

Ross routs Clay in opener

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross opened girls high school basketball season Tuesday night with a resounding 73-48 victory over Oregon Clay.

Cortney Cominsky and Vickie Castile scored 22 points apiece as the Little Giants took a 15-6 lead after one quarter and were never threatened.

In one other game reported, Bellevue defeated Clyde 64-55.

Cominsky and Castile both scored at least four points in each quarter.

The Little Giants led 37-22 at halftime and 61-37 after three quarters.

Ross also got 10 points from Amy Ritzman.

Bellevue64
Clyde.....55

Bellevue pulled away in the

fourth quarter in the opener for both teams.

The score was tied 43-all after three quarters, but the Lady Redmen outscored the Fliers 21-12 in the final eight minutes.

Heather Mowery scored 17 points and Jen Ohl added 12 for Bellevue, which outrebounded Clyde 33-19.

Mindy Swartz paced the Fliers with 13 points.

Ross pressures way to win over Bellevue

By DEAN LOWE
Staff Correspondent

Defense was the difference as Fremont Ross defeated Bellevue 57-41 in a girls high school basketball game Saturday.

"We didn't handle the pressure, and that was the key to the game," Bellevue coach John Rich said.

Ross, 2-0, led 18-16 after a quarter when it applied its full-court press.

"The press really started to work in the second quarter," Ross coach Sue Wolf said. "We were overanxious in the beginning (of the game) and weren't forcing them to commit. I told the girls to relax a little and the

Swanton routs Oak Harbor

News-Messenger reports

PEMBERVILLE — Casey Stinson scored 19 points and Nicki Heilmann added 13 as Swanton defeated Oak Harbor 64-32 Saturday in the championship game of the Eastwood Tournament.

Swanton, 2-0, led 14-8 after a quarter, 32-14 at halftime and 52-23 after three quarters.

Oak Harbor, 1-1, committed 36 turnovers.

Stephanie Barton scored 12 points for Oak Harbor, but was the only Rocket in double figures.

press started working."

Vickie Castile and Amy Ritzman benefitted from the Little Giants' press, scoring 13 of the team's 16 points in the second period.

"We tried a couple of press offenses, but we just weren't passing the ball well," Rich said. "I think it's all tied together; they put the pressure on us and we choked in all aspects of the

game. We just couldn't handle the pressure."

Castile also caused problems for the Lady Redmen, 1-1, with a strong rebounding game.

"Vickie Castile did a heck of a job boxing out (opponents) on the defensive boards, and did well on the offensive boards, too," Wolf said.

Ross outrebounded Bellevue 33-24. Castile collected eight offensive rebounds.

Bellevue's Suzanne Long picked up her third foul in the second quarter.

"That hurt because, without a doubt, she's my most physical player," Rich said. "We didn't handle the big girl (Castile) inside and they just took us out of

our offense with the defensive pressure."

Ritzman and Tanya Stull scored 10 points apiece. They combined to shoot three of five from 3-point range, opening up the inside for Castile, who finished with 22 points.

"Both of those guards have the OK to shoot the 3-point shot," Wolf said. "They both are capable of putting the 3-point shot up, and both have the green light to go."

The victory was the first for Ross over Bellevue after four straight losses to the Redmen.

"I'm just real happy to be 2-0," Wolf said. "It's been a long time since we've started out 2-0. I hope it keeps going."

Ross jumps to 3-0 start

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

There were no mysteries Wednesday for coach Sue Wolf while watching her Fremont Ross girls defeat Huron 62-56 in a high school basketball game at Ross High School.

Ross, 3-0, is off to its best start since a 2-1 beginning in the 1983-84 season.

Wolf knew her team would jump ahead, despite the misplacement of the Little Giants' inside offense.

"Our inside game was sitting on the bench," she laughed. "She (Vickie Castile) got in foul trouble."

Castile, who scored 22 points in each of Ross's first two games, was scoreless.

Enter Wolf's Mighty Mights — 5-2 Amy Ritzman and 5-0 Tanya Stull. Add fluid 5-9 sophomore, Courtney Cominsky and a strong bench performance, and the combination made up for the missing inside attack.

"Ritzman and Stull are getting the ball to the right people at the right time," Wolf said.

In this game, they were the right people.

Stull scored 21 points, including a pair of 3-pointers that put Ross up 45-34 late in the third quarter — the breakaway portion of the game, according to Wolf.



"I knew this was going to be a tough game," Wolf said. "I told the kids that we would not get ahead until the third quarter and that is about the time we did I think we were up one (28-25) at the half."

Stull had 10 of her points in the third quarter. When she cooled in the final eight minutes, Cominsky and Ritzman took over, scoring seven and six points, respectively. Cominsky had a game-high 23 points and Ritzman tossed in 14.

Trailing 45-36 after three quarters, Huron rallied, closing the gap to 58-54 with 1:15 remaining. Cominsky's three-point play had given Ross a 58-48 lead a minute before.

Jaime Caporini scored back-to-back baskets — she finished with 20 — to pull the Tigers to within four but Cominsky hit Stephanie McGee with a pass underneath for a layup to stop the Huron run.

Two Caporini free throws cut the Ross lead to four again with 54 seconds left but Stull hit two foul shots at the 28-second mark and the Ross pressure defense did the rest.

Castile, and Ritzman, were saddled with early fouls but both contributed down the stretch.

"Vickie came up with some nice rebounds in the fourth quarter, picked up some loose balls and played good defense and that is what we needed out of her," Wolf said.

Castile picked up her fourth

See ROSS, B-3



News-Messenger/Linda Epstein

COURTNEY COMINSKY of Fremont Ross aims for the basket Wednesday night as Huron's Jaime

Caporini (30) defends and Ross's Leah Lomax (15) looks on from behind.

Ross

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foul two minutes into the second half. She sat out most of the second quarter with three fouls.

"Both teams were committing a lot of fouls," Huron coach Dick Wennes said. "I think at half-time, we both had two or three girls who had three fouls on

them already.

