

1990-1991 Season Review

Ross eases nervous coach with win

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

Frank Gioffre could not have gotten a better prescription from a doctor to ease an upset stomach.

The Fremont Ross Little Giants supplied the perfect tonic for their basketball coach's ailments.

Ross scored the first 13 points and sailed to an 80-46 victory over Sylvania Northview in the season opener at Ross High School Tuesday, soothing the first-year varsity coach's turbulent stomach.

Gioffre, in his first year at Ross after coaching the Sandusky High School junior varsity to a 54-6 record the past three seasons, was nowhere to be seen while his Little Giants squad went through pre-game warmups.

"I was inside, in the restroom," Gioffre admitted, "with butterflies, vomiting, upset stomach ... typical things for a coach in his first game."

Northview, sporting T-shirts with "One for the wall" emblazoned on the back, was put up against the wall by a pressurized

Ross defense and an offense that tore apart the inner defenses of the Wildcats.

Jeff Green put Ross ahead for good with a bucket from 3 feet out 20 seconds into the game and the Little Giants wrote a prescription that failed their coach only briefly.

Green, a 6-7 senior, scored nine points in the first three minutes with Mark Sheidler and Chris Wolfe adding the other buckets for a 13-0 lead. Northview finally got on the board on a pair of technical foul shots awarded Jeff Slade when Nick Wolf was

called for reaching over the base line on a Wildcat inbounds play.

Northview ran off four straight points but Sheidler and Justin Perry scored back-to-back buckets and the Wildcats never got closer than 11 the rest of the way.

"Our kids played hard," Gioffre said about the quick start, "that was the key ingredient."

"Everyone showed a great amount of intensity; we were patient with the basket-

See ROSS, B-3

Ross

Continued From B-1

ball. We got the ball inside to where we have to and Jeff Green did a fantastic job."

Green scored 13 first-half points and after battling foul problems in the third quarter, finished with a game-high 18 points.

The Little Giants, with Wolfe dropping in seven points, rolled out to a 40-12 lead before giving Gioffre another pain in the stomach. Northview outscored Ross 8-2 in the final two minutes of the first half, cutting the Ross lead to 42-20 at intermission.

The Ross lead never slipped below 20 in the third quarter but the fluid play of the first half had become rough and out of sync.

"We came out flat," Gioffre said. "We cannot let that happen ... if we come out flat like that against good teams, we are not going to win too many basketball games.

"We got a little lax with the lead at halftime; we were too lackadaisical. We stopped doing the things that were successful

for us in the first half."

Still, the Little Giants had a comfortable 52-29 lead at the end of three quarters.

Ross shook off the erratic third quarter with a 28-17 spurt in the final quarter wiping out any butterflies remaining in the rookie head coach's stomach.

"We picked it up in the fourth quarter," Gioffre said. "We started to get into our transition game more and get the ball inside again — that's where our strength is right now."

Gioffre played all 12 of his players, and 11 of them scored.

"That is great for us for the first game," he said.

Wolfe had 16 points to back up Green and Hector Rodriguez came off the bench to score 10. Ross was 29-of-51 from the field and made 21-of-30 free throws. The Little Giants outrebounded the Wildcats 39-31.

Northview, 0-2, made just 16 of 56 shots — missing 17 of 21 3-point attempts. Slade was the only Wildcat in double figures with 11 points.

Friday, Gioffre, with his first win under his belt, and the Little Giants will host Port Clinton, 1-0, Friday night.

Ross 80, Northview 46

Score by quarters

Northview	6	14	9	17	— 46
Ross	19	23	10	28	— 80

Scoring

NORTHVIEW — Matt Sperling 1-2-4, Dave Miller 1-0-2, Jeff Slade 2-7-11, Eric Addington 0-0-0, Terry Shadle 2-0-6, Bill Falcone 3-1-8, Doug Crowley 4-0-8, Joe Raker 1-0-3, Collin Chiles 2-0-4, totals 16-10-46.

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 6-4-16, Nick Wolf 2-0-4, Jeff Green 8-2-18, Mark Sheidler 3-1-7, Todd Clark 2-2-6, Joe Frazier 0-2-2, Justin Perry 2-1-5, Hector Rodriguez 3-4-10, Mark Gottron 1-2-5, Damon Walker 0-3-3, Alec Shawl 0-0-0, Ryan Zimmerman 2-0-4, totals 29-21-80.

3-point goals: Shadle 2, Falcone, Raker, Gottron.

Records: Northview 0-2, Ross 1-0.

Ross JV 56, Northview 42

Score by quarters

Northview	7	11	8	16	— 42
Ross	10	13	15	18	— 56

Scoring

NORTHVIEW — Aaron Wittenberg 3-3-9, Chad Holtz 5-0-12, Kevin Lovett 1-0-3, Neal Guttman 1-0-3, Todd Korb 2-1-5, Ryan Drewes 3-0-6, Keith Chrapliwy 2-0-4, totals 17-4-42.

ROSS — Ryan Zimmerman 3-4-10, Jon Hetrick 1-0-2, Mike Patteron 5-1-12, Brian Wilson 2-0-4, Bryan Myers 2-0-4, Bobby Carter 3-1-7, Shane Willer 1-0-2, Jason Zilles 1-0-2, Tyrone Williams 6-1-13, totals 24-7-56.

3-point goals: Holtz 2, Lovett, Guttman, Patterson.

Records: Northview 1-1, Ross 1-0.

Wolf's 3-pointer beats PC

Little Giants win 68-67

By MARK GRIFFIN
Staff writer

Fremont Ross coach Frank Gioffre said he didn't feel lucky after the Little Giants beat Port Clinton 68-67 Friday night at the Purple Pit, just "fortunate."

Nick Wolf's 3-point shot with four seconds remaining put an end to a game that, judging by the fans' reaction during the game and the coaches' reaction after, should have been played in March instead of November.

"He (Wolf) was supposed to catch the ball on the wing and attack (the defense)," Gioffre said. "If nobody was on him, he was supposed to shoot it. We were looking for Jeff Green crossing (the middle), but I told Nick if it's open, shoot it."

Port Clinton did not pressure the ball in the backcourt and Wolf was able to get the ball on the left side of the basket, behind the 3-point line. Wolf let the ball fly and hit nothing but net, and PC called timeout with four seconds remaining.

"We told them (our players) we wanted pressure on that wing shot, on any shot," Bodager said. "(Wolf) just came down and didn't back down at all."

Port Clinton senior Steve Smith, who led all scorers with 22 points, had an opportunity to give the Redskins the win, but

his shot from half court fell short at the buzzer.

"It was a good game, I'm sure, from a fans' standpoint," Port Clinton coach Tom Bodager said, "but what a heartbreaker to lose."

Ross, 2-0, never trailed in the first quarter and led 20-16 after the first eight minutes.

Smith scored eight of his 13 first-half points in the opening quarter and Tony Meek was effective inside against Ross' 6-foot-7 seniors, Jeff Green and Chris Wolfe.

The Little Giants were able to maintain their lead in the second quarter, until a 5-0 scoring run in the final 48 seconds of the half by Port Clinton, 1-1.

Two free throws by Kit Lynch and a 3-pointer by Matt Zetzer enabled PC to tie it at 35-all at the half.

"We made a lot of mental mistakes," Gioffre said. "We've got some experienced basketball players, (but) we made some crucial mistakes at the end of the first half and the end of the third quarter."

The Redskins took their first lead of the game early in the third quarter on Smith's steal and layup.

Neither team led by more than three points during the third period, which ended with Ross holding a 49-48 lead.

The Little Giants made their first four shots in the fourth quarter for a 56-51 lead.

The Redskins hurt their cause when Meek, who finished with 10



News-Messenger/Linda Epstein

STEVE SMITH of Port Clinton drives between Ross defenders Hector Rodriguez (20) and Todd

Clark during second-half action Friday night. The Little Giants nipped the Redskins 68-67.

See ROSS, B-3



News-Messenger/Linda Epstein

CRAIG THOMAS of Port Clinton drives the baseline in front of Ross's Mark Sheidler Friday night.

Ross

Continued From B-1

points, fouled out with 6:18 to play. Nate Dingus, who added nine points, fouled out with 2:48 remaining.

A 6-0 Port Clinton run midway through the final quarter gave the Redskins a 59-58 lead, but Ross was able to stay close. PC led 63-60 with 1:14 left on a free throw by Smith, but a Wolfe layup brought the Little Giants within a point, 63-62, with 57 seconds remaining.

"We executed the game plan almost to the letter," Bodager said. "We did the things we wanted to try to do. We knew we could win it. We were in the driver's seat at the end.

"Our whole game plan was to try to keep it close and win it at the end."

Following a Zetzer layup with 46 seconds left, Green turned in a three-point play to tie it at 65. Jason Kreulen gave Port Clinton the lead again when he scored with 13 seconds left, and Ross called timeout to set up the final shot.

Chris Wolfe finished with 20 points to lead Ross, while Green added 16, Hector Rodriguez had 11 and Wolf had nine, all on 3-pointers.

The Little Giants shot 26-of-56 (46 percent) from the field, 11-of-22 (50 percent) from the line and outrebounded the Redskins 31-29.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 68, Port Clinton 67

Score by quarters

Port Clinton	16	19	13	19	— 67
Ross	20	15	14	19	— 68

Scoring

PORT CLINTON — Craig Thomas 3-0-7, Matt Zetzer 2-0-5, Steve Smith 10-1-22, Brad Kocher 2-2-6, Kit Lynch 0-2-2, Tony Meek 5-0-10, Jason Kreulen 2-2-6, Nate Dingus 3-3-9, totals 27-9-67.

ROSS — Justin Perry 0-2-2, Hector Rodriguez 5-1-11, Chris Wolfe 8-3-20, Todd Clark 3-0-8, Nick Wolf 3-0-9, Damon Walker 1-0-2, Jeff Green 6-4-16, totals 26-11-68.

3-point goals: Thomas, Zetzer, Smith, Wolf 3, Wolfe, Clark.

Records: Port Clinton 1-1, Ross 2-0.

Ross JV 57, P. Clinton 44

Score by quarters

Port Clinton	9	16	10	9	— 44
Ross	17	11	16	13	— 57

Scoring

PORT CLINTON — Pete Sokoloski 1-2-4, Ty Bodager 1-0-3, Mike Palijs 3-0-7, Scott Rickel 5-2-12, Chris Langford 1-1-3, Scott Postma 5-5-15, totals 16-10-44.

ROSS — Jon Hetrick 4-0-8, Mike Patterson 4-2-12, Brian Wilson 1-2-4, Bryan Myers 0-2-2, Bobby Carter 3-1-7, Shane Willer 1-1-3, Allen Dorsey 2-0-4, Tyronne Williams 6-2-14, Damon Walker 1-1-3, totals 22-11-57.

3-point goals: Bodager.

Ross takes care of Perkins

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

SANDUSKY — Fremont Ross survived the frying pan Saturday only to jump into the fire.

The Little Giants defeated Perkins 51-37 and will take a 3-0 record to Toledo Tuesday to play state power St. Francis.

"I thought our kids did a great job of not looking ahead to St. Francis," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said after the win over the winless Pirates. "The kids were ready to play. We had a couple of bad situations early in the game but I thought our kids did a great job — now we have to get

ready for St. Francis. That's going to be a real test."

The Little Giants survived a game punctuated by close verbal encounters, a pair of technical fouls, early foul trouble and an ejection with strong defense and an offensive slowdown to defeat Perkins, 6-3.

Ross also played without 6-foot-7 starting center Jeff Green, the team's second-leading scorer. Green was on a football recruiting trip to West Virginia University.

Ross started slowly, shooting poorly against the Pirates' zone defense before spurting midway through the first quarter for a 9-4 lead as Chris Wolfe scored twice,

and Nick Wolf made a 3-point basket.

"...our kids faced a lot of adversity tonight," Gioffre said, "but our kids held their composure; you know there were many times tonight where we could have packed it up and said, 'Forget it, let's just get the heck out of here.'"

Wolfe had five of his seven blocked shots in the first quarter to keep Perkins off balance and the Pirates' frustration flared with a minute to go in the first quarter. Jason Wierman of Perkins allegedly kicked Little Giants' 6-foot-5 senior Joe Fraizer, who retaliated by firing the ball at Wierman. The officials saw the retaliation

and Fraizer was ejected while Wierman escaped quickly to the bench.

With Green on the missing list, the ejection put Gioffre in a hole. Damon Walker, who had started in place of Green, had to play a bit more than Gioffre had hoped but with help from 6-foot-4 junior Ryan Zimmerman and Wolfe, Ross kept the inside sealed off.

Ross built a 21-14 lead before Gioffre shifted offensive gears, electing to pull the Pirates out of the zone. From the 2:24

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Ross

Continued From B-1

mark of the second quarter, the Little Giants took more than two minutes off the clock before Perkins was called for a technical foul for not forcing the action. Todd Clark hit both technical shots, giving Ross a 23-14 half-time lead.

The Ross defense held the Pirates to just three shots in the second period with none of them finding the mark.

Perkins never got closer than six in the second half.

Both Wolfe and Wolf hit two and 3-point goals in the third

quarter to build a 33-23 lead and Clark's bucket, the first field goal by a Little Giant other than Wolfe or Wolf in the game, put Ross up 35-23. The lead reached 15 twice in the final quarter.

Wolfe had 19 points and Wolf 17. Wierman had 11 for Perkins.

Gioffre used each one of his players, backing up an old coaching cliché.

"It was a great team win," Gioffre said, drawing out the words slowly. "Everyone of those kids deserves a pat on the back. I have confidence in them and those kids know what they can do; they know their roles."

It was evident Saturday, now comes the walk in the fire in Toledo.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 51, Perkins 37

Score by quarters

Ross	9	14	12	16	— 51
Perkins	8	6	11	12	— 37

Scoring

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 8-2-19, Nick Wolf 7-0-17, Todd Clark 3-3-9, Mark Sheidler 0-0-0, Damon Walker 1-1-3, Mark Gottron 0-1-1, Hector Rodriguez 1-0-2, totals 20-7-51.

PERKINS — Jason Wierman 2-7-11, George Lenyo 3-0-6, Brent Maillard 2-2-7, Brad Harrold 4-0-10, Andy Guerrera 0-0-0, Drew Acierto 0-3-3, totals 11-12-37.

3-point goals: Wolfe, Wolf 3, Maillard, Harrold 2.

Records: Ross 3-0, Perkins 0-3.

Ross JV 59, Perkins 25

Score by quarters

Ross	14	12	14	19	— 59
Perkins	2	6	9	8	— 25

Scoring

ROSS — Ryan Zimmerman 4-0-8, Jon Hetrick 2-1-6, Mike Patterson 1-0-2, Brian Wilson 5-1-11, Brian Myers 0-1-1, Christian Tooman 1-1-3, Bobby Carter 4-0-8, Shane Willer 2-0-4, Jason Zilles 1-1-3, Allen Dorsey 1-2-4, Tyronne Williams 4-1-9, totals 25-8-59.

PERKINS — Rick Nelson 2-0-4, Jason Jackson 4-2-8, Tony Obergefell 1-0-2, Jason Beatty 0-1-1, Jason Hartung 2-0-4, Mike Stubblebine 0-2-2, Evan Rulong 2-0-4, totals 10-5-25.

3-point goals: Hetrick.

Records: Ross 3-0.

St. Francis rips Ross 94-53

By **BOB MARKER**
Staff writer

TOLEDO — St. Francis turned the lights out quickly on Fremont Ross Tuesday night.

After spotting Ross 2-0 and 4-2 leads, the Knights ran off 15 consecutive points and outscored the Little Giants 30-14 in the first quarter, cruising to a 94-53 win.

It was the first loss for Ross after opening the season with three wins. The Knights raised their record to 4-1.

With four players already signed to play Division I college ball, the Knights' height advantage turned the Little Giants off inside. Larry Sykes, 6-9, Kevin Baker, 6-5, Vincent Stewart, 6-8, and Jeff Edgecombe,

6-5, were too much for Ross to handle.

With a pressurized defense and 32-of-55 shooting in the first three quarters, the Knights had the Little Giants on the ropes after spurting to a 17-4 first quarter lead.

"They are a very good team," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said, "but we are very disappointed. Some of their full-court pressure was not even that extensive. We did a terrible job handling the basketball the first part of the game, a terrible job."

Ross committed 13 first-half turnovers with the Knights scoring a dozen points off the giveaways.

Sykes dropped in 12 first-half points, Edgecombe matched him and James Johnson added 10 more as St. Francis

went to the lockerroom with a 53-29 lead.

It was academic after that as Ross made just 9-of-36 second-half shots while being outscored 25-9 and 16-15 in the final two quarters.

Nick Wolf, who led Ross with 16, scored all of the Little Giants' points in the third quarter, on three 3-pointers.

The only offense that worked was one that Gioffre apparently used to keep the Knights from reaching 100 points.

"What we tried to do was spread the floor and then attack the basket," Gioffre said about the slowed-down offense. "Nothing else seemed to work; we had to try something else."

Ryan Zimmerman, after leading the

Ross junior varisty with 10 points in a 76-49 loss, scored nine points in the final quarter for Ross.

The biggest St. Francis lead was 86-40 with five minutes to play.

Edgecombe led St. Francis with 22 points. Sykes added 18, Johnson 12 and Nolan Roberts 10.

"We just lost all continuity in what we were trying to do," Gioffre said. "We went away from our game plan."

"We knew they were tough. I guess we just got humbled tonight ... we were out of our league."

Ross will travel to Marion Saturday to play Harding.

High School Boys

St. Francis 94, Ross 53

Score by quarters

Ross	14	15	9	15	— 53
St. Francis	30	23	25	16	— 94

Scoring

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 2-4-8, Nick Wolf 5-2-16, Jeff Green 2-1-5, Todd Clark 1-0-2, Mark Sheidler 0-0-0, Damon Walker 1-0-2, Hector Rodriguez 1-0-2, Joe Frazier 2-2-6, Mark Gottron 1-0-3, Ryan Zimmerman 4-1-9, totals 19-10-53.

ST. FRANCIS — James Johnson 6-0-12, Charlie Davis 1-2-4, Larry Sykes 9-0-18, Nolan Roberts 3-2-10, Jeff Edgecombe 7-8-22, Kevin Baker 3-0-6, Tim Harris 4-0-8, Vincent Stewart 2-3-5, Tom Takats 1-0-3, Jeremy Bennington 0-3-3, Darius Saxton 1-1-3, totals 37-17-94.

3-point goals: Wolf 4, Gottron, Roberts, Bennington.

Records: Ross 3-1, St. Francis 4-1.

St. Fran. JV 76, Ross 49

Score by quarters

Ross	12	17	7	13	— 49
St. Francis	19	22	21	14	— 76

Scoring

ROSS — Jon Hetrick 3-0-7, Mike Patterson 3-0-7, Brian Wilson 1-2-4, Brian Myers 1-1-3, Bobby Carter 4-0-8, Shane Willer 2-0-5, Jason Zilles 1-1-3, Allen Dorsey 1-0-2, Ryan Zimmerman 4-2-10, totals 20-6-49.

ST. FRANCIS — Mike Green 4-0-8, Denny Armhein 7-7-21, Lamar McLemore 2-4-8, Jim David 3-0-6, Josh Murphy 5-2-12, Jeff McClellan 0-6-6, Laner Bills 4-0-8, Lamont 0-3-3, Dan Pierce 2-0-4, totals 27-22-76.

3-point goals: Hetirck, Patterson, Willer.

Record: Ross 3-1.

Ross bounces back to whip Harding;

News-Messenger reports

Ross bounced back from 41-point loss to Toledo St. Francis Tuesday to defeat Marion Harding 52-34 Saturday night in a high school boys basketball game at Marion.

In other games Saturday, Lakota ripped St. Wendelin 74-49, Genoa nipped Calvert 75-69, Norwalk stopped Oak Harbor 78-71 and New Riegel defeated Bettsville 105-74.

"We played a good floor game," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said. "We did have some mental mistakes but we did a good job of bouncing back after that devastating loss at St. Francis."

Chris Wolfe and Todd Clark paced the Little Giants' fourth win in five games with 16 and 17 points, respectively. Jeff Green added 10.

Wolfe also grabbed 11 rebounds as Ross held a commanding 37-20 edge.

"Todd hit some key baskets on transitions that gave us breathing room in the first half," Gioffre said.

"Defensively, we played very well. We forced them do a lot of things they did not want to do in their half-court offense," the Ross coach said. "We contained their guards (Oliver) Hardman and (Alfonzo) Simms — they were impressive when I scouted them 2 weeks ago — but they did not hurt us all."

Hardman and Simms topped the Presidents, 1-5, with nine points apiece.

Ross was 18-of-40 from the floor and 15-of-22 at the line. The Little Giants had 10 turnovers. Harding was 15-of-39 shooting, 4-of-9 at the foul line. The Presidents had 16 turnover.

Tuesday, Ross will host Toledo Whitmer.

"Whitmer has a young ball club," Gioffre said. "They are inexperienced but a play hard,

Boys Basketball

somewhat like Marion. We will have to pick up the tempo of the game.

Genoa.....75
Calvert.....69

Genoa picked up its second win in as many nights.

The Comets, 2-5, had five players score in double figures against the Senecas, 2-3. Sy Gladden finished with 13 points, followed by Todd Bullock and Pat Jones with 12 each and Andrew Gladden and Tim Plantz with 10 apiece.

Genoa led 16-15 after one period and 35-34 at halftime. The Comets outscored Calvert 17-16 in the third quarter and 23-19 in the fourth.

Bullock's 3-point basket with one minute left gave the Comets a five-point lead.

The Comets shot 41 percent

(24-of-58) and made 26 of 38 foul shots. Bullock pulled down 12 rebounds to help Genoa to a 43-34 advantage. Both teams finished with 22 turnovers.

Lakota.....74
St. Wendelin.....49

At Kansas, the Raiders improved to 6-1 and dropped St. Wendelin to 3-4.

Brian Boze connected for a game-high 23 points for Lakota, which also got 15 points and 13 rebounds from Eli Arbogast and 12 points from Mark Hiser.

Rusty Heinsman led the losers with 20 points.

The Raiders shot 55 percent (28-of-51) and 14-of-19 from the free throw line, while outrebounding their opponent 40-31.

Norwalk.....78
Oak Harbor.....71

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SUPREME

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 52, Harding 34

Score by quarters

Ross	8	14	10	20	— 52
Harding	3	8	6	17	— 34

Scoring

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 6-4-16, Todd Clark 6-4-17, Nick Wolf 2-2-6, Joe Frazier 0-2-2, Jeff Green 4-2-10, Ryan Zimmerman 0-1-1, totals 18-15-52.

HARDING — Ryan Day 2-0-4, Oliver Hardman 2-0-4, Jeff Scott 0-2-2, Jason Klepzig 4-1-9, Brian Musser 1-0-2, Alfonzo Simms 4-1-9, John Ross 2-0-4, totals 15-4-34.

3-point goals: Clark.

Records: Ross 4-1, Harding 1-5.

Harding JV 46, Ross 42

Score by quarters

Ross	14	6	5	17	— 42
Harding	12	9	12	13	— 46

Scoring

ROSS — Mike Patterson 4-0-9, Jon Hetrick 5-1-13, Brian Myers 1-1-4, Shane Willer 1-0-3, Jason Zilles 1-0-2, Ty Williams 5-1-11, totals 17-3-42.

HARDING — Turner 2-2-6, Wallace 3-2-8, Swihart 1-0-2, Scott 3-1-7, Conant 0-1-1, Allen 5-3-13, Ross 4-1-9, totals 18-10-46.

3-point goals: Patterson, Myers, Willer, Hetrick 2.

Records: Ross 3-2.

Ross survives Whitmer scare

Little Giants win 65-55

By TIM HARMON
Staff writer

A hustling group of Panthers gave Fremont Ross a scare Tuesday night, but the Little Giants earned a 65-55 non-league victory over Toledo Whitmer.

"I thought we outlasted them for three quarters," Whitmer coach Bruce Anderson said. "In the first quarter, we came out flat. We didn't anticipate their size and their shooting skills."

Ross, 5-1, jumped to a 14-0 lead but fought off a Whitmer rally.

"When the scoreboard said zero, zero, zero," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said is when he knew the Little Giants had their fifth win.

Mark Gottron started the early Ross run with two jump shots, including a 3-pointer. Gottron also fed Chris Wolfe for a layup and a 3-pointer before Justin Keller's 8-footer in the lane got Whitmer on the scoreboard.

Wolfe led all scorers with 26 points, while Keller led Whitmer with 17.

"Our game plan was transition," Gioffre said. "Rebound, push the ball up the floor and fill the lanes."

The Little Giants collected 21 first-half rebounds as Whitmer missed 23-of-32 shots in the first half. Ross finished with a 35-17 rebounding advantage as Jeff Green pulled down 12 to go with his 14 points off the bench.

"We wanted to take advantage of missed shots," Gioffre said. "They shot well in the second half and took away the break."

Ross made 16-of-29 shots in the first half and led 20-10 after a quarter and 41-24 at halftime. The Little Giants finished the night 25-of-47 against Whitmer's match-up zone.

"The match-up is live-and-die with us," Anderson said. "In the first half, they hit the low man (low post) and hit the high man (Wolfe). We made an adjustment at halftime, and they only hurt us once in the second half."

Whitmer, 2-6, made 11-of-30 shots in the second half. The

Panthers, who finished the night 20-of-62 from the field, cut Ross's lead to 51-45 after three quarters.

"We didn't do a very good job rotating to the basketball on the help side," Gioffre said. "We tried not to let them have any open shots, but they are a good shooting ballclub."

Greg Common and Don Warren sandwiched 3-pointers around a 3-pointer by Nick Wolf to start the fourth quarter, and the Panthers made it 54-53 with 5:37 left in the game on a put-back by Charlie Ulrich.

