

2012-2013 Season Review

Ross shows it's maturity in season opener



Ross' Ariana Spencer drives to the hoop during Saturday's game against Sandusky at the Purple Pit. NEWS-MESSENGER PHOTO

By Yaneek Smith
News-Messenger correspondent

FREMONT — You never want to read too much into one game, but if this is any sign, the Ross girls basketball team appears to be a poised group that could be in for a good season.

Facing arch-rival Sandusky in the season opener, the Little Giants took control early and built a double-digit lead en route to a 48-34 non-league win Saturday at the Purple Pit.

Kiera Hall, who had a game-high 14 points, and Torri Holmes combined for 13 first-half points. But it was the team's play in the second half that was most impres-

sive. The Little Giants (1-0) pushed their lead to 20 and came through with some clutch plays to hold off the Blue Streaks (0-1), who mounted a late rally.

"I think they played with a lot of heart (tonight)," Ross coach Juan Vela said. "They didn't let the first-game jitters get to them (and) we won all the quarters except the fourth."

Hall was a constant presence inside, consistently cleaning up the offensive glass and giving the Little Giants a number of second-chance opportunities. Holmes had 11 points to help pace Ross.

"Kiera's been working on trying to get good position," said Vela. "Physically, she's in tip-top

shape. I don't know how many rebounds she had, but it was probably over 10."

The backcourt duo of Ariana Spencer and Abbi Hasselbach stepped up, finishing with eight and four points, respectively. Both came up with some key defensive stops in the fourth quarter to stifle the Blue Streaks' comeback attempt. Spencer hit a 15-foot baseline jumper with 1:31 remaining to push to lead to 40-31 after Sandusky had rallied to cut the deficit to seven points on a three-pointer by Azyah Smith-Crager.

"Abbi and Spencer grew up a

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lot tonight,” Vela said. “That was a key jumper Spencer hit late in the fourth quarter.”

Early in the third quarter, the Little Giants went on a 10-3 run to push the lead to 31-11. Shania Kiser scored four points in the spurt and finished with eight on the night. Sandusky, however, responded with a 20-7 run to get within striking distance. Smith scored all 10 of her points during the run as she connected on two 3-pointers to help close the deficit to 38-31.

Sandusky got 10 points apiece from Smith-Cragger and Icelene Smith, Dorsha Green chipped in with five points.

“We have a very young team and we graduated both of our point guards,” Blue Streaks coach Nic Venerucci said, referring to Morgan Newell and Caroline Estell. “It was a very disappointing night (but) I saw some good things. (The girls) did not quit, and I’m proud of them for that. We’ve just got to get them to play hard for four quarters. In the first half, we just weren’t executing.

“We’re trying to figure out a lineup and who plays together well.”

Little Giants no match for Clay



Fremont Ross' Pamela Michael drives to the basket Thursday. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS MESSENGER

Points hard to come by for Ross

Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Ross' Abbi Hasselbach made a nice steal, before taking the ball the length of the floor for a lay-in just ahead of the half-time buzzer to end a 6-3 run for the Little Giants to close the opening half.

But runs and points were hard to come by for Ross on Thursday night, as the Little Giants opened

Three Rivers Athletic Conference play with 57-36 setback to Oregon Clay in a game played at the Purple Pit.

The Eagles (1-1) forced the Little Giants into 37 turnovers, including double-digit giveaways in each of the first and fourth quarters. Morgan Connor tallied a game-high 19 points to go with eight steals. Tylor Brummett added four more steals for a group that totaled 23 thefts.

Clay led 31-18 at halftime and built a 48-24 advantage going into the final quarter.

"They played hard. They played fast and they made us do

things that we're not use to," said Ross coach Juan Vela of the Eagles. "Then they hit a couple quick shots in the third quarter, and when couldn't get anything going on the offensive end, we just put ourselves in a bad situation."

Connor knocked down five 3-pointers, three of which came in the opening half. She finished 5-of-9 from beyond the arc after going 0-for-7 in a season-opening 67-47 loss to Delta last Friday.

"She's definitely our streaky shooter," Eagles coach Kevin Crosson said. "I loved her bounce-

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back tonight. It showed a little bit of maturity for her to do that as a sophomore.”

Connor and Hannak Novak each hit threes in opening four minutes as Clay staked a 10-2 lead. Halfway through the second quarter, the advantage was 16 points after Brummett missed a foul shot, got her own rebound and hit a wide-open Connor at the top of the key for a triple.

