

## 2016 Division I Sectional Tournament

# GIANTS CAN'T STOP SPARTANS

Ross can't slow down  
Lima standout in defeat

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CORRESPONDENT

TOLEDO - After Bowling Green State University commit Rion Thompson nailed five 3-pointers en route to 24 first-half points, Fremont Ross tried a variety of defenses to try to slow down the Lima Senior guard.

Little Giants' head coach Juan Vela said his team even went as far as box-and-1 and triangle-and-2 defenses on the senior. Thompson had just one bucket in the second half but it was came after a missed free throw by Lima as Ross at-

tempted to mount a comeback late in the fourth quarter.

Thompson finished with 30 points and the Little Giants had 10 second-half turnovers as the Spartans defeated Ross, 63-53, Tuesday in a Division I sectional semifinal at Start High School.

"We tried everything to stop Thompson," Vela said. "We tried to slow her down but she's a tough player. I thought DeRae James did a nice job defending her in the second half."

With the win, Lima improves to 14-8 overall while Ross finishes the season at 8-15.

Thompson grabbed a steal from Ross' hands after teammate Kierre James missed a pair of free throws. The score increased the Spartans' lead to 57-47

with 2:39 left.

"It was key for us to have a chance in the second to slow down Thompson," said Vela. "I thought we did a pretty good job of it but we did not hit many shots in the second half. You have to hit shots against a team like Lima Senior if you want to win."

Valerie Samson had the hot hand early for Ross, scoring eight points in the first quarter to give the Little Giants a 18-15 edge after eight minutes. Thompson, who had ten points in the first quarter herself, went toe-to-toe with Samson for the first minute of the second quarter.

Thompson hit a 3-pointer to open the quarter but Samson drilled one of her own on the other end. Thompson, not to be outdone, smacked her second in a row

to tie the game at 21. Samson missed on the other end and that led to a James score.

"Defending a team like Lima Senior is tough," Vela said. "You typically either back off or you play tight but you have to respect their shooters and you have to respect their ability to drive."

Lima was able to open a four-point lead on three separate occasions and took a 32-27 lead on a 3-point play by Thompson. DeRae James and Matallyn Overmyer scored for Ross to cut the lead to a point but 3s by Thompson and Essence Cowan sent Lima into halftime with a 38-31 lead.

"I thought our seniors led the way and

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# Ross

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executed well for us," said Vela. "We had it but just did not hit shots. We had some turnovers that led to points for them."

Ross didn't go away without a fight. Elayna Ackerman scored six straight points for the Little Giants to open the third quarter and after an offensive rebound and score by Overmyer, Ross found itself ahead, 39-38 with 5:50 left in the quarter.

But that's when Lima kicked up its defensive pressure a notch. Ross committed five turnovers in the quarter while Cowan converted a 3-point play and Thompson made three free throws for a 46-39 lead. Cowan added two more and hit a 3-pointer to balloon the lead to 51-39. Jazmin Bulger banked in a 3-pointer before Ackerman split two free throws to draw the Little Giants within 51-43 after three quarters.

"In the fourth quarter, you have to dominate," said Vela. "We had to hit shots and didn't. The effort was there but we didn't do the little things."

Ackerman scored to open the fourth quarter but Rowan scored on a third opportunity after two offensive rebounds to boost the lead back to eight points. Ross played more like the team that lost 72-61 at home to Lima on January 25th than the team that fell, 71-39 at Lima on December 3rd.

"It is tough to watch

"We had to hit shots and didn't. The effort was there but we didn't do the little things ... It is tough to watch the girls play so well and not win."

## JUAN VELA

LITTLE GIANTS HEAD COACH

the girls play so well and not win," Vela said.

Ross made just 22-of-57 (38.6 percent) shots including 10-of-27 in the second half. Rowan finished with 20 points while Kierre James had 11 points. The two, plus Thompson, scored 61 of Lima's 63 points.

Ackerman finished with 16 points and Samson tallied 11 points - none in the final 23:40 of the

game. Overmyer added a double-double of 14 points and 10 rebounds.

"I can remember the seniors coming in as freshmen and just loving basketball," said Vela. "They played well and stuck it out. They battled and did everything we asked of them."

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