"There was no doubt," Anderson said of Whitmer's prospects of winning at that point. "The momentum was there."

After Ulrich's basket, though, Whitmer missed eight of its next nine shots. The Panthers missed several opportunities after Ross turnovers.

"We made too many turnovers in the third quarter," Gioffre said. "We made some mistakes and didn't get the ball into the low post, and that's our strength."

Ross committed 16 turnovers in the game, including five in the first and third quarters. Whitmer did not commit a turnover after turning it over three times in the first quarter.

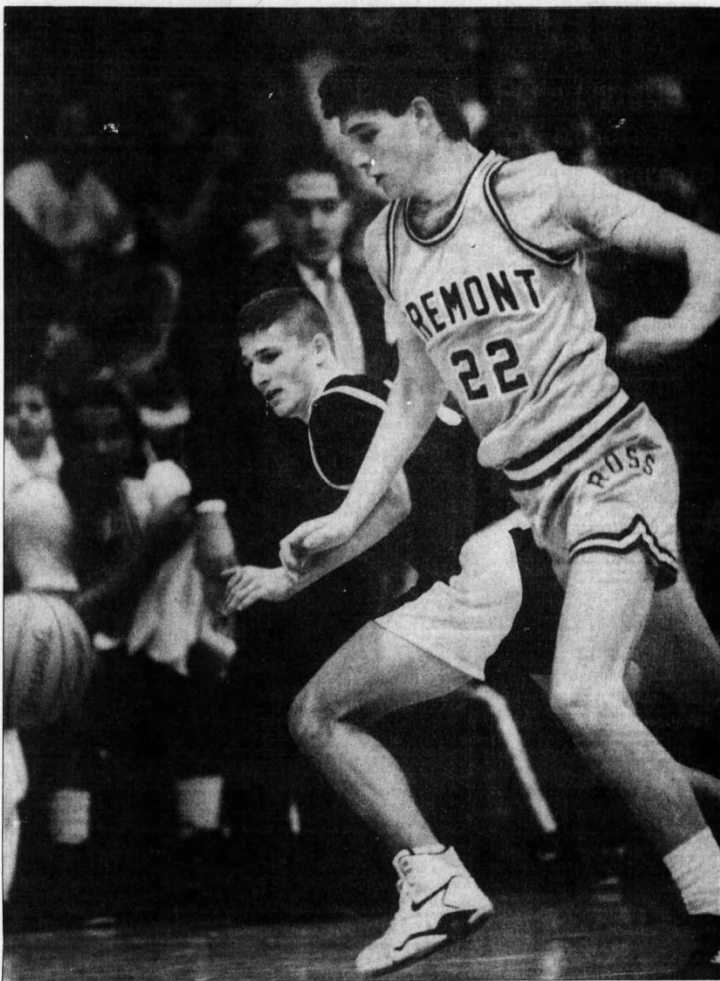
Anderson said the Panthers average 25 turnovers per game.

Green hit a turnaround shot from 12-feet after Ulrich's basket. Wolfe followed with a jumper along the right baseline to make it 58-53.

The Panthers' last basket was a layup by Common with 1:25 remaining, cutting the Little Giants' lead to 59-55.

Wolfe's layup with 55 seconds left made it 61-55. Wolfe also made two free throws with 41 seconds left.

Todd Clark's two foul shots sealed the win with 25 seconds left. Clark, normally a starter, did not play in the first half because of a deep thigh bruise, played part of the third quarter and the fourth periods.



News-Messenger/Terry Reimer

CHRIS WOLFE (22) of Fremont Ross and Toledo Whitmer's Justin Keller chase a loose ball Tuesday night.

Wolfe scored 26 points in the Little Giants' 65-55 victory over the Panthers.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 65, Whitmer 55

Score by quarters

Whitmer	10	14	21	10	— 55
Ross	20	21	10	14	— 65

Scoring

WHITMER — Don Warren 2-0-6, Justin Keller 5-7-17, Greg Common 3-2-9, Charlie Ulrich 2-2-6, Craig Block 4-0-9, Corey McIlhargey 2-0-4, Ryan Wolf 2-0-4, totals 20-11-55.

ROSS — Mark Gottron 2-1-6, Mark Sheidler 1-0-2, Nick Wolf 2-2-7, Chris Wolfe 9-6-26, Damon Walker 1-0-2, Hector Rodriguez 2-0-4, Todd Clark 0-2-2, Joe Frazier 1-0-2, Jeff Green 7-0-14, totals 25-11-65.

3-point goals: Warren 2, Common, Block, Gottron, N. Wolf, Wolfe 2.

Records; Whitmer 2-6, Ross 5-1.

Ross JV 61, Whitmer 52

Score by quarters

Whitmer	15	11	10	16	— 61
Ross	12	8	21	20	— 52

Scoring

WHITMER — Jasiri Green 2-0-4, Kevin McIlhargey 6-5-19, Mark Roby 0-2-2, Rhett Boyd 1-3-5, Casey Jacobs 1-0-2, A.J. Coates 4-0-8, Ahren Jacobs 2-0-4, Darnell Mays 1-0-2, totals 20-10-52.

ROSS — Jon Hetrick 3-0-6, Moe Myers 2-0-4, Jason Zilles 1-0-2, Allen Dorsey 4-0-8, Tyronne Williams 3-4-10, Scott Root 3-0-6, Alec Shawl 2-0-6, Ryan Zimmerman 8-3-19, totals 26-7-61.

3-point goals: McIlhargey 2, Shawl 2.

Records: Whitmer 3-5, Ross 4-2.

Ross rests after win over BG

By BOB MARKER
Staff Writer

BOWLING GREEN — Christmas has arrived none too early for Frank Gioffre.

"I'm glad," Gioffre said while breathing a sigh of relief, "that Christmas vacation is coming; we need a couple days off ... bad."

A passerby may have thought Gioffre's Fremont Ross High School boys basketball team had lost, but the opposite was true — the Little Giants shook off a sluggish start for a 57-49 win over Bowling Green.

It was a win, Gioffre conceded, but the break may be more enjoyable after his team's sixth win in seven games. Bowling Green slipped to 1-5.

Andy Tracy and Tony Kramp scored Bowling Green's first nine points as the Bobcats rolled ahead 9-2 over the complacent Little Giants.

"We started out really slow," Gioffre said. "We missed some key opportunities in the beginning of the game and they came out, did the things they had to do to jump out early on us."

"We fought back the whole time, but they outhustled us — that's about four games in a row where we have been outhustled."

BG coach Mike Vannett said, "We gave them everything they asked for ... they knew they were in a basketball game."

Ross chipped away at the Bobcat lead, catching them at 23 on Chris Wolfe's 3-point goal with 1:55 remaining in the first half. Pete Kramp put BG up by two again but Wolfe scored from in close, was fouled and made the free throw for a 26-25 Ross lead with 1:07 left.

Tony Kramp's free throw tied it again but Jeff Green scored on a layup, was fouled and canned the free throw with nine seconds left, putting Ross ahead for good.

"That is the best job we have done this year against a good basketball team of executing our offense," Vannett said, "especially against a team that

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

changes its defense so much.”

In the second half, Ross began to get the ball inside after quickly reversing its offense. Green benefited most, scoring 10 of his 19 points as Ross increased its halftime lead to 41-31. The Little Giants led 47-40 after three quarters.

In the third quarter, Ross turned its defense up a notch, forcing a pair of 10-second calls on the Bobcats — capitalizing on both.

Bowling Green had the ball, trailing 33-31, when the first 10-second call hit them. Wolfe followed with a bucket. A minute later, Green scored after the second violation for a 39-31 Ross lead.

“For the most part, for 29 minutes” Vannett said, “Out kids did not get rattled. The two 10-second calls hurt us; we could have made it a three or four-point ball game but they were able to get it out to seven to eight points and I think that was the difference.”

The Bobcats closed the Ross lead to 51-46 with 4:50 to play but

after a Ross timeout, Wolfe outscored the Bobcats 4-1 for a 57-47 led with just under a minute to play.

Wolfe and Green had 19 points apiece for Ross. Nick Wolf had seven with Todd Clark and Mark Gottron adding six each as only five Little Giants scored.

Tracy scored 22 points, 12 on 3-point buckets, for Bowling Green. Tony Kramp added 11.

Gioffre said he will give his team the next two days off.

“We’ll come back Monday real light,” he said. “These kids need a break; we need a break from each other for awhile.”

Ross 57, B. Green 49

Score by quarters

Ross	10	19	18	10	— 57
Bowling Green	14	12	14	9	— 49

Scoring

ROSS — Mark Gotttron 3-0-6, Chris Wolfe 8-2-19, Todd Clark 3-0-6, Nick Wolf 3-1-7, Jeff Green 7-5-19, totals 24-8-57.

BOWLING GREEN — Matt Hover 1-0-2, Kevin Wolfe 2-0-4, Dave Burkle 1-0-2, Chris Flynn 1-0-2, Andy Tracy 6-6-22, Tony Kramp 4-3-11, Pete Kramp 2-2-6, totals 17-11-49.

3-point goals: Wolfe, Tracy 4.

Records: Ross 6-1, B. Green 1-5.

B. Green JVs 46, Ross 44

Score by quarters

Ross	8	11	9	16	— 44
Bowling Green	13	9	7	17	— 46

Scoring

ROSS — Jon Hetrick 5-0-12, Mike Patterson 3-0-7, Bobby Carter 1-0-2, Allen Dorsey 3-1-7, Tryone Williams 3-0-6, Alec Shawl 2-0-4, Ryan Zimmerman 3-0-6, totals 20-1-44.

BOWLING GREEN — Matt Carek 3-1-8, Shawn McMahon 5-1-13, Jimmie Butler 2-1-5, Ben Gedeon 2-0-4, Ryan Schneider 4-4-12, Dave Sullivan 2-0-4, totals 18-7-46.

3-point goals: Hetrick 2, Patterson, Carek, McMahon 2.

Records: B. Green 2-4, Ross 4-3.

Lancaster beats Ross

By **BOB MARKER**
Staff writer

It was a game of cliches and points and Lancaster won in all phases.

The key phase was Lancaster 58, Ross 50 in the Buckeye Central Conference opener for the Little Giants Friday night in the Ross Purple Pit.

Lancaster, 8-0 and 3-0 in the BCC, danced with the gal that it had waltzed with to seven straight wins entering the game while Ross left its steady date on the sidelines.

Patience was a virtue for the Golden Gales while the Little Giants scorned it.

"Our biggest problem tonight," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said as he sorted out the thoughts in his mind, "was we were very impatient. We did not do the things that had gotten us here with six wins."

Greg Cave, after a verbal lecture from coach Jack Greathouse midway through the first quarter, led four Golden Gales in double figures with 19 points.

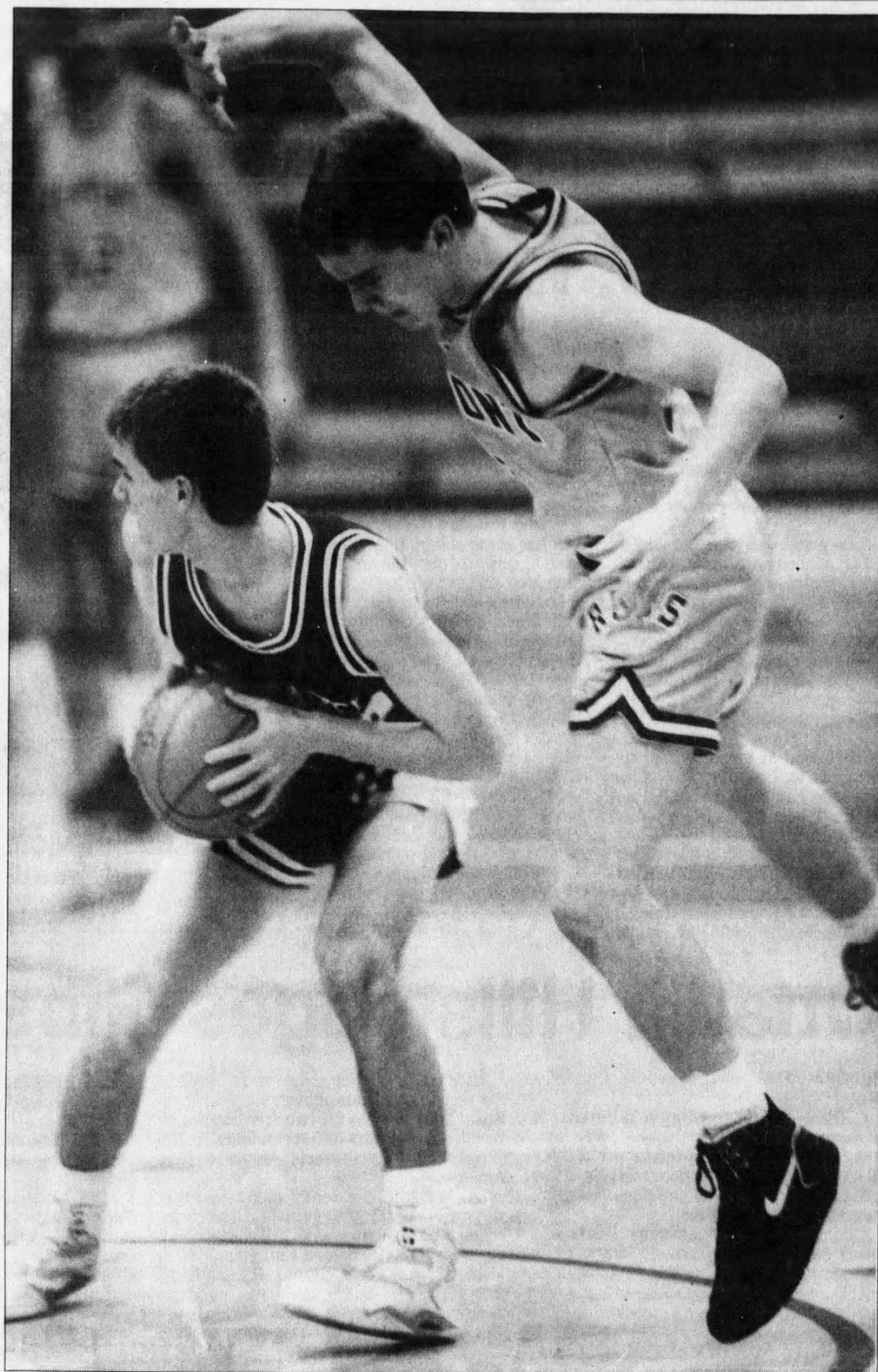
Bob Spieth, who hit 6-of-9 free throws in the final quarter, and Kenny Muck scored 11 points each and Tim Henwood added 10.

"I did not think Greg was performing up to his capabilities," Greathouse said, "... but I don't think either team played real well and I'm sure Frank will tell you the same thing; it certainly wasn't one of our top performances."

Lancaster led Ross, make that Jeff Green, 8-6 after one quarter. Green, a 6-7 senior who battled the 6-8 Cave all evening, was the only Little Giant close to the scoring column in the first eight minutes, scoring all of the first-quarter points. Green finished with 11 points and a game-high 12 rebounds.

But Cave, fresh from the intense Greathouse lecture, and Muck spurred the Golden Gales to a 13 unanswered points and a 21-6 lead. Ross, sinking just 6-of-24 first-half shots, was fortunate

See ROSS, B2



News-Messenger/Terry Reimer

SAILING BY. Mark Sheidler, right, of Fremont Ross flies past Neil Snider of Lancaster during

Friday night's game at Ross High School. Lancaster won 58-50.

Ross

Continued From B1

to trail by only a 27-16 count at the half.

"The tempo was in our favor because no one was making a lot of shots," Greathouse said. "Both teams were cold. When that happens, we are more of a patient team than what they are because we feel with our kids, we have to be a little more patient."

Gioffre said, "I don't know what happened. We were just trying to take our time, work the basketball in a half-court set, pound it inside, but we just didn't do anything. All of a sudden, we started shooting jumpers from everywhere."

In the second half, the jumpers began to fall, often enough to shrink Lancaster's once-comfortable lead to a narrow 36-32 margin on Nick Wolf's 3-point bucket with 1:55 remaining in the third quarter.

That was as close as Ross was to get. Cave knocked in two free throws — he made 9-of-10 in the game — putting Lancaster up 38-32 at the end of three quarters.

Wolf's bucket closed the gap to four early in the final period but Cave hit from in close — the Golden Gales' final field goal — and followed it with four straight free throws, putting Ross down 46-36 with 5½ minutes to play.

Muck hit a pair of foul shots after Todd Clark hit 1-of-2 for Ross for a 49-37 Lancaster league before Spieth kept the Little Giants at arm's length with his free throw barrage.

Wolf scored with two minutes to play, but Ross did not score again until after the Golden Gales had built a 57-40 advantage. Alec Shawl and Clark drilled 3-point shots, Clark and Ryan Zimmerman hit a basket apiece to make the final score deceptive.

Ross finished with 19-of-55 from the floor and Lancaster 18-of-48. Lancaster made 19-of-27 free throws.

Clark finished with 18 points and Wolf 12. Chris Wolfe, who entered the game with a 17.7 scoring average, was held to two points.

"We had no enthusiasm to night," Gioffre said sullenly. "It was lack of effort on our part."

The Little Giants have a chance to bounce back quickly, hosting Tiffin Columbian this evening.

Basketball

High School Boys

Lancaster 58, Ross 50

Score by quarters

Lancaster	8	19	11	20	— 58
Ross	6	10	16	18	— 50

Scoring

LANCASTER — Tim Henwood 5-0-10, Bob Spieth 2-6-11, Greg Cave 5-9-19, Kenny Muck 4-1-11, Bill Dilley 0-0-0, J.J. Searls 1-1-3, Neil Snider 1-1-3, Jamie Garverick 0-1-1, totals 18-19-58.

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 1-0-2, Nick Wolf 5-0-12, Jeff Green 5-1-11, Mark Sheidler 0-0-0, Todd Clark 5-6-18, Joe Frazier 1-0-2, Ryan Zimmerman 1-0-2, Alec Shawl 1-0-3, totals 19-7-50.

3-point goals: Spieth, Muck 2, Wolf 2, Clark 2, Shawl.

Records: Lancaster 8-0 (3-0), Ross 6-2 (0-1).

Ross JVs 62, Lancaster 58

Score by quarters

Lancaster	12	15	8	23	— 58
Ross	13	12	19	18	— 62

Scoring

LANCASTER — Mike Woolard 0-2-2, Scott Miller 4-4-12, Scott Burre 3-7-13, Matt Hilliard 2-0-4, Steve Poston 4-2-10, Bill Luse 1-1-3, fLarry Freeman 6-2-14, totals 20-18-58.

ROSS — Alex Shawl 1-0-2, Ryan Zimmerman 5-4-14, Jon Hetrick 2-2-7, Mike Patterson 2-4-8, Brian Wilson 3-0-6, Bryan Myers 1-0-3, Bobby Carter 2-1-5, Shane Willer 1-0-2, Jason Zilles 1-0-2, Allen Dorsey 1-0-0-2, Tyrone Williams 3-1-7, Scott Root 2-4-12-62.

3-point goals: Hetrick, Myers.

Records: Ross 5-3, Lancaster 7-1.

Lancaster beats Ross

By **BOB MARKER**

Staff writer

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The key phase was Lancaster 58, Ross 50 in the Buckeye Central Conference opener for the Little Giants Friday night in the Ross Purple Pit.

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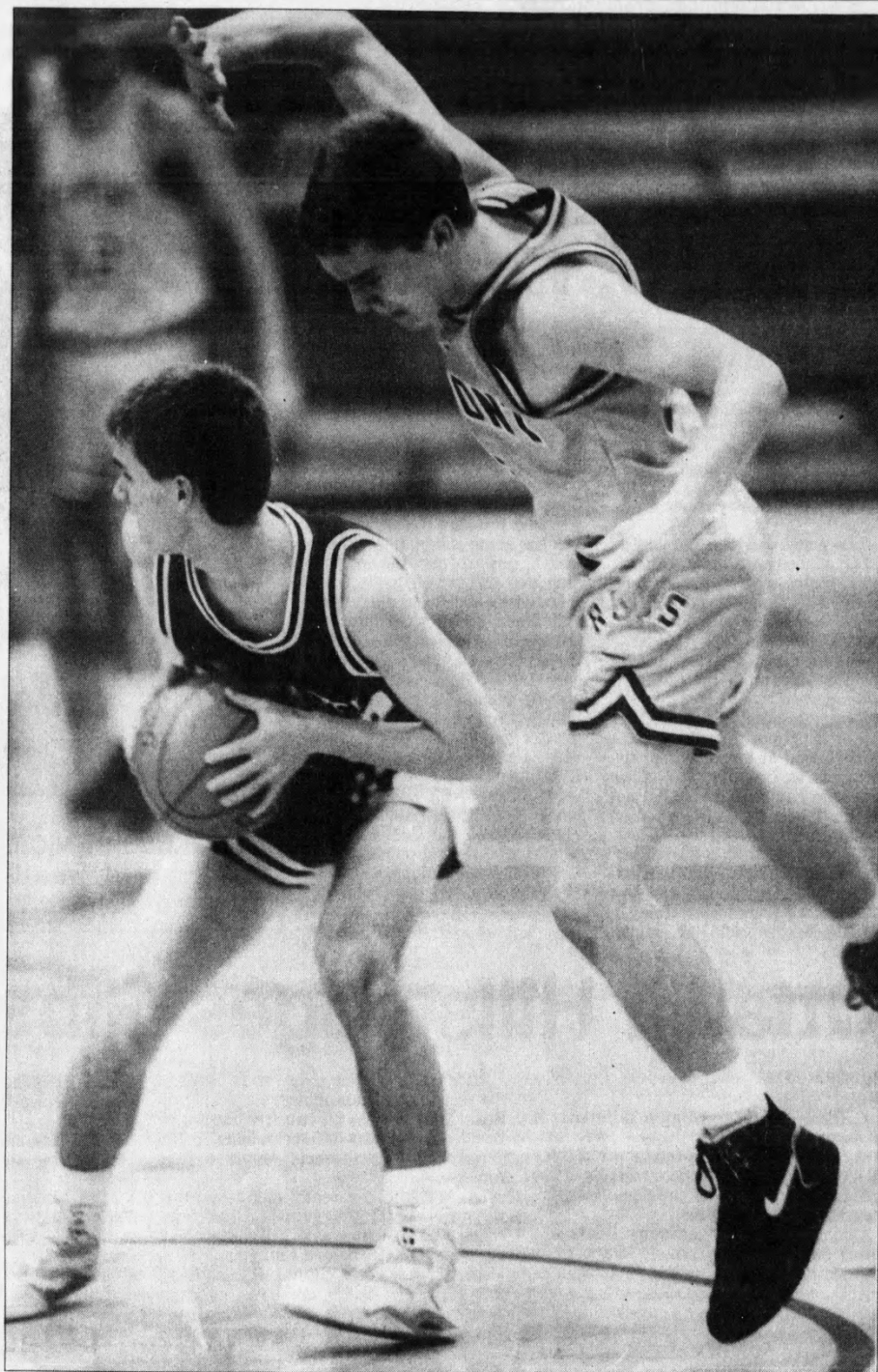
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See ROSS, B2



News-Messenger/Terry Reimer

SAILING BY. Mark Sheidler, right, of Fremont Ross flies past Neil Snider of Lancaster during

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Ross

Continued From B1

to trail by only a 27-16 count at the half.

"The tempo was in our favor because no one was making a lot of shots," Greathouse said. "Both teams were cold. When that happens, we are more of a patient team than what they are because we feel with our kids, we have to be a little more patient."

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In the second half, the jumpers began to fall, often enough to shrink Lancaster's once-comfortable lead to a narrow 36-32 margin on Nick Wolf's 3-point bucket with 1:55 remaining in the third quarter.

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Basketball

High School Boys

Lancaster 58, Ross 50

Score by quarters

Lancaster	8	19	11	20	— 58
Ross	6	10	16	18	— 50

Scoring

LANCASTER — Tim Henwood 5-0-10, Bob Spieth 2-6-11, Greg Cave 5-9-19, Kenny Muck 4-1-11, Bill Dilley 0-0-0, J.J. Searls 1-1-3, Neil Snider 1-1-3, Jamie Garverick 0-1-1, totals 18-19-58.

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 1-0-2, Nick Wolf 5-0-12, Jeff Green 5-1-11, Mark Sheidler 0-0-0, Todd Clark 5-6-18, Joe Frazier 1-0-2, Ryan Zimmerman 1-0-2, Alec Shawl 1-0-3, totals 19-7-50.

3-point goals: Spieth, Muck 2, Wolf 2, Clark 2, Shawl.

Records: Lancaster 8-0 (3-0), Ross 6-2 (0-1).

Ross JVs 62, Lancaster 58

Score by quarters

Lancaster	12	15	8	23	— 58
Ross	13	12	19	18	— 62

Scoring

LANCASTER — Mike Woolard 0-2-2, Scott Miller 4-4-12, Scott Burre 3-7-13, Matt Hilliard 2-0-4, Steve Poston 4-2-10, Bill Luse 1-1-3, fLarry Freeman 6-2-14, totals 20-18-58.

ROSS — Alex Shawl 1-0-2, Ryan Zimmerman 5-4-14, Jon Hetrick 2-2-7, Mike Patterson 2-4-8, Brian Wilson 3-0-6, Bryan Myers 1-0-3, Bobby Carter 2-1-5, Shane Willer 1-0-2, Jason Zilles 1-0-2, Allen Dorsey 1-0-0-2, Tyrone Williams 3-1-7, Scott Root 24-12-62.

3-point goals: Hetrick, Myers.

Records: Ross 5-3, Lancaster 7-1.

Quick start propels Little Giants to 7th victory

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

A quick start took the sting out of a "miss parade" Saturday night as Fremont Ross outscored Tiffin Columbian 62-52 in high school boys basketball.