"I saw them play Saturday and that number 40 (Castile) had a big day that day but those two little out front and that number 20 (Cominsky) had an awfully nice night. Well you stop one, and someone else breaks loose, you never know."

Wolf also pointed out the play of her bench players.

"I was happy with the play of Becky Williams; Andrea McGee did some nice things and Leah

Lomax did a nice job filling in at the guard spot," Wolf said.

Williams and McGee shored up the Ross inside defense when Castile was forced to the bench.

Ross was 23-of-61 from the floor and Huron 20-of-53. Both teams had 31 rebounds with Stephanie McGee and Ritzman grabbing five apiece for Ross, which had 21 turnovers to Huron's 22.

Ross travels to Sandusky Perkins Tuesday.

Ross stands at 4-0

Little Giants rout Perkins

News-Messenger reports

Sue Wolf expressed cautious criticism after Fremont Ross routed Sandusky Perkins 58-15 in a high school girls basketball game Tuesday night.

"We can play better than we played tonight," Wolf said. "We didn't execute as well as we would like to execute."

In other games, Gibsonburg defeated Otsego 52-46, Lakota beat Northwood 56-42, Genoa topped Woodmore 52-44 and Galion edged Bellevue 62-58.

Ross, undefeated in four games, got 20 points and 14 rebounds from Vickie Castile and 11 points from Amy Ritzman in its victory over Perkins.

The Little Giants outrebounded the winless Pirates 44-21 but made 22-of-67 shots.

"We made steals off the press," Wolf said. "We just didn't finish things off."

See GIRLS, B-3

Girls

Continued From B-1

Wolf also expressed concern over the Little Giants' 11-of-24 effort from the foul line.

"Our foul shooting has got to improve some or it's going to cost us a ballgame," she said.

Zanesville.....40

Ross34

The Little Giants suffered their first loss after four wins in the Buckeye Central Conference opener.

Ross, which shot 27 percent from the floor, committed 23 turnovers. Although Zanesville also shot 27 percent, the Blue Devils committed 13 turnovers.

Zanesville, 2-2, got 20 points from Regina Gibson, who made 10-of-12 free throws.

Amy Ritzman led Ross with 11 points.

Little Giants 'D' clips Eagles

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

Ross fought off the effects of a week's layoff with a defensive gem to stop Oregon Clay Saturday afternoon in the Purple Pit.

The Little Giants girls held Clay without a field goal in the second quarter, using it to pull away to a 60-37 high school girls basketball win.

The win was the fifth in six games for Ross and came on the heels of the loss at Zanesville a week earlier.

"This was a very nice game after losing down there," Ross coach Sue Wolf said after her team dropped Clay to 1-6.

Ross led 16-13 after one quarter but outscored the Eagles 16-4 in the second period for a 32-17 halftime lead. The Little Giants pressure defense kept Clay off-balance, forcing the Eagles to miss all 10 shots.

That was the tonic Ross needed after a sluggish first quarter start.

Clay grabbed a 6-3 early lead but with Amy Ritzman scoring 10 of her game-high 17 points, Ross overtook the Eagles with 4:36 remaining in the period. Ritzman's basket tied it at 7-7 and a 15-foot jumper from the right of the key put the Little Giants on top for good.

"Maybe it was because of the week off," Wolf said about her team's rustiness.

Whatever it was, the rust was polished to a gleam quickly as the Ross starters were backed up with a strong show from the supporting cast from the bench.

"I was very happy with the kids coming off the bench," Wolf said. "(Leah) Lomax had several (four) blocked shots and (Andrea) McGee played well inside."

McGee, spelling 5-10 senior Vickie Castile in the middle, scored six points. Ross coupled those efforts with the outside shooting of Cortney Cominsky (14 points) and the ball-hawking defense of Stephanie McGee to steal the Eagles' game away.

Wolf pointed out that when Ritzman, her floor general, got into foul trouble, off-guard Tanya Stull stepped into that role. Stull had eight points.

The Little Giants made 24 of 56 shots but only 12 of 29 free throw attempts. Clay was 15 of 52 from the floor and 7-of-19 at the foul line.

The Eagles outrebounded Ross 45-41 but committed 37 turnovers, 15 more than the Little Giants.

Ross travels to Whitmer this evening and hosts Tiffin Columbian Saturday.

Little Giants beat Whitmer with fast start

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross defeated Toledo Whitmer 65-48 in a high school girls basketball game Monday night behind a 27-point, first-quarter outburst.

Vickie Castile and Amy Ritzman scored 16 points apiece as the Little Giants won for the sixth time in seven games.

In other games Monday, Old Fort defeated Woodmore 38-29, Danbury beat Bettsville 53-38 and Lakota topped Hopewell-Loudon 41-27.

Ross jumped to a 27-6 lead in the first quarter, scoring on eight straight possessions at one

point.

"We played the best first quarter we've played so far," Ross coach Sue Wolf said.

The success was short-lived, however.

Whitmer, 2-5, outscored Ross 13-5 in the second quarter.

"We got in foul trouble, and that took us out of our game," Wolf said. "In the second half, we softened the press, and I told them to run the offense."

Ross, which outrebounded Whitmer 33-21, outscored the Panthers 33-29 in the second half. Tanya Stull and Stephanie McGee added 10 points apiece

for Ross, while Chris Tilly led Whitmer with 17.

Lakota.....41

H-Loudon.....27

Jenny Geyman scored 17 points, and Lakota outscored Hopewell-Loudon 25-16 in the second and third quarters.

The Raiders, 5-3, took advantage of 34 turnovers by the Chieftains, 4-4.

Old Fort.....38

Woodmore.....29

Old Fort won its first game in

six tries.

Although no player scored in double figures for Old Fort, seven players scored led by Becky Magers' nine points.

Julie Brueggemeier, who added eight points, grabbed 13 rebounds, and Melissa DeRan collected nine for the Stockaders.

"(Brueggemeier) got a bunch of (rebounds) late in the game when we needed them," Old Fort coach Gary Perkins said.

