tiffin Columbian Saturday to hold on for a 57-51 non-league victory.

Drew Starks added 10 points for the Little Giants (10-9). Jay Carnicom, Drew Solander and Nick Streacker each scored eight.

"It feels great to get that 10th win and definitely gives our guys some confidence heading into the final week here," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said.

The Little Giants had a lead of 16 at one point in the first half and 14 in the second half. The Little Giants were up 47-35 after three quarters.

But the Tornadoes rallied.

With just over four minutes left, Columbian cut the deficit to 49-46 on a shot by Bryce Lonsway. Two stops on defense and two successful trips on offense resulting in jumpers from Jay Carnicom and Drew Starks upped the lead to 53-46 with 2:30 left.

"We came out with a lot of energy in the first half," Gedeon said. "We were using our quickness to create turnovers and get transition hoops."

"Second half, we just got a little tentative. Tiffin made a nice run at the end and Jay and Drew hit some big shots for us."

Lonsway led Columbian with 16 points. Nick Loura had 11 points and Jonah Boyer added 10.

Ross hasn't eclipsed the 10-win barrier since going 11-11 in 2008-09. Its last winning campaign came in 2005-06 when it was 16-6. The Little

Giants play at Whitmer Friday.

"It's going to be a tremendous challenge going up there." Gedeon said. "The kids just want to prove they can compete. Hopefully we'll continue to do some positive things."

See **ROUNDUP**, page 7A

Fremont Ross 57, Tiffin Columbian 51

Ross	21	16	10	10	—	57
Columbian	17	9	9	16	—	51

ROSS (57)

Diante Pettiford 6-4-18, Jarett Koonce 1-2, Skylar Reffner 1-1-3, Drew Starks 4-10, Jay Carnicom 3-2-8, Drew Solander 3-2-8, Nick Streacker 4-8. Totals 22-9-57.

COLUMBIAN (51)

Jonah Boyer 5-12, Bryce Lonsway 6-4-16, Deker Kneeskern 1-2-5, Nick Loura 5-11, Michael Rohrbach 0-1-1, Kyle Heminger 2-2-6. Totals 19-9-51.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Ross 4 (Pettiford 2, Dr. Starks 2); Columbian 4 (Boyer, Kneeskern, Loura). Rebounds — Ross 30 (Streacker 7); Columbian 24 (Loura 6). Turnovers — Ross 15; Columbian 17. Records — Ross 10-9; Columbian 9-10). Next — Ross at Whitmer, Friday.

Giants can't stop 3-pointers

By Nick Marlow
News-Messenger sports correspondent

TOLEDO — The Whitmer Panthers jumped out to a 22-point lead by halftime Friday and then staved off a second-half surge from Ross to defeat the Little Giants 59-43 and take the inaugural Three Rivers Athletic Conference Championship for boys basketball.

In front of a sea of blue and yellow after the win, Coach Bruce Smith watched each player climb the ladder rungs to snip off a morsel of nylon for the second straight year.

Smith's team won the Toledo City League Championship last season before leaving the TCL along with Clay, St. Johns, Central Catholic and St. Francis to team up with Findlay, Ross and Lima Senior to create the TRAC.

A 59-57 St. John's loss to Central Catholic gave the Panthers the title outright, after the two teams entered their respective Friday evening games tied atop league standings.

"It's a testament to our seniors who were obviously a big part of it last year as was our graduating class of 2011," Smith said. "Any time you have success like this it points to one thing: you have dedicated kids that are willing to work hard and do the things that are necessary to win championships. I couldn't be more pleased and proud for our kids."

Whitmer (18-2, 12-2) used six 3-pointers and a 12-2 edge in the paint to get to the halftime lead. Leading scorer Nigel Hayes (13.8 ppg) had the statisticians' carpals throbbing after the first 16 minutes as the junior wingman had already tallied eight points, six rebounds, two blocks, two steals and an assist. He would finish with 14 points and grabbed his 10th rebound toward the end of the final frame to complete the double-double.

Ricardo Smith paced the Panthers with 15 points and Leroy Alexander chipped in 11.

Alexander and Smith contributed five of the team's eight 3-pointers on the night with three and two, respectively. Two more from Ray Rublaitus and one from Luke Hickey made up the other three. On the night, the Panthers were 8-of-22 (32 percent) from behind the arc.

Fourteen first-half turnovers from Ross (10-10, 6-8) gave the ambitious Panthers numerous extra scoring opportunities and transition buckets.

"It was a lot of what we did," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said. "You look at those last seven possessions of the first quarter and we had all turnovers. You take a 6-4 game and then all of a sudden its 18-4."

"We just shot ourselves in the foot there."

See GIANTS, page 2B

Ross

Continued from Page 1B

before in the state.

"There's just a lot of fast swimmers here."