The Little Giants, 7-2, behind a trio of 3-point buckets and 11 first quarter points by Todd Clark, charged to a 24-8 first quarter advantage. The cushion held up as Columbian, despite a strong performance off the bench by Findlay High School transfer Vince Perrine, was unable to cut the deficit to single figures until less than two minutes remained in the game.

Ross was unable to put the Tornadoes, 3-5, away, missing 11 of 18 free throws in the final quarter.

"Those are golden opportunities for us to step up to the line and put the game away," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said, "but

there is something about this team — I don't know if it is lack of concentration; I know it is not lack of practice.

"...there are still too many mental mistakes," Gioffre continued. "We had a chance to put them away but we let them back in."

The Tornadoes, though, joined the "miss parade," making only three of its dozen final quarter foul shots.

Ross coach Frank Gioffre, smarting from his team's 58-50 lackluster loss to Buckeye Central Conference foe Lancaster Friday, juggled his starting lineup. Chris Wolfe, the Little Giants' leading scorer (15.8) who was held to two points Friday, and Mark Sheidler were out of the starting lineup. Justin Perry took over Sheidler's guard slot and Damon Walker was in Wolfe's wing slot.

"It was a little bit (of a mes-

sage)," Gioffre admitted, "but I wanted to see what Damon and J.P. (Perry) could do. I knew what Damon could do — he did not start last night but I wanted to get him back in the lineup because he plays so hard."

Wolfe took the message to heart, coming off the bench late in the first quarter to score four points and finished with a game-high 20 points to go with a dozen rebounds. The 6-7 senior's only apparent problem was at the foul line where he was 8-of-14, including 3-of-7 in the final quarter.

Wolfe added seven points in the second quarter as the Ross lead increased to 38-18 at the half.

"I'll tell you who had a great game was Justin Perry," Gioffre said. "He did a lot of the little things we have been looking for someone to do."

Perry had seven points and five rebounds.

"I also thought Todd Clark did a great job shooting and controlling the tempo of the game in the first half," Gioffre said.

Clark made his first four shots — three of them 3-pointers — and finished with 17 points. The four-year starter and the Little Giants' top free throw shooter, had his problems at the line in the final quarter, making just 3-of-7.

Jeff Green turned in 13 rebounds to lead Ross to a 50-37 edge and added nine points. Columbian was hurt in the rebounding game when 6-5 senior Jeff Kuhn was forced out of the game early in the first quarter because of an ankle injury.

"Obviously," Columbian coach Robert Nocton said, "we got a kid (Kuhn) who averages about eight rebounds a game and who is an important player, so when the 6-5 kid went down, it really created problems...we were guarding a team who had two

big guys and it was tough to keep them off the boards."

Nocton, who was charged with a technical foul early in the fourth quarter, was not happy with the officiating.

"I usually try to avoid being very critical," he said, "but I really felt we had some very interesting officiating that added to our problems."

Trailing 47-32 after three quarters, Columbian rallied in the final eight minutes, closing to 58-49 on a Mike Betz basket with 1:55 to play. Mark Gottron hit 1-of-2 free throws to put Ross back up by 10 before Columbian's Joe Lundy made a free throw to make it 59-50 with 1:32 remaining. It was academic after that with both teams trading missed free throws until Clark nailed the front end of a 1-and-1 with 24 seconds left. Wolfe followed with a bucket to polish off the win.

Perrine, a long-distance shot

specialist Findlay his sophomore and junior years, saw his first action for Columbian, responding with a team-high 15 points. The 6-2 senior is recovering from an ankle stress fracture suffered late in the football season. Nocton played him in two-minute intervals.

Despite the failure to put the game away early, Gioffre saw improvement in the wake of Friday's disappointing loss.

"We shot the ball really well in the first half (12-for-27)," the Ross coach said. "We did everything we wanted to do in the first half; we ran our halfcourt offense; we were very patient. Really, I think our kids came out fired up to play basketball tonight."

The fire may have to be hotter Friday when Ross travels to Newark, winner of three straight Buckeye Central Conference titles.

Ross 62, Columbian 52

Score by quarters

Columbian	8	10	14	20	—	52
Ross	24	12	11	15	—	62

Scoring

COLUMBIAN — Matt Fawcett 4-0-8, Chris Neukon 2-1-6, Jeff Kuhn 0-0-0, Jeff Fey 2-1-5, Mike Betz 6-0-12, Joe Lundy 1-1-4, Vince Perrine 6-1-15, Aaron Reidling 1-0-2, totals 22-3-52.

ROSS — Damon Walker 0-0-0, Nick Wolf 4-0-8, Jeff Green 3-3-9, Todd Clark 5-3-17, Justin Perry 1-3-5, Mark Gotttron 0-1-1, Ryan Zimmerman 1-0-2, totals 20-18-62.

3-point goals: Neukon, Fey, Lundy, Perrine 2, Clark 4.

Records: Ross 7-2, Columbian 3-5.

Ross JVs 53, Columb. 48

Score by quarters

Columbian	8	12	18	10	—	48
Ross	19	14	8	12	—	53

Scoring

COLUMBIAN — Ken Reinbolt 0-1-1, Brian McNulty 5-0-10, Nate McClung 2-0-4, Jeff Hoover 0-2-2, Eric Bryant 8-5-21, John Bolte 2-0-4, Chris Bowlin 1-0-2, totals 20-8-48.

ROSS — Alec Shawl 3-0-7, Ryan Zimmerman 10-0-20, Jon Hetrick 7-0-14, Bobby Carter 2-0-4, Shane Willer 2-1-5, Tyrone Williams 1-1-3, totals 25-2-53.

3-point goals: Shawl.

Records: Ross 6-3, Columbian 4-4.

Ross tries to round into form at Newark

By TIM HARMON
Staff writer

The Fremont Ross boys basketball team is still searching for an identity as it prepares for a trip to Newark Friday night for a Buckeye Central Conference game against the Wildcats.

"I think we're still learning, which is kind of good for us," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said. "We're getting better, but we have a big test this week."

The Little Giants, 0-1 in the BCC, have meandered their way to seven wins in nine games so

far. The losses came in Toledo to a powerful St. Francis squad and at home last Friday against undefeated BCC foe Lancaster.

"We've had a few chances to put games in our hands, but we're missing free throws and we're making mental mistakes," Gioffre said. "I think we can still improve. I'm pleased and think we can peak come tournament time."

Gioffre has used six different starting lineups this season.

"We're still looking for some key people," he said. "I want to

give everybody a good look."

Most notably, Gioffre said he is looking for a reliable guard to team with point guard Todd Clark.

"We're going to give Justin Perry another look," he said.

"He's doing a lot of the little things well and he played well against Tiffin Columbian."

Ross defeated the Tornadoes 62-52 Saturday night.

Clark and Perry will be joined in the starting lineup by Jeff Green, Nick Wolf and Chris Wolfe. Wolf has been ill and if he

can't play Friday, Damon Walker will start at forward.

Newark, 5-4 and 1-1 in the BCC after a 66-65 loss at Findlay last Friday, is led by 6-foot-8 senior center Jeff Quackenbush and 6-foot-1 junior guard Bob Sellers.

"Those kids are outstanding basketball players," Gioffre said.

Quackenbush, who has signed to play at St. Bonaventure University, and Sellers are averaging 24 and 17 points per game, respectively.

No other Wildcat is averaging

more than five points per game for coach Gary Walters.

"(Walters) has got some role players just like us and he needs for them to come through for them to be a good basketball team," Gioffre said. "We need the same type of things to become a good team."

"We need a big game. We need to go down there and play a good basketball game."

"We need to play a sound basketball game for four quarters. If we do we'll have a chance to win in the final two minutes."

Overtime

Ross wins 64-63

News-Messenger reports

NEWARK — Fremont Ross came from 15 points down late in the third period and defeated Newark 64-63 in overtime Friday night.

The Buckeye Central Conference victory was the Little Giants' first over the Wildcats in seven games since the BCC began

play four seasons ago. Ross, 8-2, leveled its conference mark at 1-1, while Newark, the three-time defending BCC champ, slipped to 5-5 and 1-2.

"This was a big one, a big one," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said hoarsely. "We

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

needed this win big time."

Ross trailed 26-9 with less than five minutes remaining in the first half and was down by 33-19 at halftime.

"At halftime, I told the kids to stick with the game plan," Gioffre said. "We had all the shots in the first half but they would not go down; in the second half, they started to fall."

Ross was 8-for-25 from the floor in the first half and only 3-of-7 from the foul line.

Chris Wolfe, held to six points in the first half, scored 17 in the third quarter for Ross while on his way to a game-high 30.

"Our seniors really came through," Gioffre said, "especially Wolfe and Todd Clark."

"In that third quarter, I thought we could come out fired up but we had trouble, but after we got down 16 (38-22), the kids began to chip away at it. The kids were patient and did not get rattled."

Ross still trailed 45-30 with 2:30 remaining in the third period before Wolfe and Green began to pull the Little Giants back into it.

Clark had been held in check, scoring just two points the first 31 minutes of the contest. But in the final minute of regulation, Clark tossed in four points — including tying the game at 57-all with 10 seconds left.

He added five more points in the overtime.

Jeff Quackenbush, the Wildcats' 6-foot-8 senior center, put his team ahead in the extra session, scoring on a rebound. The Little Giants missed a chance of taking the lead when Jeff Green followed with a basket to tie it, was fouled, but missed the three throw.

Bobby Sellers gave Newark a 63-59, hitting a bucket and two free throws with 50 seconds remaining.

Clark took over from there.

The 6-1 senior canned a 3-pointer with 38 seconds left, cutting the deficit to 63-62. With 18 seconds on the clock, Newark's Brad Campbell missed a three throw and Wolfe rebounded.

Clark got open with eight seconds left and sank a 14-foot jumper, giving Ross its first lead 64-63.

"Our defense did the job then," Gioffre said. "We forced the kid to dribble the ball all the way down the floor; they did not get off a shot."

Ross made 18-of-34 shots in the second half and in the overtime and made 4-of-5 at the line. Newark made 20-of-52 shots and 21-of-30 at the foul line.

Only four Little Giants scored, with Wolfe topping the quartet. Green had 17 and Clark finished with 11. Hector Rodriguez came off the bench to score six. Nick Wolf, troubled by the flu all week, and Justin Perry started for the Little Giants but failed to score.

Quackenbush led Newark with 24 points. Sellers finished 20.

Ross returns to action Friday, hosting Zanesville in a BCC clash.

Ross 64, Newark 63 (OT)

Score by quarters

Ross	8	11	21	17	7	— 64
Newark	21	12	14	10	6	— 63

Scoring

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 12-2-30, Nick Wolf 0-0-0, Jeff Green 7-3-17, Todd Clark 5-0-11, Justin Perry 0-0-0, Hector Rodriguez 2-2-6, totals 26-7-64.

NEWARK — Bobby Seller 7-5-20, Jeff Quackenbush 9-6-24, T.J. Summers 1-1-4, Brett Salisbury 1-4-6, Brice Jones 1-1-3, Don Shackleford 0-3-3, Seth Deutsch 1-0-2, Brad Campbell 0-1-1, totals 20-21-63.

3-point goals: Wolfe 4, Clark, Sellers, Summers.

Records: Ross 8-2 (1-1), Newark 5-5 (1-2).

Ross 52, Newark 45

Score by quarters

Ross	4	12	17	19	— 52
Newark	10	8	11	16	— 45

Scoring

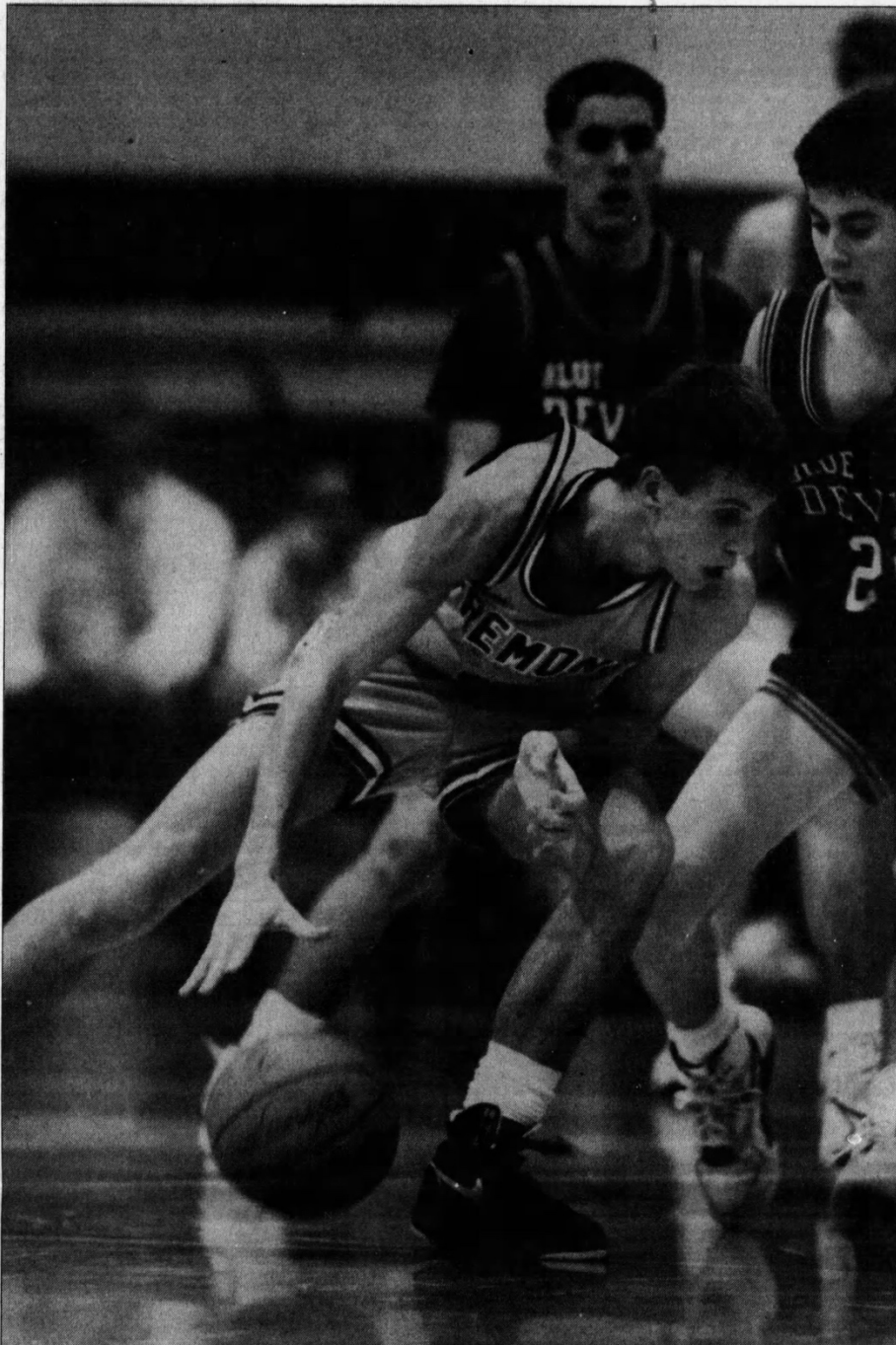
ROSS — Ryan Zimmerman 7-7-21, Jon Hetrick 5-5-16, Moe Myers 1-0-3, Jason Zilles 1-0-2, Shane Willer 0-2-2, Alec Shawl 0-1-1, Christian Tooman 1-0-2, Tyrone Williams 2-1-5, totals 17-16-52.

NEWARK — Little 1-0-2, Hollister 5-3-13, Black 2-0-4, Shackleford 1-0-2, Santa 1-0-2, Stypula 1-0-2, Pangborn 4-3-11, Vogelmyer 2-1-5, Deutsch 2-1-5, totals 19-7-45.

3-point goals: Hetrick, Myers.

Record: Ross 7-3 (2-0), Newark 4-6 (1-2)

Ross smothers Zanesville



MARK GOTTRON of Fremont Ross drives on Zanesville's Kevin Witucky Friday night.

News-Messenger/Chris Walker

Little Giants near top of BCC

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

It was balance — basketball-style.

Fremont Ross combined a smooth offensive attack with a smothering defense Friday night for a 70-54 Buckeye Central Conference boys basketball victory over Zanesville.

The Little Giants won for the ninth time in 11 games. The victory, coupled with a 68-56 Newark win over previously undefeated Lancaster, left Ross tied with Findlay at 2-1, one-half game behind Lancaster, 3-1, in the BCC race.

Chris Wolfe and Todd Clark scored 16 points apiece, Jeff Green added 12 and Nick Wolf 10 for the Little Giants, whose defense never let the Blue Devils settle into its offense.

Ross scored the first 13 points of the game, rolling to a 23-9 first-quarter lead. Wolfe scored eight points and Wolf added six in the period.

At the same time, a suffocating man-to-man by Ross held Zanesville's leading scorer, Kevin Witucky, scoreless in the opening eight minutes.

"That was a big key in the game," Zanesville coach Scott Aronhalt said. "He is our only returning kid with playing experience, but I keep telling our kids that we are at a point in the season where we cannot use that immaturity as an excuse anymore."

Mike Lightfoot got Zanesville, 5-7 and 0-4 in the BCC, on the board with a short shot from the left side nearly five minutes into the game. Lightfoot finished with 10 points.

"We wanted to get the basketball inside right away and that is what we did," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said. "We got some easy baskets at the beginning and our confidence level took off."

Wolfe, a 6-foot-7 senior, scored on three rebound shots as Ross

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

outrebounded the Blue Devils 12-2 in the first quarter. Wolfe finished with 15 rebounds and Green, also 6-7, grabbed 11 as Ross held a 38-29 rebounding lead.

"Chris Wolfe did a fantastic job on the boards, got some easy baskets and got the tempo in our favor right away," Gioffre said.

Said Aronholt, "(The inside game) was like the men against the boys, but that has been a problem for us. I felt we were a little intimidated at first. What we wanted to do was square up and use our quickness against those big people; we tried to take it at them at first and I don't think we got some calls, but physical strength was the bottom line."

Only in the second quarter did the Ross offense falter.

"I think we got kind of passive going into the second quarter with that big lead," Gioffre said.

Witucky broke away from Ross, scoring 12 of the Devil's 18 points as the Ross lead slipped to 34-27 at halftime.

Clark's 3-point basket with five seconds left in the half gave the Little Giants breathing room after four consecutive free throws by Witucky cut the Ross lead to 31-27.

Gioffre resorted to trickery in the third quarter to cool off Witucky, who had entered the game averaging nearly 20 points.

"Witucky is such a good player," Gioffre said, "that he can shoot the three or he can go by you on the dribble. Coach (assistant Jim) Morgan and coach (junior varsity coach Mark) Gedeon, half time, said, 'Hey, let's try a box-and-one,' so we tried it and contained him for a little bit."

With the trick defense in place, Witucky was held scoreless and added just a basket in the final period, finishing the game with 14. Ross steadily pulled away in that span.

"I think the deal with Kevin (Witucky)," Aronholt said, "is that Ross is so much stronger, it wore him out. Even when he got going, he tired, I thought, in the second half."

Gioffre had feared Zanesville's 3-point shooting ability but the defense allowed just three.

"We wanted to put enough pressure on them where they were going to go past us on the dribble and then we wanted our big guys (Wolfe and Green, both 6-7) to be in a help position; that is what we did," Gioffre said.

"I'll tell you what Chris Wolfe



News-Messenger/Chris Walker

DAMON WALKER (left) and Justin Perry of Fremont Ross surround Zanesville's Kevin Witucky Friday night during the Little Giants' Buckeye Central Conference victory.

does well, especially tonight, is he intimidates shots in the paint. They had a lot of opportunities from five to six feet and Chris went straight up and made them alter their shots."

Green and Perry gave Ross a 38-27 lead early in the third quarter before Zanesville closed to 39-33. The Devils got no closer after Wolfe sank two free throws and Mark Sheidler scored on a

putback for a 43-33 lead with 5:30 left in the third quarter. The lead got below 10, 54-45, only once more.

Mark Gottron gave Ross a spark at the end of the third quarter, stealing a pass and laying it in at the buzzer for a 51-36 Ross lead.

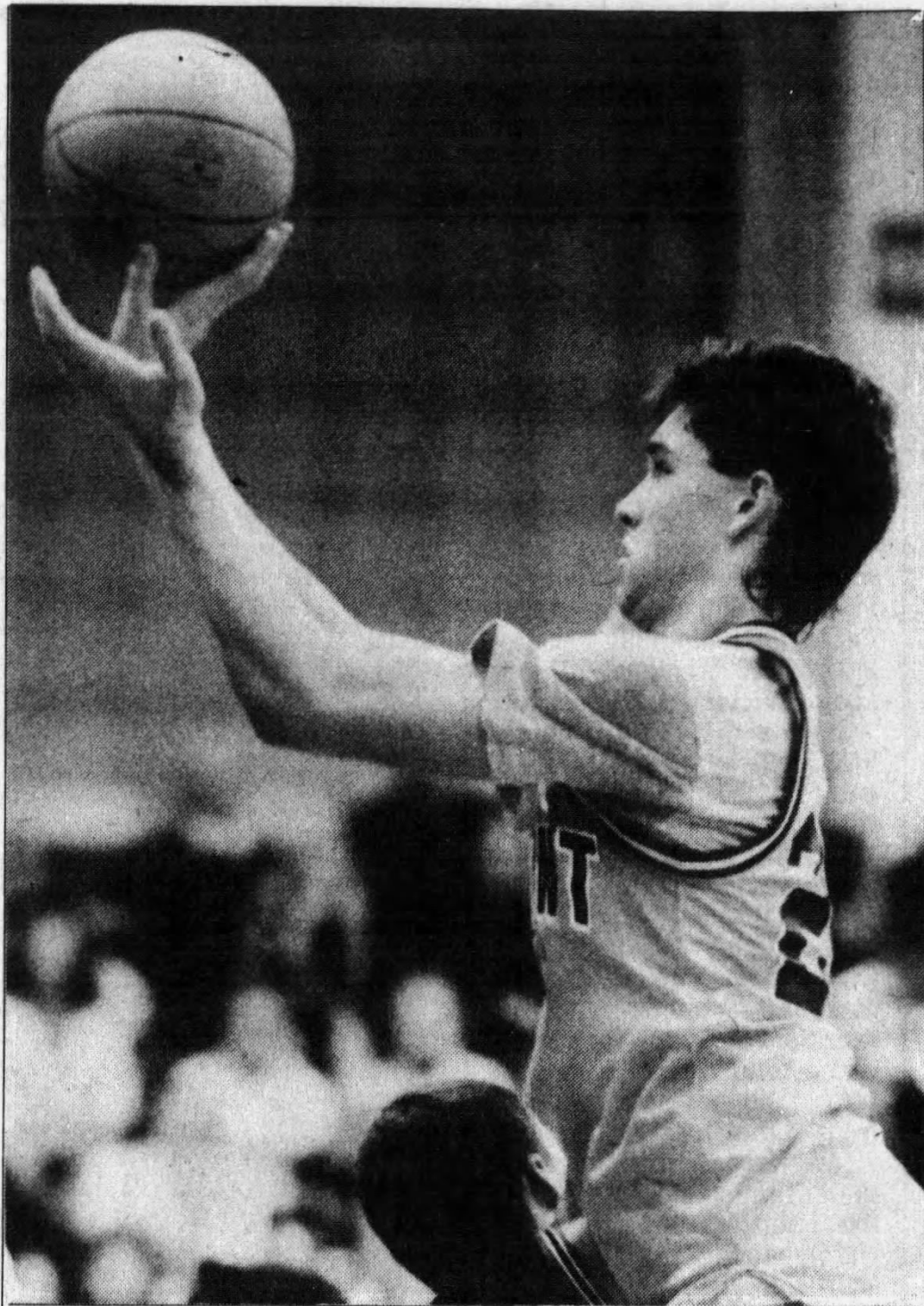
"Our kids really got fired up," Gioffre described. "They saw Mark anticipate that pass, pick

it off — they had momentum going their way a little — but when Mark laid that in, all of a sudden, it got us back into the game."

Clark scored 10 points and Green seven in the final period.

Ross made 28-of-61 shots and Zanesville 17-of-44.

The Little Giants return to action Tuesday, hosting Eastwood in a non-conference game.



News-Messenger/Chris Walker

Going up

Chris Wolfe of Ross goes up for a jump shot over a Zanesville defender Friday night in Purple Pit at Ross High School. Wolfe scored 16 points and grabbed 15 rebounds in the Little Giants' 70-54 victory.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 70, Zanesville 54

Score by quarters

Zanesville	9	18	9	18	— 54
Ross	23	11	17	19	— 70

Scoring

ZANESVILLE — Kevin Witucky 4-6-14, Brad Ziemer 3-0-8, John Langland 2-0-4, Matt Johnson 1-6-8, Michael Lightfoot 3-4-10, Reggie Newman 2-1-5, Jay Spargrove 1-0-3, Ryan Smith 1-0-2, totals 17-17-54.

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 6-4-16, Nick Wolf 5-0-10, Jeff Green 4-4-12, Todd Clark 5-5-16, Justin Perry 3-0-6, Joe Frazier 2-0-4, Mark Gottron 2-0-4, totals 28-13-70.

3-point goals: Ziemer 2, Spargrove, Clark.

Records: Zanesville 5-7 (0-4), Ross 9-2 (2-1).

Ross JV 62, Zanesville 46

Score by quarters

Zanesville	13	16	8	9	— 46
Ross	13	19	6	24	— 62

Scoring

ZANESVILLE — Kevin Knowlton 3-3-9, Rob Hodges 1-0-2, Mike Mercer 2-0-4, Andy Shirer 5-0-10, Jason Steele 3-2-8, Bryan Dickson 0-1-1, Shawn Bell 2-0-4, Chad Green 4-0-8, totals 20-6-46.