Kiera Hall had seven second-quarter points for Ross (1-2). Back-to-back buckets in-

side by the senior in the half's final two minutes cut the Little Giants deficit to 28-16.

“I thought we did OK in the first half,” Vela said. “(The Eagles) hit five threes and we missed four lay-ups. If we hit a few of those, we're right in the game. But we got out how to win and realize just how important the little things are.”

Hasselbach had 10 points to pace the Little Giants, adding six steals and two assists. Hall finished with seven points, while Ariana Spencer had six and chipped in six boards.

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Central Catholic knocks off Ross

Kiser's 12 pace
Little Giants in loss

By Yaneek Smith
News-Messenger correspondent

TOLEDO — Fremont Ross was able to hang with Central Catholic in the first half of their Three Rivers Athletic Conference matchup Monday at the Sullivan Center.

But as the third quarter wore on, the Irish were able to exert their will on the Little Giants, causing a number of turnovers and converting numerous layups and easy baskets in their 69-33 victory.

Central guard Jazmine Scott scored the Irish's first eight points in the third quarter on a mix of layups and open jumpers that were created by her aggressive play. Central dominated the period, outscoring Ross 25-10 to take control of the contest. The Irish sustained the momentum from that point forward, outscoring the Little Giants 15-3 in the final quarter.

"I thought we played pretty hard," Central Catholic coach Marty McGurk said. "We got a lot of points (off) of our defense, which is always a good thing. When we play with some intensity, we can do some good things. Offensively, we lost our top scorer from last year, and we're still finding ourselves. It's probably best for us when we have a balanced scoring attack like we did (Monday)."

The Irish (1-1, 1-1) employed a full-court press that caused a number of turnovers, leading to some opportunities for them on the offensive end. And while the Little Giants (1-3, 0-2) were able to break the press and score at times, they missed too many layups and inside shots.

Central featured a balanced scoring attack that was led by guard Michelle Murnen, who finished with 16 points, including two 3-pointers. The Irish had four players finish with eight points apiece in Jen Vliet, Scott, Deonna Murdock and Sydni Harmon.

Central never trailed and took the lead for good at 10-8 on a layup by Harmon midway through the first quarter.

The first half was pretty competitive and featured a number of back-and-forth spurts by both teams, but ultimately, the Irish were able to build the lead and had an answer for every run Ross made in the first two quarters. After outscoring the Little Giants 15-10 in the first quarter, Central was able to build a lead that was between seven and nine points for the duration of the second quarter before going into the half with a 29-20 advantage.

"We played well in the first half," Ross coach Juan Vela said. "We struggled at the beginning but bounced back and made a game of it. Then they hit two big 3s (in the third quarter) and we turn the ball over two times and a 9-point lead turns into a 17- or 18-point lead."

Ross was led by Shania Kiser, who finished with 12 points, and point guard Abbi Hasselbach, who scored eight.

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL

Little Giants have a rough night

Slow start dooms Ross as Findlay rolls

By Angela Hill
News-Messenger correspondent

FREMONT — The Ross High School girls fell 60-26 Thursday to Findlay in Three Rivers Athletic Conference action.

“We didn’t play good at all,” said Little Giants’ coach Juan Vela. “I don’t think the girls were ready for tonight. The lesson that they learned — I hope — was that they need to be ready to play like a team. Find-

lay threw up a lot of shots and played like a team.”

When talking about standout Abbi Hasselbach, Vela said: “Abby is always ready to play basketball and when she is on the court you can tell that she plays hard.”

The Little Giants (1-6, 0-5) had a tough start. They only put 3 points on the board in the first quarter.

Findlay (4-1, 3-1) put 16 points on the board.

It didn’t get much better than that.

“You have to respect your opponent,” Findlay coach Connie Lyons said. “They have a really good point guard, and that defense was important. Our guards did a decent job. We need to do a better job at defending, and minimize turnovers.”

Fremont Ross hosting the Fostoria Redmen on Dec 20.



Abbi Hasselbach of Fremont Ross drives to the basket as Findlay defenders. SUBMITTED PHOTO



Fremont Ross Whitney Overmyer puts up a shot during a basketball game against Fostoria on Thursday, Dec 20, 2012. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Ross steals game from Fostoria

Little Giants force Lady Red into 39 turnovers

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Anticipate. That had been the word of choice for Ross girls coach Juan Vela in practice throughout the week leading up to Thursday's game with Fostoria. With the Little Giants struggling on the offensive end of the floor, Vela wanted his team to be more aggressive in the way they pursued the ball on defense.