Old Fort led 13-4 after a quarter, 22-10 at halftime and 25-22 after three quarters.

Woodmore, 2-7, outscored Old Fort 12-3 in the third quarter, but

the Stockaders held a 13-7 edge over the Wildcats in the fourth quarter.

"Our defense did a good job on them," Perkins said.

Susie Hinkle led Woodmore with 13 points.

Danbury.....53

Bettsville.....38

Danbury never trailed after taking an 18-9 first-quarter lead.

Jayna Ontko led Danbury, 4-4, with 13 points, Becky Ball had 12 and Teresa Minton 11.

Maria Miller's 10 points led the Bobcats, 0-8.

Tornadoes defeat poor-shooting Little Giants

By TIM HARMON
Staff writer

The object of basketball was difficult for the Fremont Ross girls team in a 44-36 loss to Tiffin Columbian Saturday.

The Little Giants had trouble putting the ball in the basket. The outside shots went awry, and the inside shots didn't fall.

Ross, 6-2, shot 21 percent (10-

of-48) from the field.

"We shot poorly ... it's simple," Ross coach Sue Wolf said. "Any time the score is low, we're in trouble."

Columbian, 8-2, didn't have an outstanding shooting game, but 15-of-40 (38 percent) was good enough to win.

The Little Giants compounded their shooting woes by commit-

ting 27 turnovers against Columbian's match-up zone defense.

"They were frustrated with the shots they were missing, and they made other mistakes," Wolf said. "We've played against so much man (man-to-man defense) that a match-up shouldn't bother us."

"We passed on the defensive side of the floor instead of re-

versing the ball, and they had a chance to get it."

The Tornadoes took advantage as the turnovers set up most of Kara Gordon's game-high 16 points and Beth Perrine's 13.

"(The match-up zone) has been good for us," Columbian coach Dave Hershey said. "It has its weaknesses but when we're working hard ...

"We try to make you work real hard against our match-up and hopefully get the rebound."

Ross outrebounded Columbian 28-24, but that advantage was never a factor.

Thirty-eight missed shots, many of them from in close, stood out.

See ROSS, B2

Ross

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"We had the shots," Wolf said. "We just didn't put them in the basket."

Which detracted from the Little Giants' entire game.

"If we score, we can get into our press," Wolf said.

Twice in the game, a 3-point field goal by Amy Ritzman enabled Ross to do that.

Late in the first quarter, a Ritzman 3-pointer was followed by two of Columbian's 24 turnovers. Stephanie McGee converted the first into a basket off a rebound, and McGee made two free throws after the second turnover — giving the Little Giants a 9-7 lead at the end of the first quarter — after they trailed 7-2 at the outset.

Midway through the third quarter, Ross converted a Ritzman 3-pointer, a Columbian turnover and a 12-footer by Cortney Cominsky into a 24-all tie.

Ritzman finished with a team-high 11 points.

The lead changed hands three times in the second quarter before Columbian took a 12-11 lead when Angie Puffenberger scored off a pass from Amy Schar.

After the 24-all tie, Columbian led by nine points on three occasions. The Little Giants, who trailed 30-24 after three quarters, got no closer than five (38-33) the rest of the way.

Ross played without leading scorer Vickie Castile for nearly 14 minutes. Castile was saddled with foul trouble after picking up her third foul with 5:59 left in the first half.

Ross girls roll past Lancaster

By JOE HOFFMANN
Staff correspondent

Fremont Ross erupted for 20 points in the first quarter and held off a late rally to storm past the Lancaster Golden Gales 63-40 in girls high school basketball Saturday afternoon.

"They played us really hard and played some good defense on us," Lancaster head coach Steve Clippinger said after his team's first loss in Buckeye Central Conference play.

Ross, 7-2, evened its BCC record at 1-1 while Lancaster's loss

was its
third
against
eight wins.

☐ Ross boys
win, B3

Vickie Castile scored 12 of her 20 points in the first quarter, allowing the Little Giants to calm the Gales right from start, giving Ross a 20-8 lead at the end of the period.

"(Castile) played really well and very hard," Clippinger said. "I was really impressed with the way she played."

Midway through the fourth quarter, tension between the two teams became evident when Ross' Amy Ritzman was called for an offensive foul on Trisha Wolshire with 6:34 to play.

After Ritzman's foul, Lancaster went on a 13-5 run, closing the Little Giants lead to 46-38 when Wolshire scored with 2:09 left in the game.

"We got caught up in them pushing us around," Ross coach Sue Wolf said. "Our kids felt that the fouls weren't getting called."

The Little Giants re-grouped after Lancaster's spurt, running off seven straight points in the last minute and a half.

"I told them to get under control because they were letting the game slip away," Wolf said. "We had to get back and do what we know how to do."

Ross rattled Lancaster in the second quarter with a tough man-to-man defense, forcing the Gales into 3-of-18 shooting. Lancaster shot 31 percent (18-of-58) from the field in the game, while Ross was 21-of-51 (41 percent).

The Little Giants led at half-time 30-14 and 41-23 at the end of three quarters.

Wolf said a key to the early start was the constant pressure that the Little Giants applied to Lancaster on the full court press.

"That was the difference in the game," Wolf said. "We've got to press, because we have a lot of speed."

Courtney Cominsky had 11 points for the Little Giants, while Stephanie McGee and Ritzman added eight apiece.

"We are capable of hitting the outside shots," Wolf said.

Lancaster was led by Tammy Scott with 20 points, including 16 points in the second half.

Ross nets BCC win over Newark

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross spotted Newark a 25-20 halftime lead before roaring to life in the third quarter of a 48-39 Buckeye Central Conference girls victory Saturday.

The Little Giants, paced by Vickie Castile and Stephanie McGee, outscored the Wildcats 16-6 in the third quarter.