ROSS — Ryan Zimmerman 5-2-12, Jon Hetrick 3-1-8, Mike Patterson 8-1-17, Bobby Carter 1-0-2, Shane Willer 3-0-6, Jason Zilles 1-0-2, Tyrone Williams 4-2-10, Scott Root 1-1-3, Alec Shawl 1-0-2, totals 27-7-62.

3-point goals: Hetrick.

Records: Zanesville 6-6, Ross 8-3.

Ross survives Eastwood scare

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

Steve Stoller smiled in the face of defeat, while Frank Gioffre winced in the face of victory.

Stoller was upbeat after his Eastwood Eagles lost to Gioffre's Ross Little Giants 57-55 in a high school boys basketball game Tuesday night at Ross High School. Gioffre was down-cast.

"I told the kids coming in tonight, I really thought we could win," Stoller said, "but I did not want to say that to anybody but our kids."

Stoller's thoughts were nearly carried out.

Eastwood led only once, 30-29, a half minute into the second half on Gary Haas' bucket, but never trailed by more than nine.

"Did we play tonight?" Gioffre

asked, putting little stock in the fact the Little Giants may have been looking ahead to Friday's Buckeye Central Conference game at Findlay.

"I have no idea. That was a very disappointing game; we did not do the job on the offensive end or the defensive end," he said.

Stoller said, "I was hoping we would catch them looking past

us."

Ross started quickly, scoring the first four points on Jeff Green baskets, and took a 16-8 first-quarter lead.

The first quarter set the tone for the night: spurts. First Ross, then Eastwood. Eventually, the Eagles would have the last spurt, but not enough time.

Eastwood outscored Ross 9-2 in the final two minutes of the first

half and trailed 29-28.

"Our first half defense was pitiful," Gioffre said. "We could not stop the dribbler; the guy would go right by us on the dribble."

"You know we play at Findlay Friday and then at Sandusky (Jan. 26). We've got a long road ahead of us."

See ROSS, B4

Ross

Continued From B1

Eastwood nearly threw in a roadblock, but one Little Giant was able to avoid it.

Chris Wolfe, who led all scorers with 25 points, took charge of the Ross offense in the second half — scoring 19 of the Little Giants' 28 points.

Wolfe, who also grabbed 13 rebounds, scored eight points in the third quarter, giving Ross a 42-34 lead after three periods.

After falling behind for the only time, Ross raced to a 38-30 lead before Eastwood closed to 38-34.

In the final quarter, the Ross lead shrunk to 42-38 before a Green free throw and a Wolfe bucket made it 45-38. Haas, who led Eastwood with 19 points, answered with four consecutive free throws before Wolfe scored five straight for a 50-42 Little Giant lead.

Eastwood charged back, cutting the deficit to 50-48 with 2:19 remaining on a Haas basket, two free throws by Jason Bowser and Toby Thompson's bucket.

Ross countered as Green knocked in a bucket on a rebound, was fouled and made the free throw — only his second in seven attempts.

Wolfe followed with his second slam dunk of the night and added two free throws for Ross's biggest lead, 57-48, with 1:09 left.

"I still thought we could pull it out," Stoller said.

Only time was not on his side.

First Bowser and then 6-foot-8 junior Denny DeWese scored, cutting the Ross lead to 57-52 with 26 seconds left.

Kasey Lewis made the second

of two free throws with 12 seconds to go and Ross on top 57-53, but Eastwood got the ball back when Nick Wolf missed a free throw — the Little Giants' 12th miss in 21 attempts.

Tony Weis hit a jumper with three seconds left and Stoller called time out a second later, trailing by two.

The Ross inbounds pass was batted out of bounds as a tick fell off the clock. On the next attempt, the Little Giants got the ball in and time ran out on the Eagles.

"We were not aggressive at all tonight," Gioffre said. "I don't know what the answers are but we have two days to work on it. If we don't get it solved and we go to Findlay — that is probably one of the toughest places to play in the state of Ohio — it will be along night."

One of the keys for his team, Stoller said, was controlling the boards against the taller Little Giants. Each team finished with 35 rebounds. Green, who finished with 14 points, added 10 rebounds for Ross, while DeWese collected 13 for the Eagles.

"We might have won if we won the rebounding battle," Stoller said. "I remember two big rebounds Wolfe scored on. Shoot, but that's not bad. (Rebounding) has been our weakness all year."

Stoller glanced at the scorebook, seeing the 9-for-21 Ross free throw show.

"My goodness," he said, "if we could have been ... it's a big thing. Doggone it, I'll tell you, it was a heckuva game."

It was Eastwood's fifth loss in 12 games while Ross struggled to its 10th victory in a dozen outings.

"Yeah," Gioffre said, "it was the 10th win ... thank goodness."

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 57, Eastwood 55

Score by quarters

Eastwood	8	20	6	21	— 55
Ross	16	13	13	15	— 57

Scoring

EASTWOOD — Gary Haas 6-4-19, Kasey Lewis 2-2-7, Denny DeWese 2-1-5, Tony Weis 3-0-8, Jason Bowser 4-2-10, Toby Thompson 3-0-6, totals 20-9-55.

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 11-3-25, Nick Wolf 0-0-0, Jeff Green 6-2-14, Todd Clark 1-1-3, Justin Perry 1-0-2, Joe Frazier 3-0-6, Ryan Zimmerman 1-0-2, Mark Gottron 0-1-1, Mark Sheidler 2-2-4, totals 24-9-57.

3-point goals: Haas 3, Lewis, Weis 2.

Records: Eastwood 7-5, Ross 10-2.

Ross JV 67, Eastwood 46

Score by quarters

Eastwood	12	9	12	13	— 46
Ross	17	11	18	22	— 67

Scoring

EASTWOOD — Steve Staats 0-3-3, Jamie Jared 2-0-4, Rod Bauer 4-0-8, Brandon Donaldson 0-1-1, Bobby Flores 3-0-6, Chris Downey 1-0-2, Curt Lemmerbrock 9-2-20, Kevin Burtchin 1-0-2, totals 20-6-46.

ROSS — Alec Shawl 3-0-6, Ryan Zimmerman 7-1-15, Jon Hetrick 2-0-5, Mike Patterson 3-0-6, Brian Wilson 1-0-2, Bryan Myers 2-0-5, Bobby Carter 1-0-2, Shane Willer 1-2-4, Jason Zilles 3-2-8, Allen Dorsey 0-1-1, Tyrone Williams 3-2-8, Scott Root 2-1-5, totals 28-9-67.

3-point goals: Hetrick, Myers.

Record: Ross 9-3.

Ross at Findlay twice

By BOB MARKER

Staff writer

Fremont Ross missed a work day this week.

"These are the games where we really have to work hard on our overall games, Ross boys basketball coach Frank Gioffre said after Tuesday's 57-55 win over Eastwood. "We have to work on our defense and offense; start doing all the little things in our non-conference games.

"We have to do a good job in the non-conference games to help with our conference games."

Gioffre's team did not do that against the smaller Eagles.

"That was a very disappointing game," Gioffre said despite his team's 10th win in 12 games.

Tonight, Gioffre will find out if missing the day of work will hurt his team as he takes the Little Giants to Findlay for a Buckeye Central Conference clash. The Trojans are 8-2 and on a four-game winning streak.

Ross and Findlay are 2-1 in the BCC race, a half-game behind Lancaster, 3-1 in the conference.

The game tonight is the first of two in two days for Ross basketball teams at Findlay — Saturday, the girls play the Trojans.

Gioffre called Findlay "one of the toughest places to play in the state of Ohio," earlier this week.

Last season, Ross won at home but lost at Findlay.

Against Eastwood, Ross was victimized by the transition game (from defense to offense).

"If you thought Eastwood did

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

a good job in transition," Gioffre said, "wait till you see Findlay. They get the basketball out and run everytime; if they get a three-point shot with no one underneath on the break, they will pull up and shoot it."

Korey Hinkle and Todd Phillips are the top Trojan guns, Gioffre said. Phillips is averaging 20 points per game and Hinkle nearly 18 per contest. Hinkle has made 59 percent (66-of-112) of his two-point goal attempts and leads the BCC in 3-point accuracy at 50 percent. Phillips is a 50 percent shooter in two-point attempts and has made 28-of-70 (40 percent) 3-point attempts.

"They have the great shooters and the (Matt) Miles kid inside — I'll tell you, they are transition breakout after a made basket or a missed basket every single time," Gioffre said referring to his scouting reports.

Miles averages a dozen points a game and leads the Trojans in rebounding with over nine per game.

Gioffre said his team will run against multiple zone defenses with occasional pressure.

Findlay averages 70 points a game — first in the BCC — while allowing nearly 67, last in the conference games. The Trojans are the top shooting BCC team, making nearly 50 percent of their shots.

The junior varsity game begins at 6:15 p.m. Ross is 3-0 in

the BCC JV race, 9-3 overall. Findlay is 2-1 in the conference and 7-3 this season.

Saturday, the Ross girls, 8-4 and 2-2 in the BCC, takes on the Trojans, 7-5 and 1-2.

Ross is one of three BCC teams with two losses after Zanesville's 53-52 overtime win over Lancaster Thursday. The Little Giants are 2-2 while Zanesville and Lancaster are 4-2. Ross has four conference games left, Zanesville and Lancaster two each.

Findlay, on a four-game winning streak, is led by Allyson Creel, the BCC's leading scorer with a 16.6 average. Amy Jauert of the Trojans is third in scoring with 15.5 per contest. Vickie Castile (13.1) and Amy Ritzman (11.8) of Ross are fifth and sixth.

The JV game begins at 1 p.m., Saturday.

Ross comes up short at Findlay

By **BOB MARKER**

Staff writer

FINDLAY — One quarter does not make a basketball game.

Ross played well for one, miserably for the other three, and Findlay took advantage, rolling to a 78-70 Buckeye Central Conference win Friday night.

Toss out the first three quarters and Ross won 34-16, but Dr. James Naismith's game does not work that way. The Trojans won the first three quarters 62-36 and survived a scrambling, but aborted, Little Giants' comeback in the final quarter.

"You can't get down by 30 that quickly," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said.

Actually, Findlay's biggest lead was 29 points, but it was still too much for Ross.

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

The Little Giants, 10-3, slipped into third place in the BCC at 2-2. Findlay, 8-3, improved to 3-1. The Trojans are one-half game behind Lancaster, which defeated Zanesville 49-43.

"They threw a little 1-3-1 half-court zone defense on us and we panicked," Gioffre said. "We practiced against it all week but they got in our passing lanes and we did not even make a ball fake and dribble in against it.

"We started doing that in the second half and we started creating shots for everybody."

Findlay forced 14 first-half turnovers by Ross, which turned it over 24 times in the game.

Ross had come back this year, charging from 16 points down with a minute to go in the third quarter to defeat Newark in overtime earlier this month, and Gioffre had his hopes in this one.

With 90 seconds left, Ross trailed 74-63 after back-to-back 3-point baskets by Chris Wolfe and Nick Wolf.

"After that, we called timeout and wanted to foul quickly but we never got a chance to foul and they were able to take a lot of time off the clock (from 1:27 to 0:46.) and that hurt," Gioffre said.

A corps of juniors sparked the Little Giants' final-quarter onslaught.

"Our juniors played really hard," Gioffre said, clicking off the names of Damon Walker, Ryan Zimmerman, Nick Wolf, Mark Sheidler and Alec Shawl.

"Those kids were not going to quit; they did everything we asked them to do ... and we made a run at 'em."

Jerry Snodgrass, acting coach for the Trojans in place of Roger Renz, who missed the game because of illness, said, "That shows the type athlete Ross has; they never gave up."

In the end, Ross came up short. In the beginning, Findlay was pulverizing the Little Giants.

"What hurt us," Gioffre said, "is they shoot the basketball so well; we knew that they were going to get it on the break ... shoot threes (3-point attempts) off the break. We worked on it all week, getting back quickly and finding our man."

Only Todd Phillips, the BCC's leading scorer, was the invisible man. Phillips, a wispy 6-3 senior, banged in six 3-pointers while scoring 30 points in only three quarters as the Trojans built their huge lead.

"Phillips can shoot the basketball," Gioffre said. "Once he got going, he just got everyone else involved in the game, got the crowd into the game and that was the ballgame."

Ross stayed close briefly, trailing 8-5 with 3:30 left in the first quarter but Findlay outscored the Little Giants 15-3 in the next five minutes. Matt Miles, a 6-6 senior, helped Phillips in the early going, outscoring his teammate 7-5 in the first quarter, but Phillips was just getting warm.

He canned a pair of 3-pointers to go with a deuce in the second quarter and the Trojans took a 38-22 lead at the half, but saved his best for the third quarter.

Phillips tossed in a trio of 3-pointers, added a two-pointer and made five of six free throws, scoring 16 of his team's 24 points. That gave the Trojans a 26-point lead heading into the final eight minutes.

In the final quarter, Gioffre's junior brigade, along with a rotation of senior veterans, broke loose. Wolfe scored 12 points. Todd Clark added eight and Nick Wolf canned a pair of 3-pointers. Shawl added a 3-pointer as the Little Giants made 12-of-26 shots in the period, five of them from beyond the 3-point arc.

Ross cut the deficit to 76-68 on two Clark free throws but there were just 18 seconds left. Lamont Paris put Findlay up by 10 a few seconds later and Mark Gottron's bucket at the buzzer cut the final deficit to single digits.

Wolfe finished with 22 points and grabbed 11 rebounds. Clark, with 11, was the only other Little Giant in double figures.

Findlay 78, Ross 70

Score by quarters

Ross	10	12	14	34	— 70
Findlay	19	19	24	16	— 78

Scoring

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 9-2-22, Joe Frazier 0-0-0, Jeff Green 4-0-8, Todd Clark 3-3-11, Justin Perry 0-0-0, Nick Wolf 2-3-9, Mark Gottron 3-1-7, Damon Walker 1-2-4, Ryan Zimmerman 1-0-2, Mark Sheidler 1-0-3, Alec Shawl 1-1-4, totals 25-12-70.

FINDLAY — Todd Phillips 9-6-30, Korey Hinkle 5-2-12, Matt Miles 3-5-11, Jeff Cobb 1-2-4, Lamont Paris 3-5-11, Chrfris Ireland 1-0-2, Aaron Grlak 1-0-2, Erik Fenberg 1-2-4, Matt Gray 1-0-2, totals 25-22-78.

3-point goals: Wolfe 2, Clark 2, Wolf 2, Sheidler, Shawl, Phillips 6.

Records: Ross 10-3 (2-2), Findlay 8-3 (3-1).

Findlay JV 50, Ross 48

Score by quarters

Ross	4	16	13	15	— 48
Findlay	14	12	8	16	— 50

Scoring

ROSS — Alec Shawl 2-0-4, Ryan Zimmerman 6-4-16, Jon Hetrick 4-0-10, Mike Patterson 7-0-16, Tyrone Williams 1-0-2, totals 20-4-48.

FINDLAY — Javan Conley 9-0-18, Doug DePuy 4-0-8, Anthony Hall 4-0-8, Chris Allison 1-0-2, Marlon Berry 6-1-13, Jon Nichols 0-1-1, totals 24-2-50.

3-point goals: Hetrick 2, Patterson 2.

Records: Ross 9-4 (3-1), Findlay 8-3 (3-1).

Rebounding on minds of Little Giants

Gioffre prepares Ross for Sandusky

By BOB MARKER

Staff writer

It will be a homecoming in a pressure cooker when Fremont Ross visits Sandusky Saturday.

Frank Gioffre, the first-year coach at Ross, returns to the school where he honed his coaching skills, guiding the Blue Streaks' junior varsity teams to more than 50 wins in three years prior to coming to Fremont this season.

After a rare Friday night off, Gioffre will put the Little Giants' 10-3 mark up against Sandusky's 9-4. The Blue Streaks warm up for Ross with a game against North Ridgeville Friday.

The Little Giants will face a pressure defense almost the moment they get off the bus.

"They are good, quick, will press us and get the basketball up and run with it," Gioffre succinctly described the Sandusky.

"'Streak ball' is still alive and well over there," Gioffre said. "We have to handle their press and make them work on the defensive end. If we do break the press, we have to make transition and take it to them. If not, we have to be patient."

Gioffre said a key to stopping the Streaks' running game is rebounding.

"We have to crash the boards," he said, "and score some easy baskets; get the second and third shots."

The Little Giants, however, will go into Sandusky minus one of its top two rebounders, Jeff Green, who has been suspended for two games.

"The suspension started Jan. 21 (Monday)," Gioffre said. "It is a disciplinary suspension, mine and the school's."

Ross

Continued From B1

Green was involved in an altercation with a Findlay student at the end of a 78-70 loss last Friday but Gioffre would not elaborate on the reasons for the suspension.

The 6-7 senior will come off the suspension in time for the Feb. 5 game against Oregon Clay.

Damon Walker, who started several games earlier in the season, will likely replace Green.

On the Sandusky side, Davio McDaniels, a 6-4 point guard, keys the Sandusky offense.

"He makes everyone on the court play better," the Gioffre said. "He handles the ball well,

is a good passer, a great shot. He is probably one of the better players in the area."

Other key Streaks are 5-9 Brian Willis, 6-0 Sha-Ki Johnson and 6-5 Scott Irby.

"Willis plays great defense and can hit the three (3-point goal)," Gioffre said. "Johnson will cause a lot of problems defensively and Irby is a great shot-blocker."

Ross is coming off a disappointing loss at Findlay. The Little Giants played poorly for three quarters, trailing 62-36, before outscoring the Trojans 34-16 in the final eight minutes.

"I hope that is a carryover," Gioffre said, "because we will need it."

Final minutes costly for Ross against Sandusky

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

SANDUSKY — The grand finale did not follow the author's script as Sandusky handed Fremont Ross a 50-39 setback in high school basketball Saturday night.

Sandusky, 11-4 and riding an eight-game winning streak, outscored Ross 13-2 in the final two minutes and 25 seconds to break a 37-all deadlock.

Ross, 10-4, had followed coach Frank Gioffre's script for 29½ minutes before fumbling the last few lines.

"... I wanted to keep the score low and have a chance to win it the last two minutes," Gioffre said. "We were there the whole way until the last three minutes, then we missed a couple of key opportunities."

"We missed some bunnies in the third quarter that could have changed the out-

come of this game," Gioffre said. "The problem is we have some seniors on our team and we have to have some senior leadership; we have been looking for it all year, but we have still have not found it yet."

Sandusky coach John Schlessman said, "If you are a positive person, you say, 'Great defense, right?' and that's what we want to say. I think anytime you hold a team to 39 points — it may have been a little bit of a slowed-down game — but, there was a lot of up-tempo basketball and they only scored 39 points and I think that is a credit to our defense."

"It all started with Sha-Ki Johnson on the ball; our ball pressure was tremendous," Schlessman continued, "and Fremont was not able to just come down the floor, set it up and run their offense."

Gioffre agreed.

"We were catching the ball 25 feet from the basket and it's hard to start an offense that far away," the Ross coach said.

Chris Wolfe, the Little Giants' leading scorer and rebounder, fouled out with 3:35 to play, leaving a hole in the Ross offense and defense.

"That really cost us," Gioffre continued, "because there went our inside game."

"We turned the basketball over way too many times (29), though," he said. "That was the key for us. We needed to do a better job of controlling the tempo, but you can't when you don't have the basketball."

Using mostly 2-3 and 1-3-1 zone defenses, Ross kept the Blue Streaks offstride.

"I absolutely did not," Schlessman said when asked if he expected Ross to use the zones. "I thought he would play some man ... it was obvious they were going to go with a zone and they play a great zone

— they don't just stand around like a bunch of scarecrows, they move."

"We got a few shots blocked inside and I think that affected our shooting inside, but you noticed when Wolfe fouled out," Schlessman said, "we scored four buckets in the paint."

Mike Franklin came off the bench to score 19 points, 13 in the final quarter for Sandusky. He also grabbed six rebounds, four off the offensive board, in the second half and took a charge from Wolfe, the 6-7 senior's fifth foul, as Wolfe drove to the basket. Wolfe finished with 12 points and five rebounds.

Ross trailed 19-17 at the half after being down 13-6 and 15-8. Nick Wolf, who scored six of his team-high 15 points in the second period, tied the game at 17 with a short

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

jumper from the right side after grabbing a rebound.

The Little Giants took the lead, 23-22, on two Nick Wolf free throws and got their biggest lead, 28-24, on a 3-point goal by Chris Wolfe with 1:50 remaining in the third quarter.

Ross led 28-26 heading into the final quarter before Franklin canned two free throws and a bucket for a 33-32 Sandusky lead with 4:35 to play. Joe Frazier gave Ross the lead again 34-33 with two free throws before Darvion McDaniel put in a rebound for a 35-34 Sandusky lead with 4:10 remaining.

Nick Wolf's basket gave Ross its final lead, 36-35, with 3:52 on the clock. Franklin gave Sandusky a 37-36 lead before Todd Clark tied it with a free throw, 37-37, with 2:44 left to play. The Blue Streaks took centerstage from that point.

McDaniel started a 13-point Blue Streaks run with a basket

before Sandusky hit nine straight free throws, the final two by Brian Willis with 42 seconds left.

Ross was only 13-of-47 (28 percent) shooting and Sandusky 17 of 56 (30 percent). Sandusky out-rebounded Ross 38-37 as McDaniel, who had 11 points, grabbed 10. Damon Walker led Ross with nine while Nick Wolfe had eight.

Gioffre, who coached the Sandusky junior varsity to a 54-6 record the last three seasons before coming to Ross, discounted any added pressure on his team because of the informal homecoming.

"I tried not to let the emotion of me coming back to Sandusky interfere with what we were trying to do," he said. "We were flat and Sandusky was flat."

Only Sandusky got pumped up at the right time and took the final bow.

**FREMONT
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Basketball

High School Boys

Sandusky 50, Ross 39

Score by quarters

Ross	6	11	11	11	— 39
Sandusky	11	8	7	24	— 50

Scoring

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 5-1-12, Nick Wolf 5-5-15, Damon Walker 0-0-0, Todd Clark 3-1-8, Mark Gottron 0-0-0, Joe Frazier 0-2-2, Justin Perry 0-2-2, totals 13-11-39.

SANDUSKY — Darvio McDaniel 4-3-11, Shi-Ki Johnson 2-0-4, Scott Irby 3-0-6, Shawn Reed 1-0-2, Brian Willis 1-4-6, Mike Franklin 5-9-19, Maurice Kirksey 1-0-2, totals 17-16-50.

3-point goals: Wolfe, Clark.

Records: Ross 10-4, Sandusky 11-4.

Sandusky JV 51, Ross 48

Score by quarters

Ross	6	12	19	11	— 48
Sandusky	7	18	8	18	— 51

Scoring

ROSS — Alex Shawl 1-0-2, Ryan Zimmerman 4-1-9, Jon Hetrick 4-4-12, Mike Patterson 6-0-12, Brian Myers 2-0-4, Bobby Carter 1-0-2, Shane Willer 1-0-2, Tyrone Williams 1-3-5, totals 20-8-48.

SANDUSKY — Brad Johnson 4-1-9, Chad Taylor 2-5-9, Tavarous Turner 5-0-11, Tron Lofton 3-1-8, Tony Esposito 1-0-2, Nate Conway 4-0-8, DeMonte Harper 1-0-2, Steve Scales 1-0-2, totals 21-7-51.

3-point goals: Turner, Lofton.

Records: Ross 9-5, Sandusky 13-2.

Quick start propels Little Giants to 7th victory

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

A quick start took the sting out of a "miss parade" Saturday night as Fremont Ross outscored Tiffin Columbian 62-52 in high school boys basketball.

The Little Giants, 7-2, behind a trio of 3-point buckets and 11 first quarter points by Todd Clark, charged to a 24-8 first quarter advantage. The cushion held up as Columbian, despite a strong performance off the bench by Findlay High School transfer Vince Perrine, was unable to cut the deficit to single figures until less than two minutes remained in the game.

Ross was unable to put the Tornadoes, 3-5, away, missing 11 of 18 free throws in the final quarter.

"Those are golden opportunities for us to step up to the line and put the game away," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said, "but

there is something about this team — I don't know if it is lack of concentration; I know it is not lack of practice.

"...there are still too many mental mistakes," Gioffre continued. "We had a chance to put them away but we let them back in."

The Tornadoes, though, joined the "miss parade," making only three of its dozen final quarter foul shots.

Ross coach Frank Gioffre, smarting from his team's 58-50 lackluster loss to Buckeye Central Conference foe Lancaster Friday, juggled his starting lineup. Chris Wolfe, the Little Giants' leading scorer (15.8) who was held to two points Friday, and Mark Sheidler were out of the starting lineup. Justin Perry took over Sheidler's guard slot and Damon Walker was in Wolfe's wing slot.

"It was a little bit (of a mes-

sage)," Gioffre admitted, "but I wanted to see what Damon and J.P. (Perry) could do. I knew what Damon could do — he did not start last night but I wanted to get him back in the lineup because he plays so hard."

Wolfe took the message to heart, coming off the bench late in the first quarter to score four points and finished with a game-high 20 points to go with a dozen rebounds. The 6-7 senior's only apparent problem was at the foul line where he was 8-of-14, including 3-of-7 in the final quarter.

Wolfe added seven points in the second quarter as the Ross lead increased to 36-18 at the half.

"I'll tell you who had a great game was Justin Perry," Gioffre said. "He did a lot of the little things we have been looking for someone to do."

Perry had seven points and five rebounds.

"I also thought Todd Clark did a great job shooting and controlling the tempo of the game in the first half," Gioffre said.

Clark made his first four shots — three of them 3-pointers — and finished with 17 points. The four-year starter and the Little Giants' top free throw shooter, had his problems at the line in the final quarter, making just 3-of-7.