The message was well received. Ross forced 39 turnovers from the Lady Red, including 15 steals from point guard Abbi Hasselbach as the Little Giants earned a 53-40 non-conference win at the Purple Pit.

Hasselbach added a game-high 22 points and four assists at the offensive end.

"Practice has been all about defense, defense, defense," she said. "That was our



Fremont Ross' Shania Kiser protects the ball as she falls to the floor during Thursday's game against Fostoria at The Purple Pit. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

weakness coming into the season, but I feel like we're improving on it a lot. What you do in practice shows in the games and I really think it's starting to show."

It showed right from the start of Thursday's game. Hasselbach had seven steals in the opening quarter as Ross (2-6)

jumped out to a 12-7 lead, then turned it into a 28-16 edge by halftime.

But it wasn't just Hasselbach having all the fun. Torri Holmes' steal and layup was part of an 8-0 run in the second quarter to get the Little Giants some breathing room at 20-9. Fostoria (0-8) held the lead three times in the opening quarter. Holmes finished with four steals, as did post Keira Hall. Whitney Overmyer and Pam Michael each had two apiece.

"We haven't been getting anything going on offense," Vela said. "So I told the girls in practice, another way to play offense is to play great defense and get some easy baskets."

Hasselbach tallied six of Ross' first nine points of the second half with four of those coming as a direct result of her anticipating a pass, making a play on it, then taking it hard to the basket. Her second theft that turned into a lay-in gave the Little Giants a 37-18 third-quarter lead.

"I didn't even know I could do half of that, honestly," Hasselbach said. "This

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FREMONT ROSS 71, SCOTT 16

Fremont Ross	15	21	20	15	—	71
Scott	4	5	4	3	—	16

3-Point Goals - Fremont Ross 2.

Records: Fremont Ross 3-9; Scott 5-8.

GIRLS BASKETBALL



Fremont Ross' Valerie Samson fights for position under the basket during the second half of a basketball game against Whitmer on Thursday, Jan 10, 2013. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Whitmer's start too much for Ross

Panthers start fast, run past Little Giants in Three Rivers Athletic Conference game

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Ross couldn't have started Thursday's game with Whitmer much worse.

Coming off a confidence-boosting win over the weekend at Scott (71-16) that saw each member of the Little Giants score, and the team play with a lot of energy, all of that got sucked out of their lungs in the first two minutes by the Panthers. Ross turned the ball over five times on its first five trips down the floor, while Whitmer turned those the blunders into a double-digit cushion en route to a 53-34 Three Rivers Athletic Conference victory at the Purple Pit.

The Panthers (9-4, 4-3) inside duo of Abigail Sarabia and Keshyra McCarver, both standing at 5-foot-9-inches,

combined for 31 of Whitmer's points, including seven in the first two minutes. Ross (3-10, 0-7) trailed 10-0 with six minutes to go.

"First minute, (the Panthers) come out and score seven quick points, then we went to a zone and held them to three points the rest of the quarter," Little Giants coach Juan Vela said. "So we saw some light there and we kept battling. They made some adjustments. We made some adjustments, but it's tough to stop that McCarver. She did a lot for them tonight."

McCarver finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds. She recorded seven of the Panthers' nine second-quarter points as Whitmer led 19-10 at halftime. Her strength and ability to



Fremont Ross' Paige Collier drives through the Whitmer defense during the second half Thursday. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

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Whitmer

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move inside made it tough on Little Giant posts Shania Kiser and Kiera Hall, forcing Ross to change up its defense to a 2-3 zone look.

“The key and the goal was try and stop McCarver,” Vela said. “I thought our 2-3 zone was working. Just couldn’t get anything going offensively.”

Ross shot just 5 of 19 in the opening half. It finished 15 of 46 (32 percent) for the game.

Ariana Spencer paced the Little Giants with 12 points, adding five steals. Abbi Hasselbach had nine points and tallied three thefts.

Ross never got closer than 13 points in the second half, trailing 35-17 entering the final quarter.

“Coming off the Scott game, our girls were playing well and they went into practice this week with some extra energy,” Vela said. “That’s good. But every team that you compete with is trying to do the same thing you are, and the one that executes is going to get it.”

Sarabia led all scorers with 17 points for the Panthers. She and McCarver each picked up three assists.