In other games, Old Fort defeated Seneca East 57-48, Margaretta topped Clyde 61-56, Huron routed Oak Harbor 48-27, Port Clinton edged Edison 50-47, Lakota beat Elmwood 67-54, Northwood edged Woodmore 55-52, Genoa beat Gibsonburg 69-37 and Norwalk topped Bellevue 51-48.

Ross improved to 8-2 and 2-1 in the BCC. Newark fell to 2-9 and 1-3 in conference play.

Castile led Ross with 18 points and 16 rebounds. McGee added 10 points and seven rebounds.

Bekki Berryhill had a game-high 20 points for Newark.

Ross overcame cool shooting 16-of-53 (30 percent) and 25 turnovers.

and collected 13 rebounds, while Laurie Mann scored 15 points, grabbed 14 rebounds and made seven steals.

Lakota.....6

Elmwood.....5

Patty Stowers scored 20 points and Lori Brown 15 as Lakota defeated Elmwood in the Suburban Lakes League game.

The Raiders, 8-3 and 6-1 in the SLL, shot 49 percent (26-of-53) from the field.

Elmwood, which upset previously unbeaten Genoa Thursday, slipped to 4-5 and 3-3.

Northwood.....5

Woodmore.....5

Sunny Chung and Lori Kinsler scored 17 and 16 points, respectively, and Northwood held off Woodmore after taking a 17-10 lead after one quarter.

Susie Hinkle and Jennie Verbryke scored 15 points apiece for Woodmore. 4-9 and 3-4 in SLL.

Ross girls suffer 3-point loss; Comets rip Danbury

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross fell behind Sylvania Northview by 10 points after two quarters Monday, and the Little Giants were unable to catch up in the second half en route to a 48-45 loss to the host Wildcats.

In one other girls game Monday, Genoa ripped visiting Danbury 69-24.

Ross, which had won two straight, fell behind by a 14-4 margin after one quarter and still trailed 27-17 at the half. The Little Giants, 8-3, were outscored 16-11 in the third quarter but exploded for 17 points in the final eight minutes.

"We just ran out of time," said Ross coach Sue Wolf after her squad outscored Northview by 12 points in the final period.

"We started out poorly," Wolf said. "We were getting the shots, we just couldn't get them to go in."

Amy Ritzman led Ross with

14 points, including 11 in the second half, while Vickie Castile added 12 points and a team-high eight rebounds.

The Little Giants outrebounded the Wildcats, who got a game-high 22 points from Deanna Kreidel, by a 20-19 margin.

Genoa.....69

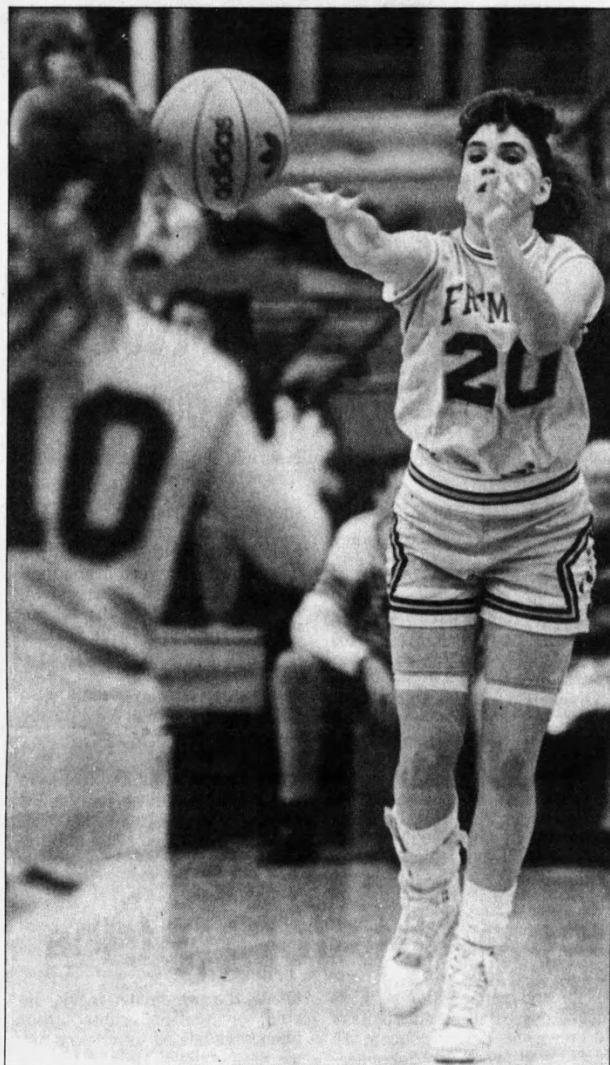
Danbury.....24

Amy Sander scored 17 points, had six steals and added four assists to lead the Comets past Danbury.

Kristi Koester added 14 points and 12 rebounds and Connie Scharer contributed a career-high 12 points for Genoa, 10-1, which now has won two straight.

Jayna Ontko and Teresa Minton each had seven points for the Lakers, 4-6, losers of two straight.

Genoa outscored Danbury 23-2 in the opening period.



News-Messenger/Bob Marker

CORTNEY COMINSKY of Ross passes to teammate Tanya Stull Saturday at Ross High School.

Blue Devils deal Ross girls 45-44 BCC loss

By **BOB MARKER**
Staff writer

The margin of victory came at a spot where Zanesville and Fremont Ross had problems Saturday afternoon.

Zanesville's RaShondra Horton, the Buckeye Central Conference's leading scorer, sank a free throw with three seconds remaining and give the Blue Devils a 45-44 victory over the Little Giants.

It was only the third free throw in eight tries that the Blue Devils made. Horton was 2-of-4.

Ross was much worse, converting 8-of-21 free shots.

"We beat ourselves at the foul line," Ross coach Sue Wolf said.

That was true but a clutch 3-point basket and a steal by Ann Davy of Zanesville unraveled Ross.

Davy's long bomb tied the game at 44-44 with 51 seconds to play. The Devils had trailed by as many as five in the final two minutes after leading most of the game.