Jeff Green turned in 13 rebounds to lead Ross to a 50-37 edge and added nine points. Columbian was hurt in the rebounding game when 6-5 senior Jeff Kuhn was forced out of the game early in the first quarter because of an ankle injury.

"Obviously," Columbian coach Robert Nocton said, "we got a kid (Kuhn) who averages about eight rebounds a game and who is an important player, so when the 6-5 kid went down, it really created problems...we were guarding a team who had two

big guys and it was tough to keep them off the boards."

Nocton, who was charged with a technical foul early in the fourth quarter, was not happy with the officiating.

"I usually try to avoid being very critical," he said, "but I really felt we had some very interesting officiating that added to our problems."

Trailing 47-32 after three quarters, Columbian rallied in the final eight minutes, closing to 58-49 on a Mike Betz basket with 1:55 to play. Mark Gottron hit 1-of-2 free throws to put Ross back up by 10 before Columbian's Joe Lundy made a free throw to make it 59-50 with 1:32 remaining. It was academic after that with both teams trading missed free throws until Clark nailed the front end of a 1-and-1 with 24 seconds left. Wolfe followed with a bucket to polish off the win.

Perrine, a long-distance shot

specialist Findlay his sophomore and junior years, saw his first action for Columbian, responding with a team-high 15 points. The 6-2 senior is recovering from an ankle stress fracture suffered late in the football season. Nocton played him in two-minute intervals.

Despite the failure to put the game away early, Gioffre saw improvement in the wake of Friday's disappointing loss.

"We shot the ball really well in the first half (12-for-27)," the Ross coach said. "We did everything we wanted to do in the first half; we ran our halfcourt offense; we were very patient. Really, I think our kids came out fired up to play basketball tonight."

The fire may have to be hotter Friday when Ross travels to Newark, winner of three straight Buckeye Central Conference titles.

Ross 62, Columbian 52

Score by quarters

Columbian	8	10	14	20	—	52
Ross	24	12	11	15	—	62

Scoring

COLUMBIAN — Matt Fawcett 4-0-8, Chris Neukon 2-1-6, Jeff Kuhn 0-0-0, Jeff Fey 2-1-5, Mike Betz 6-0-12, Joe Lundy 1-1-4, Vince Perrine 6-1-15, Aaron Reidling 1-0-2, totals 22-3-52.

ROSS — Damon Walker 0-0-0, Nick Wolf 4-0-8, Jeff Green 3-3-9, Todd Clark 5-3-17, Justin Perry 1-3-5, Mark Gotttron 0-1-1, Ryan Zimmerman 1-0-2, totals 20-18-62.

3-point goals: Neukon, Fey, Lundy, Perrine 2, Clark 4.

Records: Ross 7-2, Columbian 3-5.

Ross JVs 53, Columb. 48

Score by quarters

Columbian	8	12	18	10	—	48
Ross	19	14	8	12	—	53

Scoring

COLUMBIAN — Ken Reinbolt 0-1-1, Brian McNulty 5-0-10, Nate McClung 2-0-4, Jeff Hoover 0-2-2, Eric Bryant 8-5-21, John Bolte 2-0-4, Chris Bowlin 1-0-2, totals 20-8-48.

ROSS — Alec Shawl 3-0-7, Ryan Zimmerman 10-0-20, Jon Hetrick 7-0-14, Bobby Carter 2-0-4, Shane Willer 2-1-5, Tyrone Williams 1-1-3, totals 25-2-53.

3-point goals: Shawl.

Records: Ross 6-3, Columbian 4-4.

Ross tries to round into form at Newark

By TIM HARMON
Staff writer

The Fremont Ross boys basketball team is still searching for an identity as it prepares for a trip to Newark Friday night for a Buckeye Central Conference game against the Wildcats.

"I think we're still learning, which is kind of good for us," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said. "We're getting better, but we have a big test this week."

The Little Giants, 0-1 in the BCC, have meandered their way to seven wins in nine games so

far. The losses came in Toledo to a powerful St. Francis squad and at home last Friday against undefeated BCC foe Lancaster.

"We've had a few chances to put games in our hands, but we're missing free throws and we're making mental mistakes," Gioffre said. "I think we can still improve. I'm pleased and think we can peak come tournament time."

Gioffre has used six different starting lineups this season.

"We're still looking for some key people," he said. "I want to

give everybody a good look."

Most notably, Gioffre said he is looking for a reliable guard to team with point guard Todd Clark.

"We're going to give Justin Perry another look," he said.

"He's doing a lot of the little things well and he played well against Tiffin Columbian."

Ross defeated the Tornadoes 62-52 Saturday night.

Clark and Perry will be joined in the starting lineup by Jeff Green, Nick Wolf and Chris Wolfe. Wolf has been ill and if he

can't play Friday, Damon Walker will start at forward.

Newark, 5-4 and 1-1 in the BCC after a 66-65 loss at Findlay last Friday, is led by 6-foot-8 senior center Jeff Quackenbush and 6-foot-1 junior guard Bob Sellers.

"Those kids are outstanding basketball players," Gioffre said.

Quackenbush, who has signed to play at St. Bonaventure University, and Sellers are averaging 24 and 17 points per game, respectively.

No other Wildcat is averaging

more than five points per game for coach Gary Walters.

"(Walters) has got some role players just like us and he needs for them to come through for them to be a good basketball team," Gioffre said. "We need the same type of things to become a good team."

"We need a big game. We need to go down there and play a good basketball game."

"We need to play a sound basketball game for four quarters. If we do we'll have a chance to win in the final two minutes."

Overtime

Ross wins 64-63

News-Messenger reports

NEWARK — Fremont Ross came from 15 points down late in the third period and defeated Newark 64-63 in overtime Friday night.

The Buckeye Central Conference victory was the Little Giants' first over the Wildcats in seven games since the BCC began

play four seasons ago. Ross, 8-2, leveled its conference mark at 1-1, while Newark, the three-time defending BCC champ, slipped to 5-5 and 1-2.

"This was a big one, a big one," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said hoarsely. "We

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

needed this win big time."

Ross trailed 26-9 with less than five minutes remaining in the first half and was down by 33-19 at halftime.

"At halftime, I told the kids to stick with the game plan," Gioffre said. "We had all the shots in the first half but they would not go down; in the second half, they started to fall."

Ross was 8-for-25 from the floor in the first half and only 3-of-7 from the foul line.

Chris Wolfe, held to six points in the first half, scored 17 in the third quarter for Ross while on his way to a game-high 30.

"Our seniors really came through," Gioffre said, "especially Wolfe and Todd Clark."

"In that third quarter, I thought we could come out fired up but we had trouble, but after we got down 16 (38-22), the kids began to chip away at it. The kids were patient and did not get rattled."

Ross still trailed 45-30 with 2:30 remaining in the third period before Wolfe and Green began to pull the Little Giants back into it.

Clark had been held in check, scoring just two points the first 31 minutes of the contest. But in the final minute of regulation, Clark tossed in four points — including tying the game at 57-all with 10 seconds left.

He added five more points in the overtime.

Jeff Quackenbush, the Wildcats' 6-foot-8 senior center, put his team ahead in the extra session, scoring on a rebound. The Little Giants missed a chance of taking the lead when Jeff Green followed with a basket to tie it, was fouled, but missed the three throw.

Bobby Sellers gave Newark a 63-59, hitting a bucket and two free throws with 50 seconds remaining.

Clark took over from there.

The 6-1 senior canned a 3-pointer with 38 seconds left, cutting the deficit to 63-62. With 18 seconds on the clock, Newark's Brad Campbell missed a three throw and Wolfe rebounded.

Clark got open with eight seconds left and sank a 14-foot jumper, giving Ross its first lead 64-63.

"Our defense did the job then," Gioffre said. "We forced the kid to dribble the ball all the way down the floor; they did not get off a shot."

Ross made 18-of-34 shots in the second half and in the overtime and made 4-of-5 at the line. Newark made 20-of-52 shots and 21-of-30 at the foul line.

Only four Little Giants scored, with Wolfe topping the quartet. Green had 17 and Clark finished with 11. Hector Rodriguez came off the bench to score six. Nick Wolf, troubled by the flu all week, and Justin Perry started for the Little Giants but failed to score.

Quackenbush led Newark with 24 points. Sellers finished 20.

Ross returns to action Friday, hosting Zanesville in a BCC clash.

Ross 64, Newark 63 (OT)

Score by quarters

Ross	8	11	21	17	7	— 64
Newark	21	12	14	10	6	— 63

Scoring

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 12-2-30, Nick Wolf 0-0-0, Jeff Green 7-3-17, Todd Clark 5-0-11, Justin Perry 0-0-0, Hector Rodriguez 2-2-6, totals 26-7-64.

NEWARK — Bobby Seller 7-5-20, Jeff Quackenbush 9-6-24, T.J. Summers 1-1-4, Brett Salisbury 1-4-6, Brice Jones 1-1-3, Don Shackleford 0-3-3, Seth Deutsch 1-0-2, Brad Campbell 0-1-1, totals 20-21-63.

3-point goals: Wolfe 4, Clark, Sellers, Summers.

Records: Ross 8-2 (1-1), Newark 5-5 (1-2).

Ross 52, Newark 45

Score by quarters

Ross	4	12	17	19	— 52
Newark	10	8	11	16	— 45

Scoring

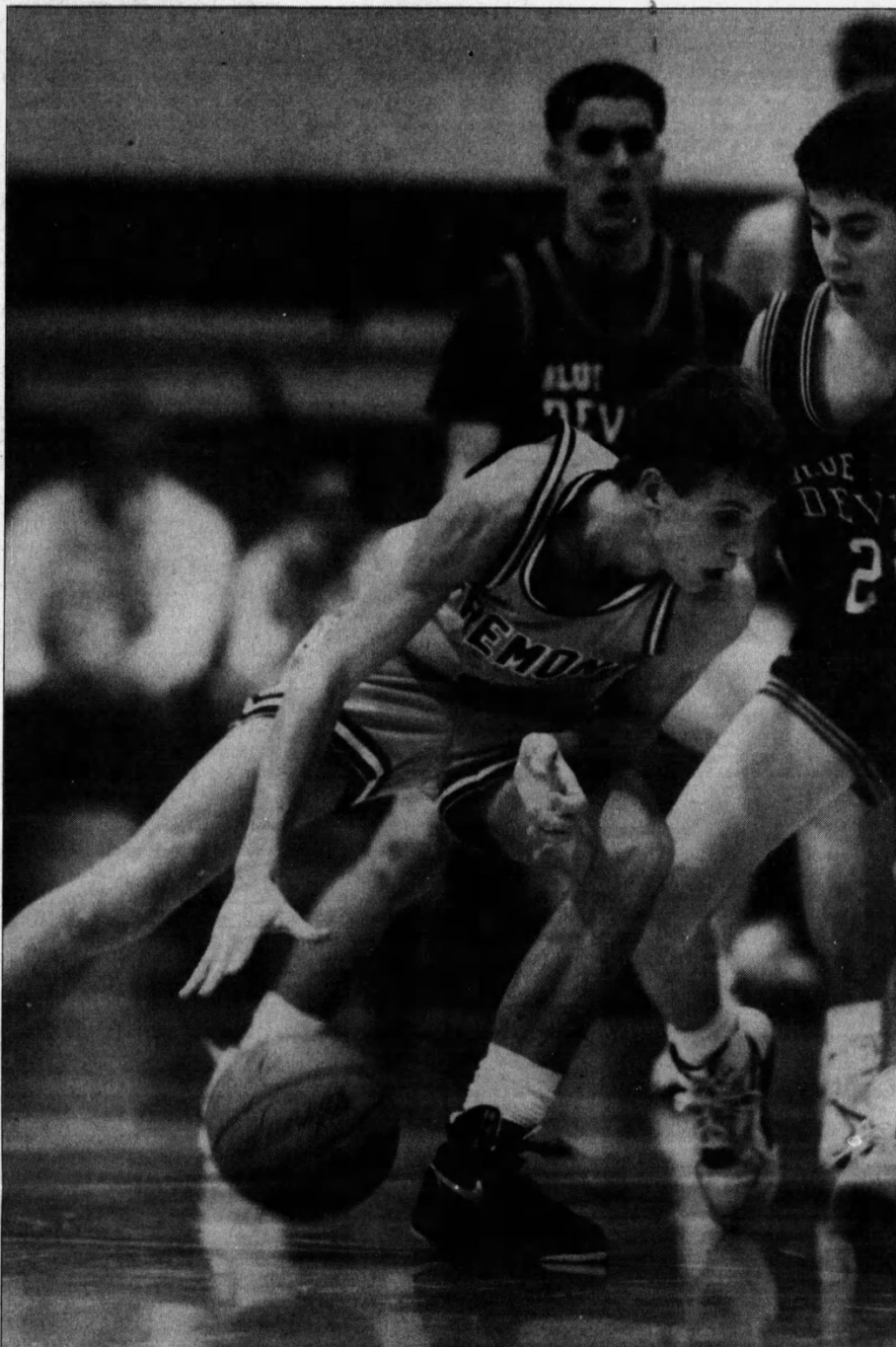
ROSS — Ryan Zimmerman 7-7-21, Jon Hetrick 5-5-16, Moe Myers 1-0-3, Jason Zilles 1-0-2, Shane Willer 0-2-2, Alec Shawl 0-1-1, Christian Tooman 1-0-2, Tyrone Williams 2-1-5, totals 17-16-52.

NEWARK — Little 1-0-2, Hollister 5-3-13, Black 2-0-4, Shackleford 1-0-2, Santa 1-0-2, Stypula 1-0-2, Pangborn 4-3-11, Vogelmyer 2-1-5, Deutsch 2-1-5, totals 19-7-45.

3-point goals: Hetrick, Myers.

Record: Ross 7-3 (2-0), Newark 4-6 (1-2)

Ross smothers Zanesville



MARK GOTTRON of Fremont Ross drives on Zanesville's Kevin Witucky Friday night.

News-Messenger/Chris Walker

Little Giants near top of BCC

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

It was balance — basketball-style.

Fremont Ross combined a smooth offensive attack with a smothering defense Friday night for a 70-54 Buckeye Central Conference boys basketball victory over Zanesville.

The Little Giants won for the ninth time in 11 games. The victory, coupled with a 68-56 Newark win over previously undefeated Lancaster, left Ross tied with Findlay at 2-1, one-half game behind Lancaster, 3-1, in the BCC race.

Chris Wolfe and Todd Clark scored 16 points apiece, Jeff Green added 12 and Nick Wolf 10 for the Little Giants, whose defense never let the Blue Devils settle into its offense.

Ross scored the first 13 points of the game, rolling to a 23-9 first-quarter lead. Wolfe scored eight points and Wolf added six in the period.

At the same time, a suffocating man-to-man by Ross held Zanesville's leading scorer, Kevin Witucky, scoreless in the opening eight minutes.

"That was a big key in the game," Zanesville coach Scott Aronhalt said. "He is our only returning kid with playing experience, but I keep telling our kids that we are at a point in the season where we cannot use that immaturity as an excuse anymore."

Mike Lightfoot got Zanesville, 5-7 and 0-4 in the BCC, on the board with a short shot from the left side nearly five minutes into the game. Lightfoot finished with 10 points.

"We wanted to get the basketball inside right away and that is what we did," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said. "We got some easy baskets at the beginning and our confidence level took off."

Wolfe, a 6-foot-7 senior, scored on three rebound shots as Ross

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

outrebounded the Blue Devils 12-2 in the first quarter. Wolfe finished with 15 rebounds and Green, also 6-7, grabbed 11 as Ross held a 38-29 rebounding lead.

"Chris Wolfe did a fantastic job on the boards, got some easy baskets and got the tempo in our favor right away," Gioffre said.

Said Aronholt, "(The inside game) was like the men against the boys, but that has been a problem for us. I felt we were a little intimidated at first. What we wanted to do was square up and use our quickness against those big people; we tried to take it at them at first and I don't think we got some calls, but physical strength was the bottom line."

Only in the second quarter did the Ross offense falter.

"I think we got kind of passive going into the second quarter with that big lead," Gioffre said.

Witucky broke away from Ross, scoring 12 of the Devil's 18 points as the Ross lead slipped to 34-27 at halftime.

Clark's 3-point basket with five seconds left in the half gave the Little Giants breathing room after four consecutive free throws by Witucky cut the Ross lead to 31-27.

Gioffre resorted to trickery in the third quarter to cool off Witucky, who had entered the game averaging nearly 20 points.

"Witucky is such a good player," Gioffre said, "that he can shoot the three or he can go by you on the dribble. Coach (assistant Jim) Morgan and coach (junior varsity coach Mark) Gedeon, half time, said, 'Hey, let's try a box-and-one,' so we tried it and contained him for a little bit."

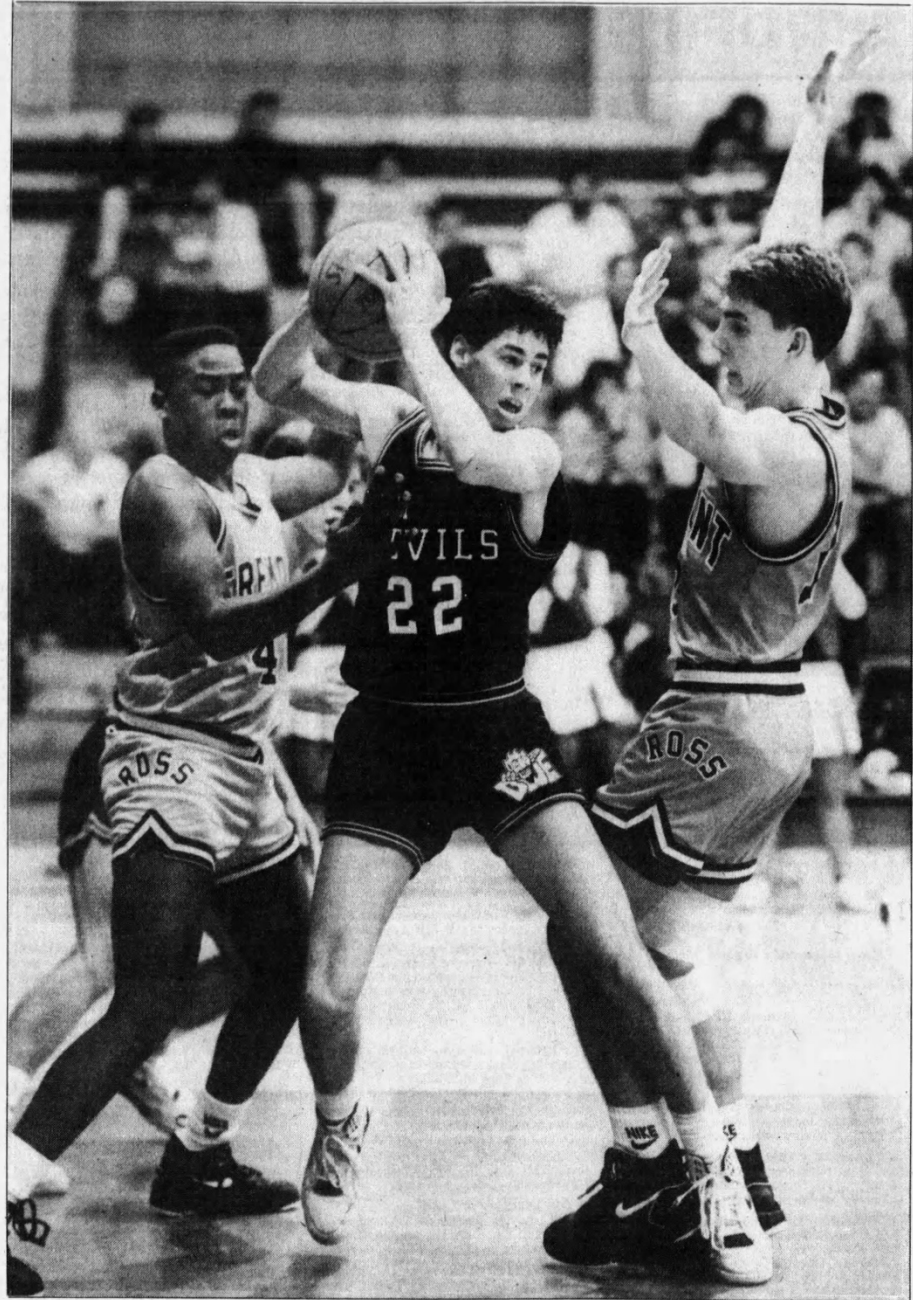
With the trick defense in place, Witucky was held scoreless and added just a basket in the final period, finishing the game with 14. Ross steadily pulled away in that span.

"I think the deal with Kevin (Witucky)," Aronholt said, "is that Ross is so much stronger, it wore him out. Even when he got going, he tired, I thought, in the second half."

Gioffre had feared Zanesville's 3-point shooting ability but the defense allowed just three.

"We wanted to put enough pressure on them where they were going to go past us on the dribble and then we wanted our big guys (Wolfe and Green, both 6-7) to be in a help position; that is what we did," Gioffre said.

"I'll tell you what Chris Wolfe



News-Messenger/Chris Walker

DAMON WALKER (left) and Justin Perry of Fremont Ross surround Zanesville's Kevin Witucky Friday night during the Little Giants' Buckeye Central Conference victory.

does well, especially tonight, is he intimidates shots in the paint. They had a lot of opportunities from five to six feet and Chris went straight up and made them alter their shots."

Green and Perry gave Ross a 38-27 lead early in the third quarter before Zanesville closed to 39-33. The Devils got no closer after Wolfe sank two free throws and Mark Sheidler scored on a

putback for a 43-33 lead with 5:30 left in the third quarter. The lead got below 10, 54-45, only once more.

Mark Gottron gave Ross a spark at the end of the third quarter, stealing a pass and laying it in at the buzzer for a 51-36 Ross lead.

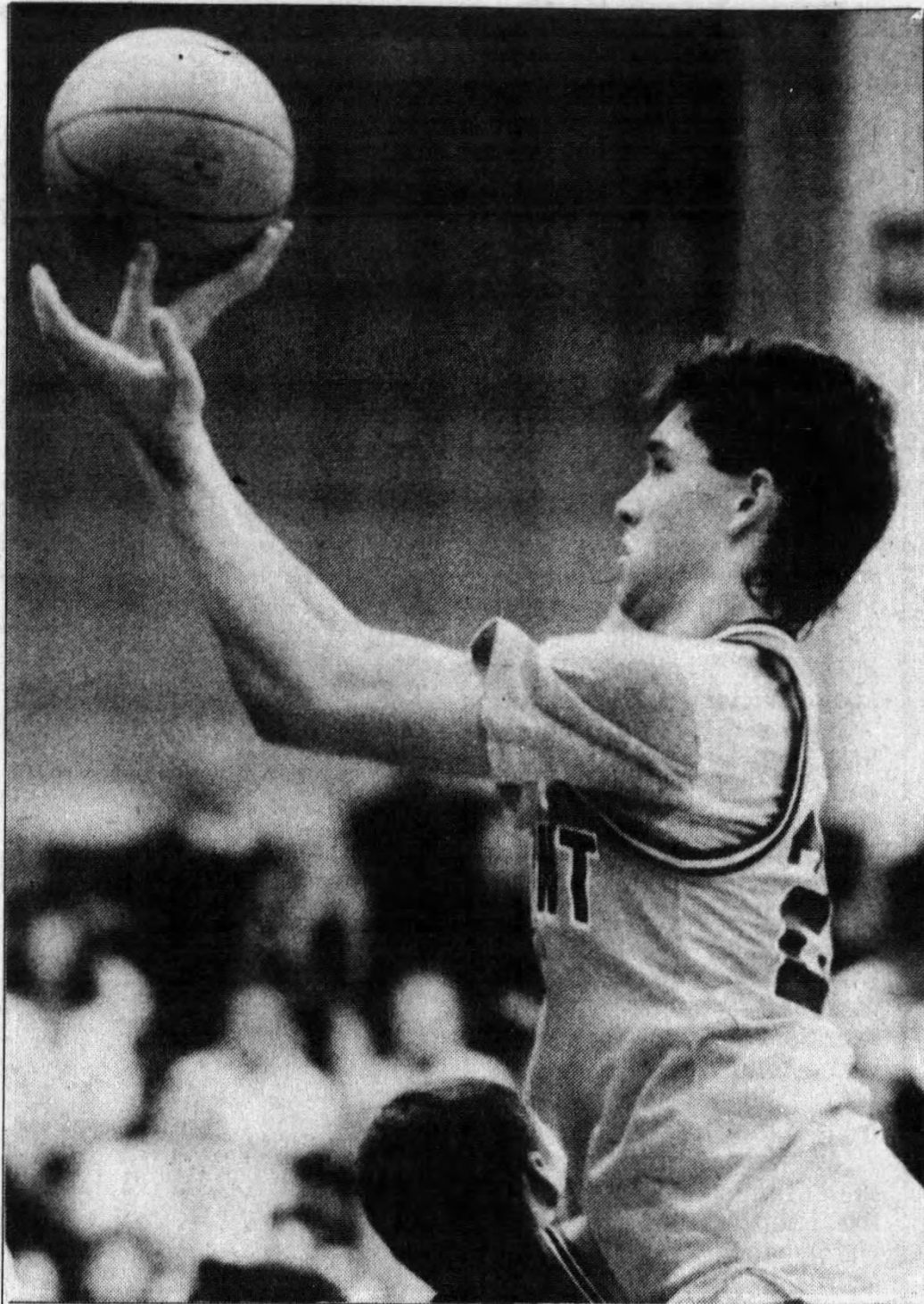
"Our kids really got fired up," Gioffre described. "They saw Mark anticipate that pass, pick

it off — they had momentum going their way a little — but when Mark laid that in, all of a sudden, it got us back into the game."

Clark scored 10 points and Green seven in the final period.

Ross made 28-of-61 shots and Zanesville 17-of-44.