Duncan had swam a 1:06.22 at the Northwest District meet to finish fourth. She was an at-large qualifier to Canton, earning the 17th seed.

"Swimming 1:06.46 is an incredible swim for this pool," Moses said. "I expect her to be even faster tomorrow night."

Duncan, another four-event qualifier Ross, one of three total, finished 24th (59.56) in the 100 butterfly.

Fisher, a freshman, was 24th in both the 200 individual medley (2:13.36) and the 100 backstroke (1:00.93).

"The girls have been holding on to their tapers well," Moses said. "We added some time in certain events, but that's what you expect when you taper for districts. Plus this is the first time we see this pool all year, and it's not as fast as the one at Bowling Green."

Saturday's festivities will start at 6:30 a.m. for the Little Giants.

"We're resting tonight, then we'll be back at it," Moses said. "We have a wake up swim at the pool, then we come back and get our things together at the hotel, and we're back at the pool for the warm-ups for finals."

"Hopefully we'll finish the year strong and the girls will do their best in finals."

*Email Kevin Shields at
kshields@gannett.com*

Boys Basketball^N

Whitmer 59, Fremont Ross 43

Ross	4	7	19	13	—	43
Whitmer	18	15	14	12	—	59

ROSS (43)

Diante Pettiford 4-2-10, Jarrett Koonce 4-8, Dylan Starks 0-2-2, Marquan McDonald 2-1-7, Jay Carnicom 6-2-14, Jack Gedeon 0-1-1, Nick Streacker 0-1-1. Totals 21-9-59.

WHITMER (59)

Luke Hickey 1-3, Ricardo Smith 5-3-15, Tyler Klem 0-2-2, Nigel Hayes 6-2-14, Leroy Alexander 4-11, Ray Rublaitus 2-6, Storm Norton 0-1-1, Chris Wormley 3-1-7. Totals 16-9-43.

TEAM STATISTICS

3-pointers — Whitmer 8 (Alexander 3, Smith 2, Rublaitus 2, Hickey); Ross 2 (McDonald 2). Records — Ross 9-10 (6-8 TRAC); Whitmer 17-2 (12-2 TRAC). JV — Perkins 54-46 (20T).

Passing fancy? Not for Ross' Carnicom

He and two teammates earn all-conference honors

By Matthew Horn

Sports writer

Seniors Jay Carnicom and Diante Pettiford weren't always dominant players for a Fremont Ross basketball team that won 11 game last season.

But they did enough to get noticed by their peers and other coaches in the Three-Rivers Athletic Conference. Pettiford was named to the all-TRAC second-team and Carnicom named to the honorable-mention squad.

Their great talents may have putting their team before their individual accolades. For that reason, the two hold a special place in the heart of Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon, who has stored in his head a huge amount of historical basketball data.

"Jay has a sincere love of the game and is a true basketball junkie," Gedeon said. "In a day when individual scoring makes highlights, Jay gets a lot more satisfaction in passing the ball than scoring."

What coach wouldn't feel a tickle in their heart when players talk about the joys of sharing?

Carnicom, who is 6-foot, 3-inches tall, enjoys it most when his vision allows him to see something another player might not have seen and he can throw a timely pass.

"The thrill for me is getting my teammates involved," he said. "I think an assist gets the chemistry going and you start playing more as a team."

Gedeon couldn't have said it better himself. He knows the best way to attack a tenacious defense is with passes.

"When it comes to passing versus scoring, I try to be patient and take what the de-

fense gives me," Carnicom said. "If I beat my defender, I'm looking to see if the next one helps off. If he does, I dump (the ball) off. If he doesn't, it's an open shot for me or I'm going to the hole."

This season, Carnicom averaged 12.1 points, 4.4 assists and 3.9 rebounds. He shot 54 percent from the field, including 39 percent from 3-point range.

"He has played every position for us this season and has started at three different positions," Gedeon said. "In my 26-year coaching career, Jay is one of the best combination shooters, creators and passers I have coached."

Pettiford, a guard and team captain who started every game the last two seasons, also put the team first. His work ethic stood out to his coach.

"Diante was our most consistent player (this season) and truly loves the game of basketball," Gedeon said. "He was asked to provide scoring, ball handling, rebounding and to defend the opponents' best perimeter player. Diante is a very hard-working, soft-spoken and respectful young man."

"He provides leadership for our team, verbally and by example. He is extremely competitive and coachable."

Pettiford's season averages were 13.5 points, 3.7 rebounds and 2.2 steals.

Senior Jarett Koonce was also honorable mention all-TRAC. Skylar Reffner and Marquan McDonald were also seniors for Ross this season.

Junior Marc Loving of Toledo St. John's was player of the year. Whitmer's Bruce Smith was coach of the year in the TRAC.

*Email Matthew Horn at
mhorn@gannett.com*