Davy followed up her long shot with the steal, coming from behind to swipe the ball from Ross guard Tanya Stull with 31 seconds remaining.

Zanesville worked the ball around until slipping it to Horton with eight seconds to play. Horton drove to the left of the lane, got off an 8-footer, missed, but was fouled when Amy Ritzman of Ross got into her body on the defensive play.

After a Ross timeout, Horton missed the first shot. Ross called another timeout but instead of icing Horton again, the Zanesville senior calmly came back and swished the next free toss and hand Ross its fourth loss in

12 games while leaving the Little Giants' BCC record at 2-2.

Zanesville is 8-5 and 3-2 in conference play.

Horton, who averages nearly 20 points per game, was held to 12, only two in the second half.

"Amy Ritzman did a good job on Horton in the second half," Wolf said. "I'll take a coaching mistake there — I should have had her on her at the beginning."

Ritzman took over defensively on Horton early in the second quarter.

Ross fell behind 20-9 late in the second quarter after an 8-3 first quarter deadlock. The Devils held Ross without a second period field goal until Ritzman's jumper found the mark with 31 second left in the half. Becky Williams cut the Ross deficit to 22-15 at the half, hitting a rebound shot and a free throw.

Ross did not take the lead again until Stull's bucket made it 33-32 with 6:53 remaining in the final quarter.

Using several lob passes under the basket to Vickie Castile, Ross built its lead to 42-37 at one point before Zanesville's last-minute surge.

"Zanesville made the plays they had to make," Wolf said.

"It was a tough loss and tough week (which included a 48-45 loss to Sylvania Northview Monday). We have four games on the road now and we have to get our work ethics back."

Horton was the only Blue Devil in double figures.

Castile topped Ross with 13 points, and Ritzman finished with 10.

Giant comeback beats Findlay

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross came from 15 points down at halftime for a 45-44 Buckeye Central Conference girls basketball victory over Findlay Saturday.

Amy Ritzman made two free throws with less than a minute to play, and the Little Giants overcame a late technical foul to improve to 9-4

See GIRLS, B4

Girls

Continued From B1

Ross is one-half game behind BCC leaders Zanesville and Lancaster.

In other games, Clyde edged Sandusky St. Mary's 54-51, Margaretta beat Port Clinton 67-39 and Oak Harbor topped Edison 45-25.

Ross trailed 28-13 at halftime at Findlay, but the Little Giants outscored the Trojans 32-16 in the second half.

"We went to a triangle-and-two (defense) because their two big scorers killed us in the first half," Ross coach Sue Wolf said. "The kids did a nice job with that, and the press started to work."

Amy Jarvet scored 16 of her 19 points in the first half for Findlay, 7-6 and 1-3 in the BCC, and Allyson Creel scored eight of her 12 before halftime.

The Little Giants outscored Findlay 14-9 in the third quarter before winning it in the fourth.

After Tanya Stull tied the game at 43-all with a free throw, Amy Ritzman put Ross on top 45-43 with two foul shots. Javert made one-of-two technical foul shots with 28 second left.

Ross missed two free throws, and Findlay missed once from the field and once from the foul line in the final seconds.

Vickie Castile led the Little Giants with 19 points, and Ritzman finished with 11.

Ross 'takes' ugly win at Clyde

By TIM HARMON
Staff writer

CLYDE — A contact-filled girls basketball game at The Hangar Tuesday night played into the hands of the Fremont Ross Little Giants.

Ross broke open a close game in the third quarter and went on to a 62-49 non-conference victory.

"It wasn't pretty, but I'll take it," Ross coach Sue Wolf said.

The teams committed 42 personal fouls in the game, including 24 by Clyde.

Clyde was forced to abandon its press in the second half because Mindy Swartz and her replacement, Choe Morrison, each had three fouls at halftime.

Lakota, Genoa showdown set

News-Messenger reports

Lakota and Genoa set up Thursday's first-place showdown in the Suburban Lakes League with girls basketball victories Tuesday night.

The Raiders got 14 points apiece from Beth Cochran and Jenny Geyman in a 65-49 victory over Woodmore, while Genoa overcame an Eastwood stall for a 45-20 victory over the Eagles.

See GIRLS, B3

The Fliers forced 13 Ross turnovers in the first half and trailed 25-24 at halftime, overcoming a 10-point second-quarter deficit.

Ross, 10-4, outscored Clyde 19-8 in the third quarter. The Little

Giants, who led 16-14 after one quarter, forced 25 turnovers with its press and outrebounded the Fliers 35-28 — including a 13-6 edge in offensive rebounds.

"Their press put us in a lot of

turnover situations," Clyde coach Nancy Hanger said. "Because we had trouble breaking the press, when we did get down the floor we didn't run our offense very well."

The Little Giants made 7-of-13 shots in the third quarter.

"Our third quarter was the best we played," Wolf said. "Of course it helps to have Amy Ritzman on the floor."

Ritzman, Ross's second leading scorer and main outside shooting threat, sat out most of the first half with three fouls.

Swartz, the Fliers' leading scorer at 15 points per game, also sat out much of the first half and a good portion of the third

quarter with foul trouble.

"That was a factor because she is a scorer for us," Hanger said.

Swartz did finish with a team-high 10 points, including eight in the second half.

The Fliers, 6-9, switched defenses (from a zone to man-to-man and back to zone) attempting to keep Ross off balance.

After falling behind 52-32 early in the third quarter, Clyde cut its deficit back to 54-44 with 3:38 left in the game but got no closer.

"I have to give them all the credit in the world," Wolf said.

"They kept coming back at us,

See ROSS, B3

Ross

Continued From B1

and back at us and back at us. They never quit."

Clyde's 87 percent (20-of-23) shooting from the foul line played a big part in keeping the Fliers in the game.

"We certainly had a lot of opportunities at the foul line," Hanger said.

Ross, meanwhile, made 14-of-30 free throws.

"If they foul and we get nothing out of it, it definitely helps the other team," Wolf said.