The Little Giants return to action Tuesday, hosting Eastwood in a non-conference game.



News-Messenger/Chris Walker

Going up

Chris Wolfe of Ross goes up for a jump shot over a Zanesville defender Friday night in Purple Pit at Ross High School. Wolfe scored 16 points and grabbed 15 rebounds in the Little Giants' 70-54 victory.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 70, Zanesville 54

Score by quarters

Zanesville	9	18	9	18	— 54
Ross	23	11	17	19	— 70

Scoring

ZANESVILLE — Kevin Witucky 4-6-14, Brad Ziemer 3-0-8, John Langland 2-0-4, Matt Johnson 1-6-8, Michael Lightfoot 3-4-10, Reggie Newman 2-1-5, Jay Spargrove 1-0-3, Ryan Smith 1-0-2, totals 17-17-54.

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 6-4-16, Nick Wolf 5-0-10, Jeff Green 4-4-12, Todd Clark 5-5-16, Justin Perry 3-0-6, Joe Frazier 2-0-4, Mark Gottron 2-0-4, totals 28-13-70.

3-point goals: Ziemer 2, Spargrove, Clark.

Records: Zanesville 5-7 (0-4), Ross 9-2 (2-1).

Ross JV 62, Zanesville 46

Score by quarters

Zanesville	13	16	8	9	— 46
Ross	13	19	6	24	— 62

Scoring

ZANESVILLE — Kevin Knowlton 3-3-9, Rob Hodges 1-0-2, Mike Mercer 2-0-4, Andy Shirer 5-0-10, Jason Steele 3-2-8, Bryan Dickson 0-1-1, Shawn Bell 2-0-4, Chad Green 4-0-8, totals 20-6-46.

ROSS — Ryan Zimmerman 5-2-12, Jon Hetrick 3-1-8, Mike Patterson 8-1-17, Bobby Carter 1-0-2, Shane Willer 3-0-6, Jason Zilles 1-0-2, Tyrone Williams 4-2-10, Scott Root 1-1-3, Alec Shawl 1-0-2, totals 27-7-62.

3-point goals: Hetrick.

Records: Zanesville 6-6, Ross 8-3.

Ross survives Eastwood scare

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

Steve Stoller smiled in the face of defeat, while Frank Gioffre winced in the face of victory.

Stoller was upbeat after his Eastwood Eagles lost to Gioffre's Ross Little Giants 57-55 in a high school boys basketball game Tuesday night at Ross High School. Gioffre was down-cast.

"I told the kids coming in tonight, I really thought we could win," Stoller said, "but I did not want to say that to anybody but our kids."

Stoller's thoughts were nearly carried out.

Eastwood led only once, 30-29, a half minute into the second half on Gary Haas' bucket, but never trailed by more than nine.

"Did we play tonight?" Gioffre

asked, putting little stock in the fact the Little Giants may have been looking ahead to Friday's Buckeye Central Conference game at Findlay.

"I have no idea. That was a very disappointing game; we did not do the job on the offensive end or the defensive end," he said.

Stoller said, "I was hoping we would catch them looking past

us."

Ross started quickly, scoring the first four points on Jeff Green baskets, and took a 16-8 first-quarter lead.

The first quarter set the tone for the night: spurts. First Ross, then Eastwood. Eventually, the Eagles would have the last spurt, but not enough time.

Eastwood outscored Ross 9-2 in the final two minutes of the first

half and trailed 29-28.

"Our first half defense was pitiful," Gioffre said. "We could not stop the dribbler; the guy would go right by us on the dribble."

"You know we play at Findlay Friday and then at Sandusky (Jan. 26). We've got a long road ahead of us."

See ROSS, B4

Ross

Continued From B1

Eastwood nearly threw in a roadblock, but one Little Giant was able to avoid it.

Chris Wolfe, who led all scorers with 25 points, took charge of the Ross offense in the second half — scoring 19 of the Little Giants' 28 points.

Wolfe, who also grabbed 13 rebounds, scored eight points in the third quarter, giving Ross a 42-34 lead after three periods.

After falling behind for the only time, Ross raced to a 38-30 lead before Eastwood closed to 38-34.

In the final quarter, the Ross lead shrunk to 42-38 before a Green free throw and a Wolfe bucket made it 45-38. Haas, who led Eastwood with 19 points, answered with four consecutive free throws before Wolfe scored five straight for a 50-42 Little Giant lead.

Eastwood charged back, cutting the deficit to 50-48 with 2:19 remaining on a Haas basket, two free throws by Jason Bowser and Toby Thompson's bucket.

Ross countered as Green knocked in a bucket on a rebound, was fouled and made the free throw — only his second in seven attempts.

Wolfe followed with his second slam dunk of the night and added two free throws for Ross's biggest lead, 57-48, with 1:09 left.

"I still thought we could pull it out," Stoller said.

Only time was not on his side.

First Bowser and then 6-foot-8 junior Denny DeWese scored, cutting the Ross lead to 57-52 with 26 seconds left.

Kasey Lewis made the second

of two free throws with 12 seconds to go and Ross on top 57-53, but Eastwood got the ball back when Nick Wolf missed a free throw — the Little Giants' 12th miss in 21 attempts.

Tony Weis hit a jumper with three seconds left and Stoller called time out a second later, trailing by two.

The Ross inbounds pass was batted out of bounds as a tick fell off the clock. On the next attempt, the Little Giants got the ball in and time ran out on the Eagles.

"We were not aggressive at all tonight," Gioffre said. "I don't know what the answers are but we have two days to work on it. If we don't get it solved and we go to Findlay — that is probably one of the toughest places to play in the state of Ohio — it will be along night."

One of the keys for his team, Stoller said, was controlling the boards against the taller Little Giants. Each team finished with 35 rebounds. Green, who finished with 14 points, added 10 rebounds for Ross, while DeWese collected 13 for the Eagles.

"We might have won if we won the rebounding battle," Stoller said. "I remember two big rebounds Wolfe scored on. Shoot, but that's not bad. (Rebounding) has been our weakness all year."

Stoller glanced at the scorebook, seeing the 9-for-21 Ross free throw show.

"My goodness," he said, "if we could have been ... it's a big thing. Doggone it, I'll tell you, it was a heckuva game."

It was Eastwood's fifth loss in 12 games while Ross struggled to its 10th victory in a dozen outings.

"Yeah," Gioffre said, "it was the 10th win ... thank goodness."

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 57, Eastwood 55

Score by quarters

Eastwood	8	20	6	21	— 55
Ross	16	13	13	15	— 57

Scoring

EASTWOOD — Gary Haas 6-4-19, Kasey Lewis 2-2-7, Denny DeWese 2-1-5, Tony Weis 3-0-8, Jason Bowser 4-2-10, Toby Thompson 3-0-6, totals 20-9-55.

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 11-3-25, Nick Wolf 0-0-0, Jeff Green 6-2-14, Todd Clark 1-1-3, Justin Perry 1-0-2, Joe Frazier 3-0-6, Ryan Zimmerman 1-0-2, Mark Gottron 0-1-1, Mark Sheidler 2-2-4, totals 24-9-57.

3-point goals: Haas 3, Lewis, Weis 2.

Records: Eastwood 7-5, Ross 10-2.

Ross JV 67, Eastwood 46

Score by quarters

Eastwood	12	9	12	13	— 46
Ross	17	11	18	22	— 67

Scoring

EASTWOOD — Steve Staats 0-3-3, Jamie Jared 2-0-4, Rod Bauer 4-0-8, Brandon Donaldson 0-1-1, Bobby Flores 3-0-6, Chris Downey 1-0-2, Curt Lemmerbrock 9-2-20, Kevin Burtchin 1-0-2, totals 20-6-46.

ROSS — Alec Shawl 3-0-6, Ryan Zimmerman 7-1-15, Jon Hetrick 2-0-5, Mike Patterson 3-0-6, Brian Wilson 1-0-2, Bryan Myers 2-0-5, Bobby Carter 1-0-2, Shane Willer 1-2-4, Jason Zilles 3-2-8, Allen Dorsey 0-1-1, Tyrone Williams 3-2-8, Scott Root 2-1-5, totals 28-9-67.

3-point goals: Hetrick, Myers.

Record: Ross 9-3.

Ross at Findlay twice

By BOB MARKER

Staff writer

Fremont Ross missed a work day this week.

"These are the games where we really have to work hard on our overall games, Ross boys basketball coach Frank Gioffre said after Tuesday's 57-55 win over Eastwood. "We have to work on our defense and offense; start doing all the little things in our non-conference games.

"We have to do a good job in the non-conference games to help with our conference games."

Gioffre's team did not do that against the smaller Eagles.

"That was a very disappointing game," Gioffre said despite his team's 10th win in 12 games.

Tonight, Gioffre will find out if missing the day of work will hurt his team as he takes the Little Giants to Findlay for a Buckeye Central Conference clash. The Trojans are 8-2 and on a four-game winning streak.

Ross and Findlay are 2-1 in the BCC race, a half-game behind Lancaster, 3-1 in the conference.

The game tonight is the first of two in two days for Ross basketball teams at Findlay — Saturday, the girls play the Trojans.

Gioffre called Findlay "one of the toughest places to play in the state of Ohio," earlier this week.

Last season, Ross won at home but lost at Findlay.

Against Eastwood, Ross was victimized by the transition game (from defense to offense).

"If you thought Eastwood did

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

a good job in transition," Gioffre said, "wait till you see Findlay. They get the basketball out and run everytime; if they get a three-point shot with no one underneath on the break, they will pull up and shoot it."

Korey Hinkle and Todd Phillips are the top Trojan guns, Gioffre said. Phillips is averaging 20 points per game and Hinkle nearly 18 per contest. Hinkle has made 59 percent (66-of-112) of his two-point goal attempts and leads the BCC in 3-point accuracy at 50 percent. Phillips is a 50 percent shooter in two-point attempts and has made 28-of-70 (40 percent) 3-point attempts.

"They have the great shooters and the (Matt) Miles kid inside — I'll tell you, they are transition breakout after a made basket or a missed basket every single time," Gioffre said referring to his scouting reports.

Miles averages a dozen points a game and leads the Trojans in rebounding with over nine per game.

Gioffre said his team will run against multiple zone defenses with occasional pressure.

Findlay averages 70 points a game — first in the BCC — while allowing nearly 67, last in the conference games. The Trojans are the top shooting BCC team, making nearly 50 percent of their shots.

The junior varsity game begins at 6:15 p.m. Ross is 3-0 in

the BCC JV race, 9-3 overall. Findlay is 2-1 in the conference and 7-3 this season.

Saturday, the Ross girls, 8-4 and 2-2 in the BCC, takes on the Trojans, 7-5 and 1-2.

Ross is one of three BCC teams with two losses after Zanesville's 53-52 overtime win over Lancaster Thursday. The Little Giants are 2-2 while Zanesville and Lancaster are 4-2. Ross has four conference games left, Zanesville and Lancaster two each.

Findlay, on a four-game winning streak, is led by Allyson Creel, the BCC's leading scorer with a 16.6 average. Amy Jauert of the Trojans is third in scoring with 15.5 per contest. Vickie Castile (13.1) and Amy Ritzman (11.8) of Ross are fifth and sixth.

The JV game begins at 1 p.m., Saturday.

Ross comes up short at Findlay

By **BOB MARKER**

Staff writer

FINDLAY — One quarter does not make a basketball game.

Ross played well for one, miserably for the other three, and Findlay took advantage, rolling to a 78-70 Buckeye Central Conference win Friday night.

Toss out the first three quarters and Ross won 34-16, but Dr. James Naismith's game does not work that way. The Trojans won the first three quarters 62-36 and survived a scrambling, but aborted, Little Giants' comeback in the final quarter.

"You can't get down by 30 that quickly," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said.

Actually, Findlay's biggest lead was 29 points, but it was still too much for Ross.

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

The Little Giants, 10-3, slipped into third place in the BCC at 2-2. Findlay, 8-3, improved to 3-1. The Trojans are one-half game behind Lancaster, which defeated Zanesville 49-43.

"They threw a little 1-3-1 half-court zone defense on us and we panicked," Gioffre said. "We practiced against it all week but they got in our passing lanes and we did not even make a ball fake and dribble in against it.

"We started doing that in the second half and we started creating shots for everybody."

Findlay forced 14 first-half turnovers by Ross, which turned it over 24 times in the game.

Ross had come back this year, charging from 16 points down with a minute to go in the third quarter to defeat Newark in overtime earlier this month, and Gioffre had his hopes in this one.

With 90 seconds left, Ross trailed 74-63 after back-to-back 3-point baskets by Chris Wolfe and Nick Wolf.

"After that, we called timeout and wanted to foul quickly but we never got a chance to foul and they were able to take a lot of time off the clock (from 1:27 to 0:46.) and that hurt," Gioffre said.

A corps of juniors sparked the Little Giants' final-quarter onslaught.

"Our juniors played really hard," Gioffre said, clicking off the names of Damon Walker, Ryan Zimmerman, Nick Wolf, Mark Sheidler and Alec Shawl.

"Those kids were not going to quit; they did everything we asked them to do ... and we made a run at 'em."

Jerry Snodgrass, acting coach for the Trojans in place of Roger Renz, who missed the game because of illness, said, "That shows the type athlete Ross has; they never gave up."

In the end, Ross came up short. In the beginning, Findlay was pulverizing the Little Giants.

"What hurt us," Gioffre said, "is they shoot the basketball so well; we knew that they were going to get it on the break ... shoot threes (3-point attempts) off the break. We worked on it all week, getting back quickly and finding our man."

Only Todd Phillips, the BCC's leading scorer, was the invisible man. Phillips, a wispy 6-3 senior, banged in six 3-pointers while scoring 30 points in only three quarters as the Trojans built their huge lead.

"Phillips can shoot the basketball," Gioffre said. "Once he got going, he just got everyone else involved in the game, got the crowd into the game and that was the ballgame."

Ross stayed close briefly, trailing 8-5 with 3:30 left in the first quarter but Findlay outscored the Little Giants 15-3 in the next five minutes. Matt Miles, a 6-6 senior, helped Phillips in the early going, outscoring his teammate 7-5 in the first quarter, but Phillips was just getting warm.

He canned a pair of 3-pointers to go with a deuce in the second quarter and the Trojans took a 38-22 lead at the half, but saved his best for the third quarter.

Phillips tossed in a trio of 3-pointers, added a two-pointer and made five of six free throws, scoring 16 of his team's 24 points. That gave the Trojans a 26-point lead heading into the final eight minutes.

In the final quarter, Gioffre's junior brigade, along with a rotation of senior veterans, broke loose. Wolfe scored 12 points. Todd Clark added eight and Nick Wolf canned a pair of 3-pointers. Shawl added a 3-pointer as the Little Giants made 12-of-26 shots in the period, five of them from beyond the 3-point arc.

Ross cut the deficit to 76-68 on two Clark free throws but there were just 18 seconds left. Lamont Paris put Findlay up by 10 a few seconds later and Mark Gottron's bucket at the buzzer cut the final deficit to single digits.

Wolfe finished with 22 points and grabbed 11 rebounds. Clark, with 11, was the only other Little Giant in double figures.

Findlay 78, Ross 70

Score by quarters

Ross	10	12	14	34	— 70
Findlay	19	19	24	16	— 78

Scoring

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 9-2-22, Joe Frazier 0-0-0, Jeff Green 4-0-8, Todd Clark 3-3-11, Justin Perry 0-0-0, Nick Wolf 2-3-9, Mark Gottron 3-1-7, Damon Walker 1-2-4, Ryan Zimmerman 1-0-2, Mark Sheidler 1-0-3, Alec Shawl 1-1-4, totals 25-12-70.

FINDLAY — Todd Phillips 9-6-30, Korey Hinkle 5-2-12, Matt Miles 3-5-11, Jeff Cobb 1-2-4, Lamont Paris 3-5-11, Chrfris Ireland 1-0-2, Aaron Grlak 1-0-2, Erik Fenberg 1-2-4, Matt Gray 1-0-2, totals 25-22-78.

3-point goals: Wolfe 2, Clark 2, Wolf 2, Sheidler, Shawl, Phillips 6.

Records: Ross 10-3 (2-2), Findlay 8-3 (3-1).

Findlay JV 50, Ross 48

Score by quarters

Ross	4	16	13	15	— 48
Findlay	14	12	8	16	— 50

Scoring

ROSS — Alec Shawl 2-0-4, Ryan Zimmerman 6-4-16, Jon Hetrick 4-0-10, Mike Patterson 7-0-16, Tyrone Williams 1-0-2, totals 20-4-48.

FINDLAY — Javan Conley 9-0-18, Doug DePuy 4-0-8, Anthony Hall 4-0-8, Chris Allison 1-0-2, Marlon Berry 6-1-13, Jon Nichols 0-1-1, totals 24-2-50.

3-point goals: Hetrick 2, Patterson 2.

Records: Ross 9-4 (3-1), Findlay 8-3 (3-1).

Rebounding on minds of Little Giants

Gioffre prepares Ross for Sandusky

By BOB MARKER

Staff writer

It will be a homecoming in a pressure cooker when Fremont Ross visits Sandusky Saturday.

Frank Gioffre, the first-year coach at Ross, returns to the school where he honed his coaching skills, guiding the Blue Streaks' junior varsity teams to more than 50 wins in three years prior to coming to Fremont this season.

After a rare Friday night off, Gioffre will put the Little Giants' 10-3 mark up against Sandusky's 9-4. The Blue Streaks warm up for Ross with a game against North Ridgeville Friday.

The Little Giants will face a pressure defense almost the moment they get off the bus.

"They are good, quick, will press us and get the basketball up and run with it," Gioffre succinctly described the Sandusky.

"'Streak ball' is still alive and well over there," Gioffre said. "We have to handle their press and make them work on the defensive end. If we do break the press, we have to make transition and take it to them. If not, we have to be patient."

Gioffre said a key to stopping the Streaks' running game is rebounding.

"We have to crash the boards," he said, "and score some easy baskets; get the second and third shots."

The Little Giants, however, will go into Sandusky minus one of its top two rebounders, Jeff Green, who has been suspended for two games.

"The suspension started Jan. 21 (Monday)," Gioffre said. "It is a disciplinary suspension, mine and the school's."

Ross

Continued From B1

Green was involved in an altercation with a Findlay student at the end of a 78-70 loss last Friday but Gioffre would not elaborate on the reasons for the suspension.

The 6-7 senior will come off the suspension in time for the Feb. 5 game against Oregon Clay.

Damon Walker, who started several games earlier in the season, will likely replace Green.

On the Sandusky side, Davio McDaniels, a 6-4 point guard, keys the Sandusky offense.

"He makes everyone on the court play better," the Gioffre said. "He handles the ball well,

is a good passer, a great shot. He is probably one of the better players in the area."

Other key Streaks are 5-9 Brian Willis, 6-0 Sha-Ki Johnson and 6-5 Scott Irby.

"Willis plays great defense and can hit the three (3-point goal)," Gioffre said. "Johnson will cause a lot of problems defensively and Irby is a great shot-blocker."

Ross is coming off a disappointing loss at Findlay. The Little Giants played poorly for three quarters, trailing 62-36, before outscoring the Trojans 34-16 in the final eight minutes.

"I hope that is a carryover," Gioffre said, "because we will need it."

Final minutes costly for Ross against Sandusky

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

SANDUSKY — The grand finale did not follow the author's script as Sandusky handed Fremont Ross a 50-39 setback in high school basketball Saturday night.

Sandusky, 11-4 and riding an eight-game winning streak, outscored Ross 13-2 in the final two minutes and 25 seconds to break a 37-all deadlock.

Ross, 10-4, had followed coach Frank Gioffre's script for 29½ minutes before fumbling the the last few lines.

"... I wanted to keep the score low and have a chance to win it the last two minutes," Gioffre said. "We were there the whole way until the last three minutes, then we missed a couple of key opportunities."

"We missed some bunnies in the third quarter that could have changed the out-

come of this game," Gioffre said. "The problem is we have some seniors on our team and we have to have some senior leadership; we have been looking for it all year, but we have still have not found it yet."

Sandusky coach John Schlessman said, "If you are a positive person, you say, 'Great defense, right?' and that's what we want to say. I think anytime you hold a team to 39 points — it may have been a little bit of a slowed-down game — but, there was a lot of up-tempo basketball and they only scored 39 points and I think that is a credit to our defense."

"It all started with Sha-Ki Johnson on the ball; our ball pressure was tremendous," Schlessman continued, "and Fremont was not able to just come down the floor, set it up and run their offense."

Gioffre agreed.

"We were catching the ball 25 feet from the basket and it's hard to start an offense that far away," the Ross coach said.

Chris Wolfe, the Little Giants' leading scorer and rebounder, fouled out with 3:35 to play, leaving a hole in the Ross offense and defense.

"That really cost us," Gioffre continued, "because there went our inside game."

"We turned the basketball over way too many times (29), though," he said. "That was the key for us. We needed to do a better job of controlling the tempo, but you can't when you don't have the basketball."

Using mostly 2-3 and 1-3-1 zone defenses,

Ross kept the Blue Streaks offstride.

"I absolutely did not," Schlessman said when asked if he expected Ross to use the zones. "I thought he would play some man ... it was obvious they were going to go with a zone and they play a great zone

— they don't just stand around like a bunch of scarecrows, they move."

"We got a few shots blocked inside and I think that affected our shooting inside, but you noticed when Wolfe fouled out," Schlessman said, "we scored four buckets in the paint."

Mike Franklin came off the bench to score 19 points, 13 in the final quarter for Sandusky. He also grabbed six rebounds, four off the offensive board, in the second half and took a charge from Wolfe, the 6-7 senior's fifth foul, as Wolfe drove to the basket. Wolfe finished with 12 points and five rebounds.

Ross trailed 19-17 at the half after being down 13-6 and 15-8. Nick Wolf, who scored six of his team-high 15 points in the second period, tied the game at 17 with a short

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

jumper from the right side after grabbing a rebound.

The Little Giants took the lead, 23-22, on two Nick Wolf free throws and got their biggest lead, 28-24, on a 3-point goal by Chris Wolfe with 1:50 remaining in the third quarter.

Ross led 28-26 heading into the final quarter before Franklin canned two free throws and a bucket for a 33-32 Sandusky lead with 4:35 to play. Joe Frazier gave Ross the lead again 34-33 with two free throws before Darvion McDaniel put in a rebound for a 35-34 Sandusky lead with 4:10 remaining.

Nick Wolf's basket gave Ross its final lead, 36-35, with 3:52 on the clock. Franklin gave Sandusky a 37-36 lead before Todd Clark tied it with a free throw, 37-37, with 2:44 left to play. The Blue Streaks took centerstage from that point.

McDaniel started a 13-point Blue Streaks run with a basket

before Sandusky hit nine straight free throws, the final two by Brian Willis with 42 seconds left.

Ross was only 13-of-47 (28 percent) shooting and Sandusky 17 of 56 (30 percent). Sandusky out-rebounded Ross 38-37 as McDaniel, who had 11 points, grabbed 10. Damon Walker led Ross with nine while Nick Wolfe had eight.

Gioffre, who coached the Sandusky junior varsity to a 54-6 record the last three seasons before coming to Ross, discounted any added pressure on his team because of the informal homecoming.

"I tried not to let the emotion of me coming back to Sandusky interfere with what we were trying to do," he said. "We were flat and Sandusky was flat."

Only Sandusky got pumped up at the right time and took the final bow.

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Basketball

High School Boys

Sandusky 50, Ross 39

Score by quarters

Ross	6	11	11	11	— 39
Sandusky	11	8	7	24	— 50

Scoring

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 5-1-12, Nick Wolf 5-5-15, Damon Walker 0-0-0, Todd Clark 3-1-8, Mark Gottron 0-0-0, Joe Frazier 0-2-2, Justin Perry 0-2-2, totals 13-11-39.

SANDUSKY — Darvio McDaniel 4-3-11, Shi-Ki Johnson 2-0-4, Scott Irby 3-0-6, Shawn Reed 1-0-2, Brian Willis 1-4-6, Mike Franklin 5-9-19, Maurice Kirksey 1-0-2, totals 17-16-50.

3-point goals: Wolfe, Clark.

Records: Ross 10-4, Sandusky 11-4.

Sandusky JV 51, Ross 48

Score by quarters

Ross	6	12	19	11	— 48
Sandusky	7	18	8	18	— 51

Scoring

ROSS — Alex Shawl 1-0-2, Ryan Zimmerman 4-1-9, Jon Hetrick 4-4-12, Mike Patterson 6-0-12, Brian Myers 2-0-4, Bobby Carter 1-0-2, Shane Willer 1-0-2, Tyrone Williams 1-3-5, totals 20-8-48.

SANDUSKY — Brad Johnson 4-1-9, Chad Taylor 2-5-9, Tavarous Turner 5-0-11, Tron Lofton 3-1-8, Tony Esposito 1-0-2, Nate Conway 4-0-8, DeMonte Harper 1-0-2, Steve Scales 1-0-2, totals 21-7-51.

3-point goals: Turner, Lofton.

Records: Ross 9-5, Sandusky 13-2.

Ross faces Gales' force

By TIM HARMON
Staff writer

Adversity stares in the face of the Fremont Ross boys basketball team.

According to Ross coach Frank Gioffre, the Little Giants plan to stare back.

Ross, 10-4 and 2-2 in the Buckeye Central Conference, travels to Lancaster Friday night.

"We haven't been very successful down there," Gioffre said. "That's a tough place to play, but we want to go down there and turn the BCC around."

The Little Giants will be with-

out center Jeff Green — who is serving a two-week suspension — and reserve guard Hector Rodriguez — who is academically ineligible — following a week when leading scorer Chris Wolfe has been bothered by turf toe and Joe Frazier, Ryan Zimmerman and Damon Walker have been ill.

"We've had a real good week of practice," Gioffre said. "We're ready for the challenge even though we know we're in for a battle."