Whitmer as a group shot 21 of 41 (51 percent).

“We got to keep building off the way we played defensively,” Vela said. “I thought we had some really good stops tonight.”

Ross returns to action Tuesday when it hosts Maumee in a non-league tilt.

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Fremont Ross' Pamala Michael drives to the hoop during the first half of a basketball game against Maumee on Tuesday. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Guard play helps Ross to win

FREMONT — Torri Holmes dove for a loose ball under her own basket, before grabbing the ball and making a near blind pass right into the hands of Kiera Hall for a layup.

The play by Ross' sophomore guard, was one of many hustle plays made by the Little Giants during Tuesday's 49-35 non-league win over Maumee inside the Purple Pit.

Holmes finished with 10 points — all coming in the first half — as Ross (4-10) built a 32-21 halftime lead thanks to 13-4 run to start the second quarter. She added four assists, four rebounds and three steals.

Holmes' backcourt partner, Abbi Has-

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

selbach, tallied a team-high 18 points. The two hooked up on back-to-back plays during the second stanza outburst. With the Little Giants leading 26-16, Holmes stole the ball at midcourt, then found Hasselbach cutting to the basket for an easy lay-in. One possession later, Holmes found Hasselbach in transition for a 3-pointer at the top of the key and a 29-14 advantage.

"I think our guards are starting to get the hang of attacking with the ball and making plays," Ross coach Juan Vela said. "I thought they showed that tonight with

some the plays they were able to make."

Holmes stole the ball, then drove to the basket for lay-in for a 10-4 first quarter edge. Her three-point play in the paint soon upped it to 13-6, as the Little Giants scored 17 of the game's first 25 points. Hasselbach's perfect pass to a driving Ariana Spencer for a another easy bucket, closed the opening run.

"I thought the girls' intensity was there tonight," Vela said. "But more than that, I thought they were seeing the whole floor and reading the plays.

"I told them I think this was the first time we put everything together and

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played a real solid game for four quarters.”

Maumee never got closer than 13 in the second half.

Hasselbach scored eight of Ross’ 17 second-half points. Most of those came via her ability to see a lane and drive to the basket. Two straight lay-ups by Hasselbach midway through the fourth quarter gave the Little Giants their biggest lead of the game at 47-27.

“A lot of the runs tonight had a lot to do with Abbi,” Vela said. “There were times tonight where it seemed like she wasn’t really in the game, but she was doing a lot on defense and the offense. And most of those runs came from her attacking and just being Abbi, the great athlete that she is.”

Hall had eight rebounds inside for Ross. Taylor Topel added seven boards. Both were instrumental on shutting down Panthers’ post Joeal Olman.

Olman scored a game-high 20 points, but scored only five points in the second and third quarters when Ross stretched the lead to 39-24 after three quarters.

“When she scored eight of their first 10 points, our defense had to start focusing on her and trying to take her away,” Vela said. “And our post players responded.”

Olman, the lone Maumee player in double figures, added 10 rebounds and three steals. Ross turned the ball over 26 times, while the Panthers gave it away 22 times.

The Little Giants play Thursday at Clay.

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GIRLS BASKETBALL

NOTRE DAME 64, FREMONT ROSS 18

Notre Dame	17	13	21	13	—	64
Fremont Ross	2	2	5	9	—	18

Notre Dame

Tierra Floyd 7 3 18, C. Jefferson 3 6, Kayla McIntyre 5 10, Kristen Schroeder 2 4, Jayde Worthy 6 3 15. Totals 28 7-12 64.

Fremont Ross

Elayna Ackerman 1 1, Shania Kiser 1 1, Pam Michael 1 1, Whitney Overmyer 2 4, Tajai Pitts 2 5, Ariana Spencer 2 4, Taylor Topel 1 2. Totals 7 3-6 18.

3-Point Goals - Notre Dame 1 (Tierra Floyd 1), Fremont Ross 1 (Tajai Pitts 1).

Lima Senior 58, Fremont Ross 35

Abbie Hasselbach scored nine points in Fremont Ross's setback in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.



Ross's Kiera Hall drives inside against Toledo Central Catholic's Demi Russell. DOUG HISE/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

Little Giants celebrate a bond

By Matthew Horn
Sports writer

Kiera Hall took the microphone before Monday's game and announced that Fremont Ross's Juan Vela is the best coach in the world while wishing him a happy birthday.