Vickie Castile scored 23 points and collected 12 rebounds for Ross. Castile was 11-of-21 at the foul line.

Andrea McGee, filling in for Cortney Cominsky who missed the game with a sprained ankle, added 10 points for Ross.

Ross escapes with win over Madison

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross earned a 49-45 field Madison Thursday night after failing to hold a 17-2 first-quarter lead.

"We stopped shooting well, and we committed a few too many turnovers (after the first quarter)," Ross coach Sue Wolf said.

In other games, Gibsonburg defeated Eastwood 42-35, Otsego nipped Woodmore 54-53, Oak Harbor topped Sandusky Perkins 42-35 and Old Fort beat Hopewell-Loudon 46-36.

Ross, 11-4, led 26-19 at halftime

and fell behind 33-32 after three quarters before a 16-12 edge in the fourth period lifted the Little Giants to victory.

"I was happy to get out of their with a win," Wolf said, "and it was nice to win a game at the foul line."

The Little Giants made 13-of-19 free throws. Vickie Castile, who made 8-of-12 and finished with a game-high 20 points, preserved the win with two foul shots with one second left.

Amy Ritzman added 13 points for Ross, which made eight of its 17 field goals in the first quarter, committed 30 turnovers and out-

rebounded the Rams 30-24.

Amy Keller led Madison, 4-11, with 13 points.

Gibsonburg.....42

Eastwood.....35

Bobbi Shull scored 19 points, grabbed nine rebounds and added four steals for Gibsonburg, which nudged ahead of Eastwood into a tie for fourth place with Otsego and Elmwood in the Suburban Lakes League.

The Golden Bears, who outscored the Eagles 11-6 in the fourth quarter, improved to 5-10 and 5-6. Eastwood fell to 4-11 and

4-7 in the SLL.

Tracy Canode scored 13 points to lead Eastwood.

Otsego.....54

Woodmore.....53

Sara Scott's basket with 12 seconds remaining gave Otsego the SLL victory.

Woodmore, which trailed 20-10 after one quarter and 26-22 at halftime, took a 40-38 lead after three quarters.

Otsego, 7-8 and 5-6, outscored the Wildcats 16-13 in the fourth quarter.

Darcie Westrick led all scorers

with 21 points for the Knights, while Jennie Verbryke scored 16 points and Susie Hinkle 12 for Woodmore. 4-12 and 3-8.

Oak Harbor.....42

Perkins.....35

Oak Harbor led by five points, 13-8, after one quarter and maintained its lead.

The Rockets, 8-7 and 7-3, handed Perkins its 16th loss without a victory. The Pirates are 0-10 in the Sandusky Bay Conference.

Shelley Whitaker led Oak Harbor with 12 points. Perkins Kelly

Hauser led all scorers points.

Old Fort.....

Hopewell-Loudon....

Freshman Melissa

scored 19 points, and the aders outscored the C 26-11 in the second a quarters.

Old Fort, which trail after one quarter, impro 8 and 2-5 in the Midland League.

Hopewell-Loudon, 7-8 got 17 points from Jill V

Girls' BCC title chase muddled

News-Messenger reports

Lancaster's 53-45 Buckeye Central Conference girls basketball victory over Fremont Ross Saturday left the conference title chase very much undecided.

The Golden Gales, 14-6, improved to 5-3 in the BCC. Ross, 11-5, fell to 3-3 in the BCC.

Zanesville, 5-2, can claim the championship with a victory at Findlay next Saturday. A Findlay victory, however, would give the Gales a share of the title and allow the Little Giants a chance to share the crown with victories over Newark next Saturday and Findlay Feb. 16.

Findlay, 3-3 after a victory over Newark Saturday, can claim a piece of a tri-championship with victories over Zanesville and Ross.

In other games, Oak Harbor nipped Clyde 58-57 and Tiffin Columbian beat Lakota 61-34.

Ross trailed throughout its game at Lancaster, falling behind 16-12 after one quarter and 30-24 at halftime.

The Little Giants made it 39-36 after three quarters, but Lancaster outscored Ross 14-9 in the fourth quarter.

Vickie Castile scored 16 points

for Ross, and Tanya Stull added 15.

Stefanie Holt led the Gales with 14 points.

Oak Harbor.....58

Clyde.....57

Oak Harbor outscored Clyde 25-10 in the fourth quarter.

The Rocket onslaught came after the Fliers outscored Oak Harbor 35-21 in the second and third periods.

Stephanie Barton and Pam Butzin led Oak Harbor with 17 and 15 points, respectively.

Clyde's Michelle Schnur led all scorers with 20 points.

The Rockets improved to 9-9 and 8-4 in the Sandusky Bay Conference.

Columbian.....61

Lakota.....34

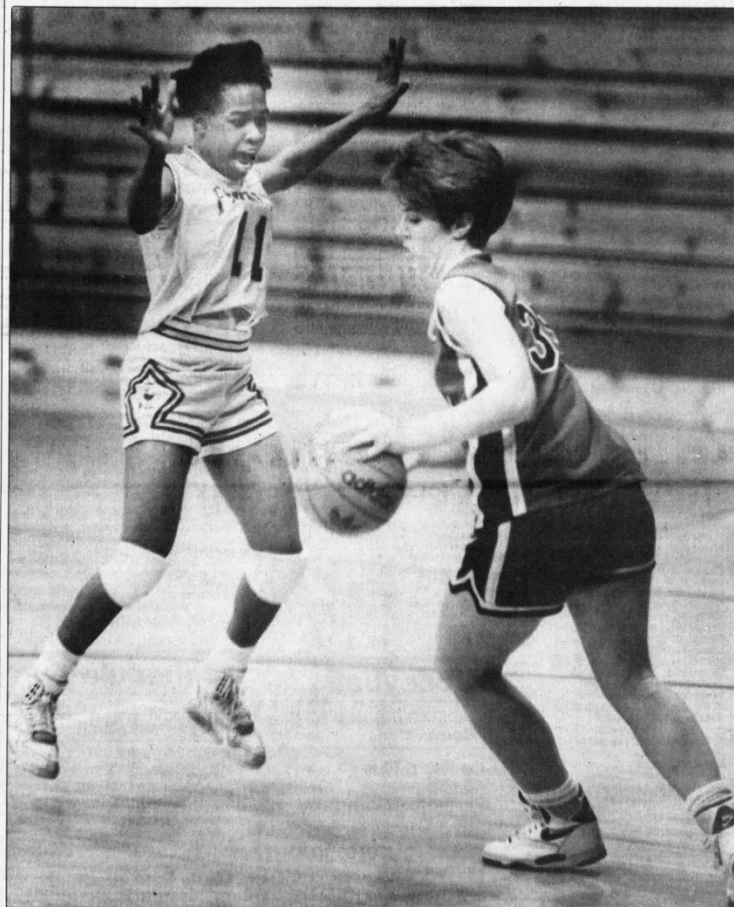
Columbian outshot Lakota 55 percent (24-of-44) to 30 percent (15-of-50) and outrebounded the Raiders 31-15.