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

Wolfe, averaging 17.9 points per game, suffered his injury during a game last week when he came down on his toe after grabbing a rebound. "He's in a lot of pain," Gioffre said.

Ross hasn't been a decided underdog in a conference game since defeating Newark Jan. 4.

"Our kids like (underdog status)," Gioffre said.

Lancaster, 14-2 and 4-2 in the BCC, is ranked ninth in Division I in The Associated Press weekly state boys basketball poll.

The Golden Gales, who trail Findlay (4-1) in the BCC race, defeated Ross 58-50 in Fremont Dec. 28.

"When they came up here, we just didn't play very well," Gioffre said. "This is a big game for us. It can either make us or

break us in the BCC.

"If we win at Lancaster, we're back in the BCC. If we go down there and get beat, it could be a long road back to the top."

While Gioffre is uncertain who will comprise his starting lineup, Lancaster will go with 6-foot-8 Greg Cave and 6-foot-4 Tim Henwood in the post, Bob Spieth (6-2) at point guard, Bill Dilley (6-foot) at one wing and either Kenny Muck (6-2) or Bucky Triplett (5-11) at the other wing.

Triplett has been hampered most of the season by an injured ankle, according to Gioffre, but was a starter prior to the injury.

Cave, a senior averaging 20 points and 11.5 rebounds a game, is bound for the University of North Carolina-Wilmington — where Ross's all-time leading scorer, Greg Bender, attended college.

"Henwood is a kid that has really kept them in the stand-

ings," Gioffre said. "When teams double-down on Cave, he's been getting to the open spots and filling it."

Gioffre knows the task at hand is a tough one.

"Our conference is so strong from top to bottom, that it's tough for teams to win on away trips," he said. "But we were fortunate to win at Newark, and we hope to go down to Lancaster and pull off an upset."

Lancaster slips past Ross 50-48

News-Messenger reports

LANCASTER — Fremont Ross came up short in a "must win" game as Lancaster sneaked past the Little Giants 50-48 in a Buckeye Central Conference boys basketball game Friday night.

The win for the Golden Gales, ranked ninth in Division I in the latest Associated Press poll, pushed them a half-game ahead of Findlay, a 65-63 loser to Newark Friday, in the BCC race.

Lancaster, 15-2, has a 5-2 conference mark while Findlay is 4-2. Ross, losing its third game in a row, is 10-5 and 2-3 in the conference race. The Little Giants' title hopes are dimmed, but not completely.

Lancaster would have to lose its final conference game at Newark Feb. 15 while Findlay will have to lose at least one of its two BCC games. Newark is also 4-2 in the conference race. Ross must win its three confer-

ence games, which includes hosting Newark Feb. 8 and Findlay Feb. 22, to force a three-way tie. Findlay hosts Zanesville Feb. 8.

Nick Wolf pulled Ross even with Lancaster with less than four minutes to play, sinking a bucket and hitting a 3-point basket for a 43-43 deadlock with 3:50 to play.

Tim Henwood got Lancaster back on top with a tip-in 25 seconds later.

Henwood gave the Golden Gales a 46-43 lead, hitting one of two free throws with 2:21 to play. Todd Clark got Ross back to within a point with two free throws with 1:08 remaining, but with the Golden Gales slowing the pace down, Ross was forced to foul.

Bob Spieth made a free throw with 51 seconds to play, putting Lancaster up 47-45 before back-to-back turnovers by both teams ended with Lancaster's Kenny

Muck making a free throw for a 48-45 lead with 22 seconds remaining.

Muck's free throw followed a controversial call by the officials. Lancaster had six men on the floor when the ball was handed to a Golden Gale for the pass inbound, but the officials stopped the play, allowing the extra man to get off the floor and awarded the ball to Lancaster.

"We could have been shooting a pair of technicals," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said, "and we would have had the ball out-of-bounds."

Gioffre made his feeling felt, singing the ears of the officials during a Ross timeout, but his arguments fell on deaf ears.

Lancaster added free throws by Bill Dilley and Greg Cave down the stretch for a 50-45 lead before Chris Wolfe's long shot at the buzzer cut the Little Giants'

final deficit to two.

Gioffre, his voice hoarse from the vocal efforts of the game, said, "We kept switching our offense back and fourth to confuse them and that may have cost us."

He referred to a pair of turnovers in the final moments.

"Mark Shiedler had a great game," the Ross coach said. "He does a great job of taking the ball to the hole. He sprained his ankle in our fourth scrimmage and he really is just now getting back into the flow."

"Damon Walker has had the flu all week and his cousin died but he played a great game for us," Gioffre said. Walker scored six points and grabbed eight rebounds.

Shiedler matched his season high with seven points, hitting three buckets on drives through

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

the middle.

Cave, a 6-8 senior, paced Lancaster with 22 points. Henwood and Dilley added nine apiece.

Chris Wolfe topped Ross with 16 points. Tood Clark added nine and Nick Wolf had eight.

Ross trailed 10-6 after one quarter and 26-19 at the half. Lancaster took a 39-33 lead into the final quarter.

Ross made 19-of-45 shots and Lancaster 15-of-55. The Little Giants missed 6-of-11 free throws while the Golden Gales made 18-of-27. Ross had 11 turnovers, seven more than Lancaster.

The Little Giants return to action Tuesday, hosting Oregon Clay.

Lancaster 50, Ross 48

Score by quarters

Ross	6	13	14	15	—	48
Lancaster	10	16	13	11	—	50

Scoring

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 7-0-16, Nick Wolf 3-1-8, Damon Walker 3-0-6, Todd Clark 2-4-9, Mark Sheidler 3-1-7, Justin Perry 1-0-2, totals 19-6-48.

LANCASTER — Greg Cave 7-8-22, Tim Henwood 3-3-9, Kenny Muck 0-1-1, Bob Spieth 3-1-7, Bill Dilley 2-3-9, J.J. Searls 0-2-2, totals 15-18-50.

3-point goals: Wolfe 2, Wolf, Clark Dilley 2.

Records: Ross 10-5 (2-3), Lancaster 15-2 (5-2).

JV game: Lancaster 73-50.

Ross transforms lead into loss

Clay wins in overtime

By TIM HARMON
Staff writer

Dr. Giant turned into Mr. Little at halftime as Oregon Clay defeated Fremont Ross 54-50 in overtime Tuesday night.

Clay scored the first 13 points of the second half after Ross hummed to a 29-17 halftime lead.

The Eagles, 8-8, outscored Ross 18-4 in the third quarter.

"We went completely away from our offense," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said. "We stopped doing the things that we did in the first half."

"Everyone thought they should become a scorer, and we didn't move the ball."

The Little Giants, 10-6, moved the ball well enough in the first half to make 12-of-24 shots.

That would change for the worse (Ross made 6-of-23 in the second half) as would a defense that forced seven Clay turnovers in the second quarter — allowing the Little Giants to outscore the Eagles 13-5 in the period.

"I don't think we played real hard in the first half," Clay coach Doug Dippman said. "Fremont's pressure really hurt us in two ways."

"The full-court pressure caused us to come up the court out of sync or unorganized. The half-court pressure pushed us out too far (from the basket)."

"And we just didn't execute on offense very well."

Ross used its hustling play to put together solid quarters of 16 and 13 points in the first half.

"We have not put four quarters together this year," Gioffre said. "They physically out-hustled us in the second half."

"When you score four points in a quarter, you're in trouble."

Clay, meanwhile, made 8-of-13 shots in the third quarter and finished 14-of-26 from the field in the second half.

The Eagles' run to start the

half featured nine points by Steve Finch. A layup by Finch after one of six third-quarter Ross turnovers gave the Eagles their first lead, 31-30, since an 8-6 advantage midway through the first quarter.

A 17-footer from the circle by Nick Wolf stopped Clay's run, and two free throws by Mark Sheidler gave Ross a 33-30 lead.

Another basket by Finch and a three-point play by Greg Schuler, however, gave the Eagles a 35-33 lead with one quarter left to play.

The lead changed hands three times in the fourth quarter before the game went into overtime tied at 46.

Jay Dunn's foul shot with 17 seconds remaining was the only point scored in the final 2:44, when Todd Clark's two free throws gave Ross a 46-45 lead.

A turnover by Ross gave the Eagles the ball with 30 seconds left in regulation.

Dunn missed the bonus foul shot, but Mark Gottron's 10-footer along the right baseline for Ross was short. Clay's Ross Revenaugh chased the rebound down near the sideline, and the Eagles called a timeout with five seconds to go.

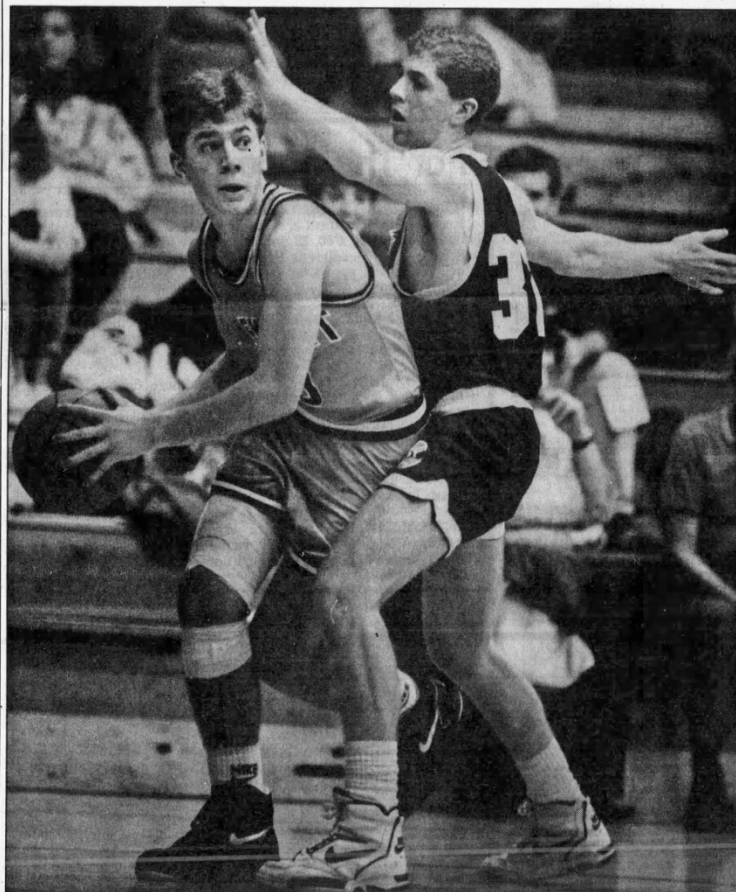
Finch, who finished with 19 points to support Josh Jaco's 22, misfired from the left wing as time expired.

"We wanted the ball in Steve's hands," Dippman said.

Dunn's foul-line jump shot a minute into overtime, and two free throws by Jaco gave Clay the lead for good.

A foul shot by Chris Wolfe, and a 15-footer by Clark from the foul line made it 50-49, but Jaco got free behind the Ross defense for a slam following a timeout.

Jaco, though, was assessed a technical foul for hanging on the



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

JUSTIN PERRY (left) of Fremont Ross looks to pass around Oregon Clay's Greg Schuler during the first half of the Eagles 54-50 overtime victory over the Little Giants Tuesday night.

See ROSS, B2

Ross

Continued From B1

rim. Clark made one of two foul shots, but Ross failed to score on the ensuing possession.

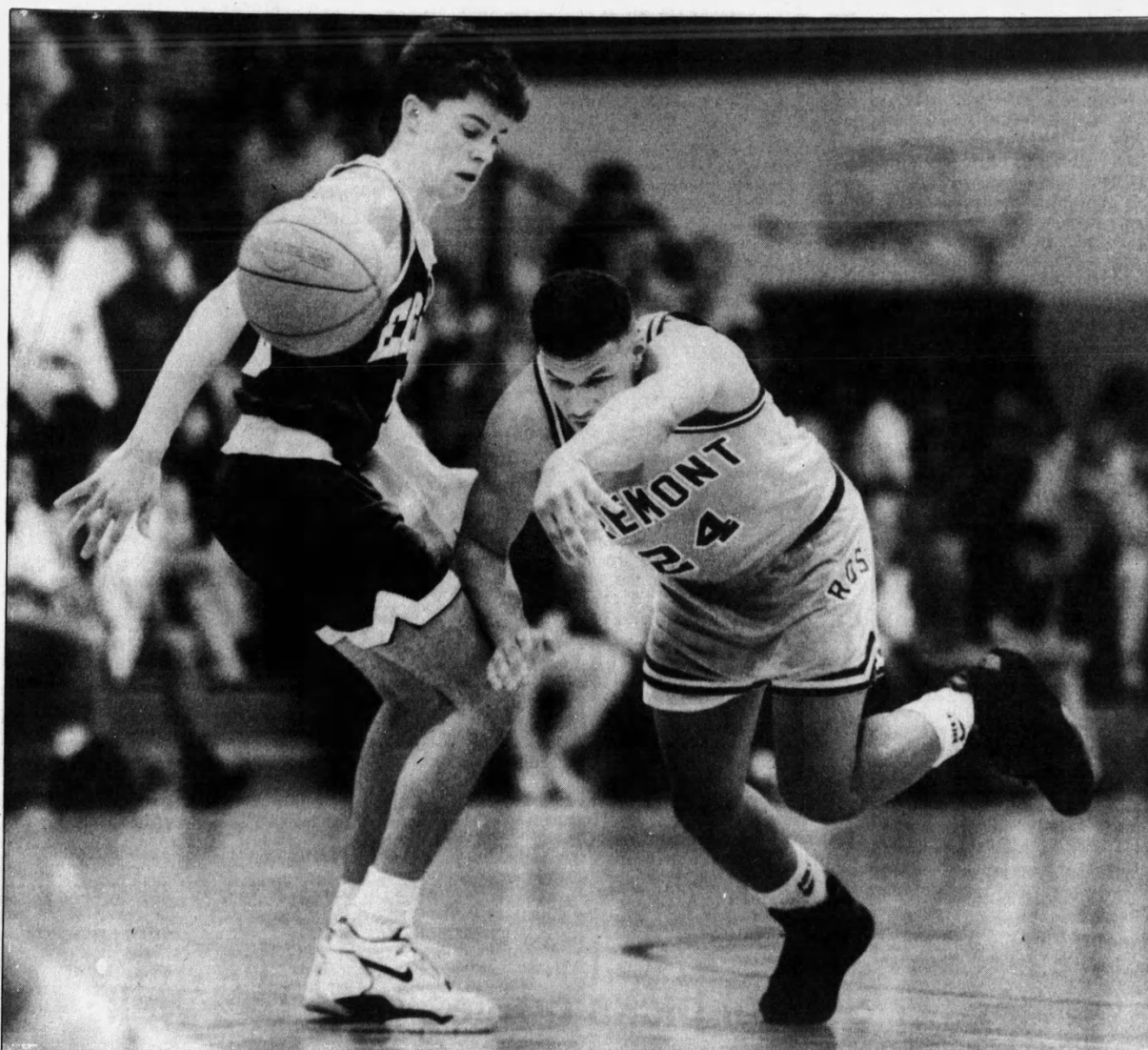
A lay-in by Jaco — who again got behind the Ross defense — with 25 seconds left finished the scoring.

Clark missed 3-point attempts after Revenaugh then Finch missed the front end of one-and-ones in the final 14 seconds.

Clark finished with 16 points, and Sheidler chipped in 10.

"We have to work together more as a group," Gioffre said. "We have too many people trying to do things on their own ..."

"It's a team basketball game."



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

Losing the handle

Todd Clark (24) of Ross loses the ball as Oregon Clay's Jay Dunn defends during the Eagles' overtime victory Tuesday night.

Basketball

High School Boys

Clay 54, Ross 50 (OT)

Score by quarters

Clay	12	5	18	11	8	—	54
Ross	16	13	4	13	4	—	50

Scoring

CLAY — Jay Dunn 1-3-5, Ross Revenaugh 0-1-1, Greg Schuler 2-1-5, Josh Jaco 8-6-22, Steve Finch 8-2-19, Mike Donnelly 1-0-2, totals 20-13-54.

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 3-2-8, Mark Sheidler 4-2-10, Nick Wolf 2-0-4, Todd Clark 4-4-16, Damon Walker 2-0-4, Mark Gottron 0-0-0, Justin Perry 2-4-9, Joe Frazier 1-0-2, Jeff Green 0-0-0, Mike Patterson 0-0-0, Tyronne Williams 0-0-0, totals 18-12-50.

3-point goals: Finch, Clark 2.

Records: Clay 8-8, Ross 10-6.

Clay JV 47, Ross 43

Score by quarters

Clay	5	18	12	12	—	47
Ross	14	6	13	10	—	43

Scoring

CLAY — Scott Fisher 1-0-2, Brian Schroeder 4-4-15, Dan Tobias 3-0-8, Jason Toth 1-3-5, Jeff Finch 1-1-3, Dave Kachmarik 1-0-2, Eric Gibbs 2-0-4, Ben Pfeiffer 4-0-8, totals 17-8-47.

ROSS — Jon Hetrick 5-0-11, Tyronne Williams 5-1-11, Mike Patterson 2-0-4, Allen Dorsey 1-0-2, Shane Willer 0-2-2, Brian Wilson 1-0-2, Ryan Zimmerman 3-3-9, Alec Shawl 1-0-2, totals 18-6-43.

3-point goals: Schroeder 3, Tobias 2, Hetrick.

Records: Clay 13-3, Ross 9-7.

Ross seeks turnaround

By **BOB MARKER**

Staff writer

Opposite directions. That's where the Newark and Fremont Ross boys basketball paths are headed.

That's good for Newark; bad for Ross.

Newark, 10-7, rolls into Fremont Friday night.

The Wildcats are riding a three-game winning streak while winning six of their last seven. Ross, after winning 10 of its first 12 games, has not won in its last four outings — the most recent loss a 54-50 overtime loss to Oregon Clay after the Little Giants led 29-17 at halftime.

"We need a win," Ross coach

Frank Gioffre succinctly put it after Wednesday's practice.

It won't be easy.

Newark, winner of all four previous Buckeye Central Conference basketball races, nearly played itself out a fifth title after breaking even in its first four conference clashes. The second BCC loss was a 64-63 overtime loss to the Little Giants, a game in which Newark had led by 17 in first half and was enjoying a 16-point lead with two minutes remaining in the third quarter.

The loss was a shocker, and it put a charge in the Wildcats. Two BCC wins later, including a

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

65-53 win over Findlay last Friday, and Newark is tied for first with the Trojans and poised to win another conference crown.

On the other hand, Ross is reeling.

"We all have lost some confidence," Gioffre admitted about himself and his team, "but the main the thing is we are not giving up. We are not giving up on each other and we are going to fight through this thing to the end.

"We are going to make something happen."

Gioffre said that while his team was 10-2, "Everything was fine and dandy but all of a sudden now we are on a four-game skid and we are starting to not really point fingers at each other, but we are starting to look

for answers.

"The things that got us to the 10 wins, well, we are losing track of what we really want to do. We have to get back to the basics again and really start playing within ourselves and play as a group — that's the key right now."

It will have to be quick reversal. Following Newark, Ross travels to Fostoria (The Redmen are undefeated in the Great Lakes League) Tuesday and heads for Zanesville on Feb. 15 before closing out the regular season at home with Findlay on Feb. 22.

But first, Newark.

"They have some kids who were sort of role players at the beginning of the year, who are stepping forward and really contributing to their overall team play," Gioffre said. "It's not just a (Jeff) Quackenbush-(Bobby) Sellers show anymore."

Feature show or not, Quacken-

bush and Seller make the Wildcats growl.

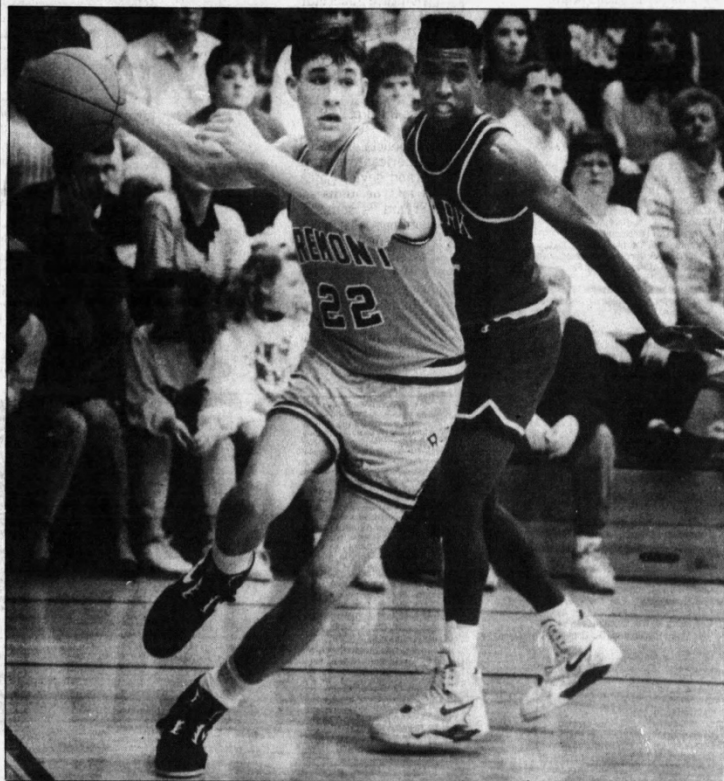
Quackenbush leads the BCC in scoring and rebounding, putting in nearly 21 points per game and grabbing nearly 13 rebounds a contest. Sellers adds more that 16 points per game while dishing out nearly five assists per game, tops in the BCC.

The Little Giants will have to stop the duo, control the other Wildcats, while trying to lay the foundation for the remainder of the season.

"I'm not gonna get down on these kids," Gioffre said. "I am going to back these kids no matter what — we are going to continue to work and we are going to make something out of this season — we really are.

"The BCC is still wide open; we are only one game back and we are really going to be ready for this game."

If the Little Giants follow that path, the paths could switch directions.



CHRIS WOLFE of Fremont Ross drives the baseline as Newark's Bob Sellers looks on.

Newark trips Little Giants

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

T.J. Somers is not a doctor but the shot he gave Newark boosted the Wildcats to a 66-63 win over Fremont Ross Friday night in the Purple Pit.

The win kept Newark on line for its fourth consecutive Buckeye Central Conference title, while the loss was Ross's fifth in a row and seventh against 10 wins.

The Little Giants are 2-4 in the BCC. Newark is tied with Findlay — a 71-61 winner over Zanesville — and Lancaster, all with 5-2 conference records.

Lancaster was idle Friday. Somers, a 6-4 junior, launched a 3-point shot that hit nothing but net with one second left in the third quarter, cutting a six-point Newark deficit to 46-43 with eight minutes left.

"We knew that right away (momentum changing on the shot)," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said. "That is why we tried to come out in the fourth quarter and take our time and be patient... work the ball around and try to get the rhythm back into our hands."

There was no stopping Newark, though.

Less than 40 seconds into the final quarter, Newark took the lead 49-48 on two Antwan Spivey free throws and the Little Giants

never regained the lead. The Wildcats had led just once before that — 3-0 on Somers' first 3-pointer a minute into the game.

The game was tied six times, the last at 48.

Newark took the lead from the spot where it had the most trouble in the first three quarters — the foul line — and then held the Little Giants at bay from the same spot. After missing 9-of-16 free throws in the first three quarters, the Wildcat made 16-of-20 in the final eight minutes.

After taking the lead, the Wildcats increased it to 52-48 as Bob Sellers converted a Ross turnover on Chris Wolfe's charge into the two-basket margin. Wolfe had been called for the charge — his fourth foul — after passing off to Jeff Green for an easy layup, but instead of two Ross points, Wolfe was forced to the bench temporarily with six minutes to play.

Four minutes later, Wolfe fouled out while attempting to block 6-foot-8 Jeff Quackenbush's shot. The 6-7 Ross senior had not committed a foul in the first half and had only one after three quarters.

"They were aggressive fouls going after second and third shots," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said. "That was a big

Ross

Continued From B1

key to the game when Chris Wolfe got into foul trouble and had to come out of the game."

Wolfe finished with 14 points — one in the second half — while grabbing 12 rebounds.

The Newark lead reached 63-55 with 57 seconds remaining on Sellers 24th and 25th points of the game before Ross charged back.

Baskets by Green and Todd Clark were sandwiched around a missed free throw by Newark's Bret Salsberry, making it 63-59 with 27 seconds to play. Somers made one of two free throws four seconds later as Ross stormed back into contention. Clark's 3-pointer cut it to 64-61 with 15 seconds to play.

Spivey stepped to the line with eight seconds left after Green committed his fifth foul. Spivey hit the first shot, missed the second but got another try when a Little Giant was called for a lane violation. Spivey made good on

the reprieve, icing the win. Ryan Zimmerman's tip at the buzzer only made the loss closer for the Little Giants.

"Newark did everything they had to do down the stretch to win," Gioffre said. "They made their free throws, moved the basketball, hit the open man and they stroked the jumpers."

After the game, a brief skirmish between the players was quickly broken up by coaches and administrators from both schools.

"I really don't know what happened," Gioffre said.

"It was a great basketball game," Newark coach Gary Walters said. "We have come up here four times and have had four games just like this."

"This was a very emotional, emotional game and we are delighted with the win."

Ross had kept the Wildcats off stride, holding the BCC's leading scorer, Quackenbush, to nine points, eight in the first half but while Quackenbush was being checked, Sellers erupted.

Sellers scored 13 first half

points, helping Newark reduce a 19-12 Ross first quarter lead to 32-30 at halftime.

"We took Quackenbush out," Gioffre said, "and we tried to take Sellers out, too. We tried everything on Sellers; we tried double-teaming him in the backcourt and all he did was find the open man. We tried to play off him; we went to a box-and-one — we did everything. When that kid's on, he is so much quicker than our kids that he just did it all."