Hall felt the same way after the Little Giants fell to Toledo Central Catholic 57-34 in the Three Rivers Athletic Confer-

ence.

"We haven't won much his four years but all he cares about is making us better," Hall said. "He loves the game and wants us to have fun. He's just a great coach all-around."

If possible, basketball keeps Vela, 32, young but also causes him to age.

"Coaching the girls, they keep you young with a fun atmosphere. As a coach, some

days the team looks great and some days it (doesn't). Coaching does make you old. The girls like to have fun and joke and that's important with the long season."

Central Catholic (12-7, 8-4) scored nine straight points early in the first quarter and led 22-9 entering the second.

"Central came out playing hard and focused," Vela said. "They hit some shots and con-

verted some turnovers into baskets. They came out aggressive in the third and we couldn't counter."

Ariana Spencer scored in transition after Abbie Hasselbach stole the ball and beat a defender with a crossover in the backcourt before finding Spencer with a bounce pass late in the second quarter. The Little

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Vela

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Giants (4-14, 0-12) scored for a 32-26 deficit in the third quarter but the Irish recorded the next 16 points.

Michelle Murnen made three of her four three-pointers in the third quarter from Central Catholic.

"We had a discussion at the half," Irish coach Marty McGurk said. "We had a strong first quarter and didn't play with the same energy in the second quarter. We picked it up in the second half and turned defense into offense. Our energy level picked up.

"(Murnen's) a real good shooter. She shoots well when

her feet are set. In the third quarter she came out and didn't hurry. She took what they gave."

Spencer scored seven of her team-high 13 points, including a pull-up jumper in the first quarter.

"She took over the point guard position and decided to be a leader," Vela said. "She took over and made some big plays and some smart passes. When (Murnen) hit those threes I asked, 'Who's going to stop her.'

"Spencer said, 'I will.' I've been waiting for that. I've been waiting for her to believe in herself."

Vela certainly does.

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Fremont Ross' Whitney Overmyer comes up with the loose ball under the net during the first half of Thursday's Three Rivers Athletic Conference game against Toledo St. Ursula. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

LATE RUN DOOMS ROSS

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — As Ross coach Juan Vela said himself, “things couldn't have gotten much worse” for the Little Giants at times during their Three Rivers Athletic Conference tilt with Toledo St. Ursula Academy on Thursday.

Down 14 points in the third quarter, Ross finished the period on an 11-0 run. Then in the fourth quarter, Abbi Hasselbach's one-handed runner off the glass, followed by Pam Micheal's two on a drive to the bas-

ket, gave Ross its first lead of the game with 5:40 remaining. But it was a 12-1 spurt by the Arrows in the final 4:12 that was the difference in the Little Giants falling by a 47-42 count in a game played at the Purple Pit.

Megan Burn's triple — part of her game-high 17 points — got St. Ursula (7-11, 2-10) within 38-36, before Megan Christopher's jumper with 3:20 remaining tied the game 38-all. That came after Ross (5-15, 0-13) ended a 19-5 run that bridged the third and fourth quarters with three straight layups from Michael to up its advantage to 38-33. The Arrows

led as much as 31-17 with 6:14 to go in the third quarter.

“It couldn't get any worse than that,” Vela said. “That definitely wasn't the way we wanted to start the second half, giving them a basket, then us turning it over and allowing them another basket. I was just trying to find something from anybody at that point.”

Hasselbach finally got Ross' offense some points. Her a layup on a second-chance opportunity was the Little Giants' first points in over a

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four-minute span. Shania Kiser hit a jumper to get the deficit to 10 and hit another one off the glass to make it 31-23. Ariana Spencer's steal and lay-in made it 31-25 with 2:33 to go in the third, before Hasselbach's 3-pointer from the corner got Ross within 31-28 heading into the final eight minutes.

"I have no idea how we came back to go up," Vela said. "For awhile, I thought someone was playing with the scoreboard, but the girls made some plays and we got back into it."

"Unfortunately, we let it slip away at the end."

Shelby Linenkugal's inside basket off of teammate Maurissa Lenard's missed foul shot, gave the Arrows a 41-38 edge with 1:52 to go.

Michael got the Little Giants as close as 41-39, splitting

a pair of free throws with 1:32 remaining, but a layup by Linenkugal and two charity shots from Burns upped the deficit to 45-39 with 47 seconds to play.

Linenkugal finished with 12 points, adding seven boards and three steals. Burns also grabbed seven rebounds and contributed four thefts for St. Ursula.