The Tornadoes led 17-9 after one quarter, 35-16 at halftime and 48-28 after three quarters.

Patty Stowers with 10 points was the only player in double figures for the Raiders, 11-6.

Ross girls stretched to limit, win

Scrappy Fostoria falls



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

STEPHANIE MCGEE (11) of Fremont Ross defends against Fostoria's Jane Lucius.

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

It seemed as if Fostoria had a rubber band attached to the shirt tails of the Fremont Ross girls basketball players.

The rubber band nearly shot the Redmen past the Little Giants before Ross pulled out a 53-49 victory Wednesday night in the Purple Pit.

The Little Giants consistently stretched out to comfortable leads before the Redmen snapped back each time on a night when the Little Giants' Vickie Castile scored 19 points and grabbed 20 rebounds.

"She played an outstanding game tonight," Ross coach Sue Wolf said.

Ross, 12-5, led 19-8 in the second quarter but the Redmen cut it to 20-15. In the third quarter, Ross led 40-26 before Fostoria bounced back to trail 42-35 at the end of the period.

In the final quarter, the rubber band nearly stung the Little Giants.

Ross led 49-37 after Castile's free throw at the 4:11 mark of the final quarter. The Little Giants still led by 11, 50-39, after Amy Ritzman's free throw with 2:58 to play.

After that, Fostoria capitalized on Ross miscues to put the pressure on the Little Giants, but the mistakes were ones Wolf could understand.

"They were hustle mistakes," she said. "We were hutsling and people were trying to do what they were supposed to do."

Still, good or bad mistakes, Fostoria was taking advantage of the gifts.

Danielle Moore closed the Ross gap to 50-41 at the 2:45 mark. A free throw, 30 seconds later, by Rachel Risner made in 50-42.

Jane Lucius rebounded in her

own missed shot with 1:50 to play and Risner scored on a steal, cutting the Ross lead to 50-46.

Stacy Fairly turned a Ross turnover into a 3-point play, sinking a layup and the free throw as the Little Giants' lead dwindled to 50-49 with 1:26 remaining before the Little Giants were able to stop the charge.

Castile's free throw 10 seconds later ended Fostoria's 10-point run.

Andrea McGee, who came off the bench in the first quarter to hit a quick layup, came up with a key defensive play for Ross at the 1:03 mark. McGee batted Fostoria guard Jenny Beigh's pass to teammate Tanya Stull.

"She came up with a nice steal," Wolf said, "and Ritzman had a great rebound at the end of the game."

After the theft, Ross melted over a half-minute off the clock until Stull was fouled by Fairley with 29 seconds remaining. Stull hit both ends of the one-and-one, putting Ross up by four.

The Little Giants tight man-to-man defense took over from there, forcing the Redmen to toss up a wild 3-point attempt and then not allowing another shot in the final 10 seconds.

Ritzman had 14 points for Ross and Courtney Comminsky added 12. Beigh and Moore topped Fostoria, 8-10, with 10 points and Lucius had nine.

Ross made 19-of-48 shots and 14-of-27 free throws. Fostoria was 20-of-51 and made 7-of-17 free throws. The Little Giants, with Castile topping the list, had 42 rebounds and Fostoria 29.

The Little Giants were guilty of 28 turnovers, four more than the Redmen.

Ross returns to action Saturday, hosting Newark in a Buckeye Central Conference game.

Newark upsets Ross girls 54-46

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

The possibility was there but the play on the floor was not as Fremont Ross erased itself from the Buckeye Central Conference girls basketball race Saturday afternoon in the Purple Pit.

Newark walked into the Ross gym with an unimpressive 3-15 record but left an impression on the Little Giants, posting a 54-46 win.

Destined for the BCC cellar before the opening tip, Newark did not lose that dubious honor but finished with class, winning for the second time in eight conference games. Ross slipped to 12-6 and 3-4 in the BCC.

The Little Giants' slim hopes of at least a portion of the conference crown rested on a Findlay victory over Zanesville, also Saturday, and then a win over

Findlay next Saturday. The Trojans did their part, beating the conference leading Blue Devils 69-65 in overtime, but Ross did not hold up its end.

Instead, Findlay kept in line for a portion of the title, raising its conference mark to 4-3. Zanesville slipped to 5-3, matching that of Lancaster. The Blue Devils and Lancaster will at least share the title and Findlay can grab a third of it with a win over Ross.

"We did not shoot well enough to win," Ross coach Sue Wolf said.

No understatement. The Little Giants, although never trailing by more than eight, took themselves out of the game, missing 25 of 34 second half shots and finishing with 17 buckets in 61 attempts. Ross began the third quarter, missing 10-of-11 shots

while Newark made 4-of-6 in the period to extend a 23-21 halftime lead to 36-32.

In the final eight minutes, Ross was 4-of-15 and could not contain Newark's inside game furnished by Bekkah Berryhill and Teresa Kwadrat. Berry scored six of her team-high 14 points while Kwadrat slipped behind the Ross defense to score all four of her points.