Sellers, a 6-1 senior, also grabbed 10 rebounds, second to Quackenbush's 15.

Spivey had 11 points and Salsberry finished with 10. Clark topped Ross with 15 points and Green had 12 to go along with 10 rebounds.

"This is like a snowball," Gioffre said about the losing skid. "Hopefully it ends soon and we get back on track."

The snowball melts or gets bigger Tuesday when the Little Giants travel to Fostoria to take on the Redmen.

Newark 66, Ross 63

Score by quarters

Newark	12	18	14	22	— 66
Ross	19	13	15	16	— 63

Score by quarters

NEWARK — Jeff Quackenbush 2-5-9, Bob Sellers 11-2-25, Seth Deutsch 0-0-0, Brett Salsberry 3-4-10, T.J. Somers 2-3-9, Antwan Spivey 2-7-11, Brice Jones 1-0-2, totals 21-21-66.

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 5-4-14, Nick Wolf 2-1-6, Jeff Green 5-2-12, Todd Clark 5-4-15, Damon Walker 2-2-6, Mark Sheidler 0-4-4, Justin Perry 0-1-1, Mark Gottron 1-1-3, Ryan Zimmerman 1-0-2, totals 21-19-63.

3-point goals: Sellers, Somers 2, Wolf, Clark.

Records: Newark 11-7 (5-2), Ross 10-7 (2-4).

Ross JV 48, Newark 44

Score by quarters

Newark	9	10	8	17	— 44
Ross	10	9	19	10	— 48

Scoring

NEWARK — Ben Little 1-1-4, Shawn McMahon 1-0-3, Mike Hollister 1-0-2, Kenny Black 1-1-3, Brian Booher 1-0-2, Jeff Santa 1-2-4, Aaron Hays 1-0-2, Todd Pangborn 4-4-12, Phil Vogelmeier 4-0-8, D.L. Dunlap 1-2-4, totals 16-10-44.

ROSS — Jon Hetrick 4-4-15, Mike Patterson 4-0-8, Alec Shawl 1-0-2, Brian Wilson 0-1-1, Bryan Myers 3-1-7, Ryan Zimmerman 3-0-6, Allen Dorsey 2-0-4, Tyrone Williams 18-9-48.

3-point goals: Little, McMahon, Hetrick 3.

Records: Newark 8-10 (1-6), Ross 10-7 (4-2).

Ross

Continued From B1

getting it at the elbow or out by the three line. Anytime I can get a 6-7 kid the ball outside, I'm happy.

"That's as much zone as we've played in two months. We were in so much foul trouble early. That's the only reason we went to the zone."

That made the success Fostoria had with its 2-3 zone ironic. The Little Giants, 10-8, shot 45 percent but made 13-of-33 shots in the second half.

"We couldn't get the basketball to Jeff Green enough," Gioffre said. "We forced a lot of shots. We were so impatient the whole game. We shot the ball too quick."

The Little Giants used multiple defenses against the Redmen, including a 2-3 zone.

"We wanted to get the zone to move," Rutter said. "When you're playing a taller team, you have to take it at them."

"We told Tony and Russell (Settles and Robinson) to penetrate, but to do it under control, then kick it back out."

Fostoria outrebounded the taller Little Giants 28-25. The Redmen pulled down seven offensive rebounds in the second quarter and six in the fourth.

"We had to dominate the glass, and we didn't," Gioffre said. "They had a lot of second and third shots."

The Redmen took an 11-4 lead in the early going and led 13-7 after one quarter. Ross, though, scored the first six points of the second quarter for a 13-all tie.

Mark Sheidler's layup gave Ross a 19-15 lead, but Fostoria went back on top after a layup by Robinson and Settles' 3-point play after a Ross turnover.

Robinson followed with a 3-pointer, and Joe Frazier scored

for Ross before Settles and Robinson sandwiched 3-pointers around a 3-pointer by Wolf. The Redmen led 29-24 at halftime.

Fostoria took its biggest lead, 33-24, when Cousin and Settles scored at the outset of the third quarter. Ross answered with a 14-2 run capped by a 3-pointer by Wolfe and a steal and layup by Wolf, which gave the Little Giants a 38-35 lead.

Settles' fourth 3-pointer and two free throws by Kidwell put Fostoria on top 40-38 with one quarter to go.

Ross's Todd Clark tied the score with a jump shot from the left wing to open the fourth period. A basket by Ryan Dunbar, a 3-point play by Robinson and a putback by Dunbar gave Fostoria a 47-40 lead.

The Little Giants battled back.

A putback by Green, a layup off a turnover by Wolf and another wing shot by Clark made it 47-46.

After a Fostoria timeout, Rutter was assessed a technical foul and Clark made the second of two free throws. A runner by Clark off the glass on the ensuing possession made it 49-47.

Robinson made two foul shots, tying the score at 49. Wolfe scored, giving Ross its last lead at 51-49, before Robinson's 3-point play with 1:47 left.

Robinson made 6-of-6 free throws in the fourth quarter and Settles was 5-of-6 as the Redmen finished the game 15-of-17 from the foul line.

Ross committed two turnovers in the final minute, while Settles made 3-of-4 intentional foul shots in the last 25 seconds.

"We're just making too many mistakes at the end of games," Gioffre said. "We just need somebody to take over."

"It's sad to say. That shouldn't be the case 18 games into the season."

Ross loses sixth straight game

By TIM HARMON
Staff writer

FOSTORIA — Fremont Ross vs. Fostoria is likely to develop into a budding rivalry once Ross becomes a member of the Great Lakes League next school year.

The first seed was planted Tuesday night, and the Redmen were the first to water it — with a 60-55 victory.

Tony Settles and Russell Robinson scored 26 and 23 points, respectively, as

Fostoria handed the Little Giants their sixth straight loss.

"Defensively we should have went to a box (defense) on Settles and Robinson," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said. "They just took the game over."

"At times, our kids played great defense, but they seemed to get everything to go in. They really shot the basketball."

Fostoria, 14-4, seemingly shot better than its 36 percent (19-of-53) thanks in part

to seven 3-point field goals by Settles and Robinson.

The lead changed hands seven times. The Redmen seized it for the final time with 1:47 remaining when Robinson scored off his own missed 3-point attempt and converted a 3-point play.

"It was very much a game of spurts," Fostoria coach Jim Rutter said. "We got real good guard play, but I would rather talk about the great job our inside people

did defensively."

Jeff Green scored 14 points against Derek Kidwell, but Davon Cousin limited Chris Wolfe to 11 (six below his average). Nick Wolf led the Little Giants with 16.

"We were forcing them to take some outside shots," Rutter said. "Green certainly didn't get the ball in the zone."

"Even when Chris Wolfe got it, he was

See ROSS, B3

Basketball

High School Boys

Fostoria 60, Ross 55

Score by quarters

Ross	7	17	14	17	— 55
Fostoria	13	16	11	20	— 60

Scoring

ROSS — Mark Gottron 0-0-0, Chris Wolfe 4-1-11, Todd Clark 3-2-8, Damon Walker 0-0-0, Jeff Green 7-0-14, Mark Sheidler 1-2-4, Nick Wolf 7-0-16, Joe Frazier 1-0-2, Alec Shawl 0-0-0, totals 23-5-55.

FOSTORIA — Tony Settles 8-6-26, Russell Robinson 7-6-23, Derek Kidwell 1-2-4, Ryan Dunbar 2-0-4, Davon Cousin 1-1-3, Brooks Lance 0-0-0, Chad Robbins 0-0-0, totals 19-15-60.

3-point goals: Wolfe 2, Wolf 2, Settles 4, Robinson 3.

Records: Ross 10-8, Fostoria 14-4.

Ross JV 54, Fostoria 51

Score by quarters (OT)

Ross	14	9	16	10	5	— 54
Fostoria	9	22	2	16	2	— 51

Scoring

ROSS — Mike Patterson 6-0-12, Moe Myers 2-1-5, Alec Shawl 2-1-6, Bobby Carter 1-0-2, Shane Willer 0-1-1, Jason Zilles 2-0-4, Allen Dorsey 1-2-4, Tyronne Williams 1-3-5, Ryan Zimmerman 5-5-15, totals 20-13-54.

FOSTORIA — Rich Warner 6-1-16, T.M. Lucius 2-2-6, Shawn Stanfield 2-0-5, Greg Flores 2-0-5, T.G. Lucius 3-2-8, Steve Dieter 1-0-2, Heath Norton 3-1-7, Daniel Dixie 1-0-2, totals 20-6-51.

3-point goals: Shawl, Warner 3, Stanfield, Flores.

Records: Ross 11-7, Fostoria 7-11.

Ross's loss skid continues

News-Messenger reports

Zanesville handed Fremont Ross its seventh straight loss with its first Buckeye Central Conference victory Saturday night.

The Blue Devils limited Ross to six points in the third quarter and that was the difference in a 59-53 victory.

The game was tied at 27 at halftime.

"We came out and threw the ball away on our first five possessions (of the second half)," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said.

In other Saturday games, Gibsonburg defeated Mohawk 85-57, Oak Harbor defeated Genoa 70-54, Old Fort topped Arcadia 83-65 and Bellevue topped Margaretta 82-69.

Ross, 10-9 and 2-5 in the BCC, committed 30 turnovers against Zanesville, while shooting 38 percent (18-of-47) from the field.

The Little Giants held the Blue Devils to 35 percent (18-of-51) shooting from the floor.

"Defense is not our problem," Gioffre said. "Our problem is at the offensive end. We're just not executing."

Jeff Green led Ross with 13 points and 13 rebounds.

Matt Johnson and Kevin Wiltucky led Zanesville, 7-13 and 1-7 in the BCC, with 16 points apiece.

Basketball

High School Boys

Zanesville 59, Ross 53

Score by quarters

Ross	10	17	6	20	— 53
Zanesville	9	18	12	20	— 59

Scoring

ROSS — Mike Patterson 1-0-2, Tyronne Williams 2-0-4, Chris Wolfe 1-2-4, Todd Clark 2-4-8, Mark Sheidler 2-4-8, Nick Wolf 1-2-5, Damon Walker 0-1-1, Joe Frazier 1-0-2, Jeff Green 5-3-13, Ryan Zimmerman 3-0-6, totals 18-16-53.

ZANESVILLE — Matt Johnson 3-8-16, Michael Lightfoot 6-2-14, Kevin Witucky 4-7-16, Brad Ziemer 1-3-5, Ryan Smith 1-0-2, Reggie Newman 3-0-6, totals 18-20-59.

3-point goals: Wolf, Johnson 2, Witucky.

Records: Ross 10-9 (2-5), Z'ville 7-13 (1-7).

JV game: Zanesville 63-46.

Motivation takes care of itself

Five senior Little Giants start tonight against rival Findlay

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

Juggling starting fives is not new to Fremont Ross High School boys basketball coach Frank Gioffre. Tonight when Findlay invades Fremont, it will be more of the same.

Ross, mired in a seven-game

losing streak after opening the season 10-2, will have an all-senior look this evening for the final regular season and Buckeye Central Conference game.

At stake for Findlay is a possible share of the BCC crown with Newark while Ross is searching for the first-of-the-season magic

that has deserted the team.

Findlay is 13-5 and 5-2 in the BCC, while Newark has clinched at least a share of its fourth straight BCC crown with a 6-2 mark.

Gioffre shakes off the feeling that his team could be the "spoilers." Instead he wants to honor

his seniors while getting momentum heading into next week's sectional tournament.

Senior Chris Wolfe and Jeff Green, both 6-7; Joe Frazier, 6-5; Todd Clark and Mark Gottron, both 5-10, will give Ross a tall

See ROSS, B2

Ross

Continued From B1

lineup for the clash with the Trojans.

"I want to give the seniors one last hurrah," Gioffre said. "They have worked hard throughout their whole playing career in Fremont; this is a little something to say 'thank you.' "

Against Zanesville last Saturday, Gioffre started Green with juniors Damon Walker, Nick Wolf and Alec Shawl along with sophomore Mike Patterson.

"I just wanted to give some kids an opportunity to play," Gioffre said, noting no predominant reason for the shakeup. "We went down there, gave a couple of kids a chance to play and that was it; it was no big deal."

The majority of the season, Gioffre has started Chris Wolfe and Nick Wolf along with Green and Clark regularly with either Mark Sheidler, Walker or Gottron in the fifth slot.

Gioffre, while taking each loss hard, has been optimistic in the days after the losses and Wednesday, the first-year varsity coach was no different.

"Our record may not indicate it," Gioffre said, "but I really think our kids are starting to come together; we are improving every day in practice. I think the kids are really starting to want basketball."

"There was a stretch when we lost Hector (Rodriguez) and Jeff, where we lost a few close games and our kids maybe started to

lose a little bit of confidence and it snowballed us. The kids were starting to second-guess themselves but we had a good discussion with the kids and coaching staff; the kids are starting to open up and they understand what needs to be done."

What needs to be done tonight is evident when gazing at the latest BCC stats: Stop Findlay's Todd Phillips and Korey Hinkle, the Nos. 1 and 5 scorers in the conference, scoring 19.5 and 17.1 points per game, respectively.

The smooth-shooting Phillips was the main thorn in the Little Giants' side when Findlay ambushed Ross 78-70 Jan. 18 in a game that was not as close as the score indicates. Phillips, bombing Ross from long range, scored 30 points in the first three quarters as Findlay ran up a 26-point lead. Only a frantic comeback cut the margin to single digits.

"If we can win this game tonight," Gioffre said, "it will put us back in the right frame of mind."

The Ross coach said he is not worried about getting his team "up" for the Trojan invasion and he has not played up the "spoiler" role.

"Just playing Findlay is enough to get the kids hyped up," he said. "That first game ... we got behind so bad early, that all we could do was play catchup."

"The kids really want to finish the season strong and this would be a great, great game for the kids to prove themselves come tournament time."

Findlay streaks past Ross 84-72

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

The name of the game was streaks and Findlay had a few more than Fremont Ross and subdued the Little Giants 84-72 Friday night.

The win in front of a jam-packed crowd at the Purple Pit netted a portion of the Buckeye Central Conference boys basketball crown for the Trojans.

Findlay, 14-5, is 6-2 in the BCC, matching that of five-time conference champion Newark. Ross is 10-10, losing for the eighth consecutive time while finishing the BCC 2-6.

The Trojans' streaky scoring nearly overshadowed 33-of-49 shooting (67 percent) including 9-of-9 in the final quarter and 18-of-22 in the second half.

"It seemed like everything they threw up, was going in," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said.

The Little Giants were 27-of-66 which included 7-of-30 from three-point range.

"I think the biggest key of the game — we did a great job offensively scoring 70 points — but we did not do the job down at the defensive end," Gioffre said.

"They have some great offensive players who can drive it to the hole or shoot the jumper."

Ross never led in the game and had to reel in the Trojans several times to keep the game close.

"I think there were four or five spurts," Findlay coach Jerry Snodgrass said, "where a couple of those came on countering spurts Fremont had."

Findlay ran to a 21-8 lead behind Todd Phillips' nine first quarter points before Ross closed to 23-14 after one period. It was the only quarter that Phillips really hurt Ross.

"Todd Clark did a great job on Phillips," Gioffre said. "Every shot he took, Todd was in his face. Phillips did not hurt us tonight — (Jeff) Lobb hurt us."

The Trojans grabbed another 13-point lead, 31-18, before the Little Giants put together its own streak, outscoring Findlay 15-4 from the 5:05 mark of the second

period. Nick Wolf's three-point bucket — the first of five in the game for the 6-4 junior — with 38 seconds remaining cut Findlay's lead to 35-33 at the half.

Snodgrass switched gears on the Little Giants at halftime, shifting his team into a man-to-man defense at the outset of the third quarter after employing a 1-3-1 zone in the first half.

"We felt we could go man-to-man," Snodgrass said, "but a lot of it depended upon when Chris Wolfe was in there and when he wasn't. To us, he is a very dangerous in there."

Phillips, who scored 30 points against Ross in a 78-70 Findlay win on Jan. 18, pumped in six points and Lobb added another as the Trojans scored the first eight points of the second half. After Wolf's second three-pointer, the Trojans ran off six more points for a 49-36 lead midway through the period.

Lobb, taking over for Phillips when the BCC's leading scorer picked up his third foul five minutes into the third quarter,

scored 10 points in the period, including a pair of three-point baskets. He finished with a season-high 19.

"We played man-to-man the whole game and then we decided to go to the 2-3 zone when Phillips went out to give the kids a little rest," Gioffre said, "but Lobb hit a couple jumpers on us; we just did not put any pressure on him."

Snodgrass called Lobb a deceiving player.

"He has a couple of games this year," the Findlay coach said, "where he did not score and he is one of the best shooters we have, but it was an excellent job by Jeff tonight."

Ross, behind a pair of baskets by Chris Wolfe, cut the deficit to 57-47 at the end of the third quarter.

The Little Giants heated up at the beginning of the final quarter as Nick Wolf sank a three-pointer and Chris Wolfe scored seven straight points, pulling

See ROSS, B2

Ross

Continued From B1

Ross to within three, 60-57 with 5:55 remaining. Matt Miles's bucket for Findlay was followed by two Jeff Green free throws for Ross, keeping the Findlay margin at three, 62-59, but it was streak time again for the Trojans.

Findlay, with Lobb sinking two free throws and a basket to go with Korey Hinkle's lay-in, pulled out to a 69-59 lead with 4:20 to play. Ross got back to 72-65 but Hinkle sank four consecutive free throws, putting the Trojans up 77-65 with 1:44 to play. The Little Giants got back to 79-70 on Wolf's final three-pointer but could get no closer.

It was a loss for Ross, but Gioffre was encouraged.

"I am pleased with the kids' effort," the Ross coach said. "We did a nice job offensively but we just did not get it done defensively.

"I thought we played four solid quarters," Gioffre continued. "We came out a little flat in the third quarter where we made a couple mental mistakes, but I am pleased."

Phillips, before fouling out with 2:08 to play, had 18 points while Hinkle had 20 to go with 11 rebounds. Miles added a dozen. Chris Wolfe tossed in 21 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for Ross while Nick Wolf had 17 points and Green 11.

The Little Giants had a 34-25 rebounding edge. Findlay had 13 turnovers, one less than Ross.

The Little Giants return to action Tuesday, traveling to Willard High School to play Tiffin Columbian in a first round Division I sectional tournament game.

High School Boys

Findlay 84, Ross 72

Score by quarters

Findlay	23	12	22	27	— 84
Ross	14	19	14	25	— 72

Scoring

FINDLAY — Todd Phillips 8-1-18, Korey Hinkle 7-5-20, Matt Miles 5-2-12, Jeff Lobb 8-1-19, Chris Ireland 2-2-6, Aaron Gralak 1-1-3, Lamont Paris 2-2-6, totals 33-14-84.

ROSS — Chris Wolfe 9-2-21, Joe Frazier 2-1-5, Jeff Green 4-3-11, Todd Clark 1-0-3, Mark Gottron 2-0-4, Mark Sheidler 2-5-9, Tyronne Williams 1-0-2, totals 27-11-72.

3-point goals: Phillips, Hinkle, Lobb 2, Wolfe, Clark, Wolf 5.

Records: Findlay 14-5 (6-2), Ross 10-10 (2-6).

Findlay JV 60, Ross 57

Score by quarters

Findlay	15	12	16	17	— 60
Ross	14	18	16	9	— 57

Scoring

FINDLAY — Javan Conley 5-1-11, Kirk Wanstedt 3-0-9, Marcus Paris 0-1-1, Doug DePuy 2-0-4, Anthony Hall 9-1-19, Chris Allison 2-0-4, Marlon Berry 4-4-12, totals 25-7-60.

ROSS — Jon Hetrick 5-2-15, Mike Patterson 4-4-12, Brian Wilson 1-0-3, Shane Willer 1-0-2, Allen Dorsey 0-2-2, Tyronne Williams 3-3-9, Ryan Zimmerman 7-0-14, totals 21-11-57.

3-point goals: Wanstedt 3, Hetrick 3, Wilson.

Records: Findlay 15-4, Ross 11-9.

High-scoring players earn top all-district honors

Associated Press

COLUMBUS — Lima Senior's Greg Simpson and Rossford's LaZelle Durden, a pair of high-scoring players who can play outside or inside, lead the 1991 Associated Press Northwestern Ohio all-district boys high school basketball team.



SMITH



THORBAHN

The other players of the year in the district were Bob Hoying of St. Henry, the reigning Mr. Football, and Convoy Crestview's Doug Etzler, who is headed to Ohio State.

Two area players, Steve Smith of Port Clinton and Oak Harbor's Jon Thorbahn were named to the first team in Division II and Division III, respectively, by a media panel from the district.

Smith averaged 25.7 points per game, while Thorbahn scored 26 a game. Both players topped the 1,000-point mark for their careers this season.

Jay Overmyer of Fremont St. Joseph Central Catholic was named to the second team in Division IV, while Steve Adelsperger of Old Fort and Mike Bauder of Woodmore were third-team se-

See DISTRICT, B2

AP all-district

COLUMBUS — The 1991 Associated Press Northwest Ohio all-district boys basketball team, as selected by a panel of sports writers and broadcasters representing the district:

DIVISION I

First Team: Greg Simpson, Lima Senior, 6-foot-1, Junior, 32 points per game; Shane Komives, Toledo St. John's, 6-6, Sr., 29.1; Craig Thames, Toledo Waite, 5-11, Sr., 24.2; Jim Dotson, Toledo Start, 6-5½, Jr., 21.2; Bryan Borchardt, Maumee, 6-4, Sr., 31.0.

Second Team: Jerry Lanier, Mansfield Senior, 6-0, Sr., 16.0; Ron Easter, Toledo DeVilbiss, 6-3, Sr., 25.3; Kevin Baker, Toledo St. Francis, 6-5, Jr., 14.9; Darvio McDaniel, Sandusky Senior, 6-4, Sr., 17.1; Jon Woolley, Elida, 6-9, Jr., 17.6.

Third Team: Todd Phillips, Findlay, 6-3, Sr., 20.3; Jamie Johnson, Mansfield Senior, 6-4, Jr., 17.4; Rod Mitchell, Ashland, 6-2, Sr., 18.1; Jim Miller, Celina, 6-3, Sr., 16.1; Shawn Pughley, Lima Senior, 6-1, Jr., 32.0.

Player of the year: Greg Simpson, Lima Senior.

Coach of the year: Joe Guerrero, Toledo Waite.

Honorable Mention: Korey Hinkle, Findlay; Vince Perrine, Tiffin Columbian; Chris Wolfe, Todd Clark, Jeff Green, Fremont Ross; Aaron Williams, Toledo Start; Steve Finch, Josh Jaco, Oregon Clay; Darrell Pitts, Toledo Libbey; James Johnson, Larry Sykes, Jeff Edgecombe, Nolan Roberts, Toledo St. Francis; Moni Feat-churs, Toledo Macomber; Jim Amstutz, Sylvania Southview; Mark Lee, Roger Scruggs Mansfield Senior; Chad Honaker, Ashland; Obie Stillwell, Mansfield Madison; Greg Smith, Defiance; Kurt Pottkotter, Celina; Victor Washington, Toledo Waite; Edwin Taylor, Jammarr Riven, Toledo Scott; James Buffaloe, Toledo Rogers; Luke Pollock, Jay Larranaga, Toledo St. John's; Kris Matuszewski, Toledo Central Catholic; Eugene McCoy, Toledo Woodward; Troy Scott, Toledo DeVilbiss; Chuck Worth, Toledo Bowsher; Mike Betz; Tiffin Columbian; Brian Metzger, Wapakoneta; Ben Curry, Elida.

Wolfe tabbed all-BCC

News-Messenger reports

Chris Wolfe of Fremont Ross has been named to the All-Buckeye Central Conference boys basketball team.

Wolfe, a 6-foot-7 senior, averaged 16 points per game for the Little Giants.

Lancaster's Greg Cave was named Player of the Year in the conference.



WOLFE

Other first-team picks are Findlay's Todd Phillips and Korey Hinkle, Bobby Sellers and Jeff Quackenbush of Newark and Kevin Witucky of Zanesville.

Todd Clark of Ross was named to the second team along with Matt Miles of Findlay, Bill Dilley and Tim Henwood of Lancaster and Zanesville's Matt Johnson.

Nick Wolf and Jeff Green of Ross were among the honorable mention selections.

Wolfe, Clark and Ritzman receive top awards

News-Messenger reports

Amy Ritzman along with Chris Wolfe and Todd Clark were named the most valuable players on the Fremont Ross High School basketball teams Wednesday night at an awards program in the high school cafeteria.

Ritzman, a three-year letterwinner, led coach Sue Wolf's Little Giants in two categories and



RITZMAN

shared another. The 5-foot-3 senior was the team's top free throw shooter with 65 percent and had the most assists, 69. She shared the best defensive player award with Stephanie McGee.

Ritzman and Tanya Stull were presented with captains trophies by Wolf.

Vickie Castile won the team's top rebounder award with 242, which put her second in the Buckeye Central Conference.

The most improved player was junior Becky Williams.

Wolfe and Clark, both seniors, topped the boys special awards handed out by coach Frank

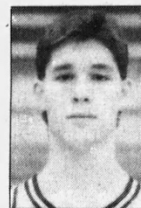
Gioffre.

Clark led the Little Giants in free throw shooting (66 percent) and assists (61) while Wolfe had the top field goal percentage at 50 percent and was the team's leading rebounder with 209.

Clark was presented with a fourth-year award, the first Ross basketball player to letter that many times since the present high school was built and switched to a three-year high school.

Senior Mark Gottron was named the team's best defensive player.

Jeff Green, Clark and Wolfe



WOLFE



CLARK

took home captain's trophies.

The Ross Athletic Boosters presented first team BCC awards to Ritzman, Castile and Chris Wolfe.