Ross never got closer than four points in the final quarter.

"Our offense never got into sync," Wolf said as she mulled over the disappointing loss.

Tanya Stull scored 13 second-half points to lead Ross with 16. Amy Ritzman and Vickie Castile added 11 each.

Ross hosts Sandusky Tuesday before the season finale with Findlay.

Ross, St. Joe triumph

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross disposed of Sandusky 58-28, while St. Joseph Central Catholic closed its regular season with a 52-37 Midland Athletic League victory over Carey Tuesday night.

In other girls basketball action, Margaretta wrapped up the Sandusky Bay Conference championship with a 78-50 victory over Clyde, Huron beat Oak Harbor 62-45, Edison edged Port Clinton 63-60, Fostoria St. Wendelin beat Bettsville 54-19, New Riegel routed Old Fort 76-42 and Tiffin Columbian topped Bellevue 57-42.

Ross, 13-6, was never threatened after taking a 13-3 first-quarter lead over Sandusky, 1-18.

Cortney Cominsky led the Little Giants with 13 points, and Becky Williams added 10.

St. Joe, 17-3 and 8-2 in the MAL, outscored Carey 17-6 in the second quarter.

Jenny Pressler had four 3-point shots among her 16 points, and Jennie Ewanski had 15 points for the Crimson Streaks. Ewanski added 10 rebounds.

Margaretta78

Clyde50

Margaretta won its third SBC title in four years. The Polar



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

See GIRLS, B3

AMY RITZMAN of Fremont Ross dribbles past Sandusky's Deshawn Moore Tuesday night.

Creel, Findlay beat Ross

By TIM HARMON
Staff writer

Four Fremont Ross seniors played their final home game in the Purple Pit Saturday, but Findlay's Allyson Creel kept it from ending in victory.

Creel scored 33 points, including 24 in the first half, and Findlay claimed a 69-57 triumph and a piece of the Buckeye Central Conference girls basketball championship.

That offset a career-high, 23-point performance by Ross's Amy Ritzman in her final game. Tanya Stull, Stephanie McGee and Vickie Castile were also playing their last home game as a Little Giant.

"(The Trojans) were aggressive," Ross coach Sue Wolf said. "They wanted the BCC."

Findlay, 12-7 and 5-3, share the title with Lancaster and Zanesville after overcoming a 1-3 record to start the BCC.

"We got beat bad at Lancaster (68-38)," Findlay coach Bill Lobb said. "We beat (Lancaster) to start the second round, and that got us going."

"We've been playing pretty well since then."

Creel has led the charge, scoring 36, 34 and 33 points in her last three games. She scored 14 points in the first quarter as Findlay took a 22-10 lead. The Trojans opened up a 38-20 half-time lead as Creel tossed in 10 second-period points.

"The kids didn't listen to what I told them," Wolf said. "We knew who was going to shoot the ball."

"They played good defense on the girls who weren't going to shoot and not good enough on the ones who were."

"We didn't practice for two days (because school was canceled), and we can't afford that. We need our practice time."

The Little Giants, 13-7 and 3-5, made the game interesting in the second half.

"We could have laid down at halftime," Wolf said.

After falling behind 46-26 midway through the third quarter, Ross made it 48-38 thanks in part to a pair of 3-point baskets by Ritzman and one by Stull.

Findlay, however, pushed its lead back to 14 following a timeout.

Ritzman scored 12 of her points in the first half, including eight in the first quarter.

"I would have liked Amy to take a few more shots in the first half," Wolf said.

Creel, meanwhile, made 10 of 14 shots before halftime — most of which came from in close after the Trojans handled Ross's full-court pressure.

"We get the ball to Amy (freshman Jauert) and clear out," Lobb said. "If she dribbles it, she's big enough (5-foot-8) to get through and she sees people really well."

"Once we get it up against the pressure, we usually shoot well."

Findlay, which outrebounded Ross 39-27, shot 50 percent.

Ross, which got 12 points from Cortney Cominsky, shot 30 percent (21-of-71).

Castile, Ritzman voted All-BCC 1st-team honors

News-Messenger reports

Vickie Castile and Amy Ritzman of Ross were named to the All-Buckeye Central Conference girls basketball first team announced Monday.

The teams were selected by a vote of the coaches. The Ross duo were joined on the first team by player-of-the-year Allyson Creel of Findlay, Rashaudra Horton of Zanesville, Stephanie Holt of Lancaster and Bekkah Berryhill of Newark. All are seniors with the exception of Horton, a junior.

Creel, 5-10, led the BCC in scoring with a 20.7 mark while Horton, 5-9, was second at 11.8. Castile, 5-10, topped Ross with a 14.0 per game average while the 5-4 Ritzman averaged 11.5. Holt, 5-8, was at 11.8 and Berryhill, 5-9, carried a 12.3 average.

Ross sophomore Cortney Cominsky earned second team honors along with senior Trisha Welshire and sophomore Tammy Scott of Lancaster; freshman Amy Jauert of Findlay and Newark junior Shelley Fietsam.

Tanya Stull and Stephanie McGee of Ross were on the honorable mention list.

Bill Lobb of Findlay won coach of the year honors. Lobb guided the Trojans into a three-way tie for the conference title with a 5-3 record. Lobb's team was 2-4 at one point but finished 12-7.



CASTILE



RITZMAN

Among honorable mentions selections were Vickie Castile of Fremont Ross in Division I; Laurie Mann of Port Clinton and Clyde's Mindy Swartz in Division II; Genoa's Kristi Koester, Lakota's Patty Stowers and Meredith Jordan, Jennifer Greene and Jennifer Castle of Maragretta in Division III; and Kris

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

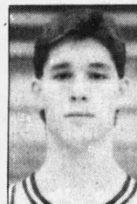
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Clark led the Little Giants in free throw shooting (66 percent) and assists (61) while Wolfe had the top field goal percentage at 50 percent and was the team's leading rebounder with 209.

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.