"We don't have a whole lot of talent, but these girls play hard," Arrows coach Jim Strall said. "And one thing I told in the locker room after the game was they could of laid down when (Ross) took a three-point lead on them, but they didn't and that's a testament to them. They hustle and they don't quit."

Hasselbach paced Ross with 14 points, adding seven assists and four steals. Taylor Topel had nine points, Michael eight to go with six boards and four steals.

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Fremont Ross' Abbi Hasselbach is pressured by Port Clinton's Paige Culver on Tuesday. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER PHOTOS

'Skins hold off Ross

Talented Port Clinton owns second half



Fremont Ross' Shania Kiser is pressured by Port Clinton's Tiffany Colston Tuesday.

By Matthew Horn
Sports writer

PORT CLINTON — Pamala Michael sank a three-pointer after an offensive rebound from Ariana Spencer late in the first half Tuesday but Port Clinton scored the next seven points for a comfortable lead it maintained for the rest of the game in a 47-32 non-conference victory over Fremont Ross.

The Little Giants (5-16) led 8-7 but the Redskins (18-3) scored the next seven points and were ahead 27-19 at the half. Ross trailed 33-24 late in the third quarter before Port Clinton scored eight consecutive points.

"Port Clinton is a good team with a lot of weapons," Ross coach Juan Vela said. "You can't shut everything down. You have to choose and hope they make some mistakes. They made more plays than us."

Tiffany Colston had game-highs of 22 points, 11 rebounds and three steals for the Redskins. Hope Thorbahn added 17 points.

"She finished," Vela said. "We made her work in the post. She will score but I wanted the girls to make her work. They earned what they got."

Abbi Hasselbach and Michael each had seven points while Kiera Hall added five rebounds for Ross.

"Ariana and Kiera brought some energy and played hard," Vela said. "That gets our team going. Ariana gave us some opportunities to make plays."

Hasselbach, Thorbahn and Colston play AAU together. Colston and cousin McKenzie Colston of the Little Giants were on the court at the same time in the fourth quarter.

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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Former Redskins visit home in purple

Wargo, Logsdon join Tisza for Ross visit

By Matthew Horn
Sports writer

It's not often that the pupil has a chance to compete against the mentor but the scenario leads to a special environment when they do.

Former Port Clinton basketball players Kelly Logsdon and Paula Wargo faced their high school coach as assistant coaches Tuesday when Fremont Ross fell to Toby Bickel's Redskins. Wargo, who was girls freshman coach last season, is a varsity assistant to Juan Vela while Logsdon coaches the seventh-grade team.

"It's fun to be back in this gym with him but not *with* him," Logsdon said.

Home is where the heart is but sometimes a different perspective is nice.

Bickel has mellowed a bit

since Logsdon graduated in 2007. But current Redskins know what she means as Bickel can be rather fiery. Logsdon, who played for a year at Capital before finishing her education at Ohio State, graduated with the school's career record for three-pointers and was an excellent free throw shooter.

Bickel is not surprised his former players are coaches. "(Wargo's) spent most of her life around basketball. Since she wanted to become a teacher, it's only natural she became a coach. They're young girls with knowledge of the game who like teaching. It's a natural fit."

Wargo, who graduated in 2006, surpassed 1,000 career points with Port Clinton before playing at American for one year. She finished her education at Bowling Green State University.

"It was the kids trying to beat their coach," Wargo said. "It was fun with Jen (Tisza) over there, too. We wanted to win ... almost like we were out there in jerseys."



Fremont Ross assistant coaches Paula Wargo and Kelly Logsdon watch the action from the bench during basketball game at Port Clinton High School on Tuesday. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Tisza, who graduated in 2004, holds the program record for career rebounds and also surpassed 1,000 points. She played at Dayton and is Bickel's assistant.

Tisza was a post with plenty of guard skills, Wargo was a

presence inside and Logsdon was a guard.

"She loves the game," Vela said of Wargo. "She had a successful high school career and relates to what it takes to be

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Redskins

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successful. She shows her passion to the kids. Her being a post and me being a guard, we balance each other out.

“Our posts’ games have improved. It’s hard to find coaches and even harder to find good coaches at one position. The girls enjoy learning from her and she has a good relationship with the girls.”

Bickel, Logsdon and Wargo shared a light yet intense exchange as they crossed paths heading back into the gym for the third quarter.

“It was fun and competitive,” Logsdon said.

Not coincidentally, those are the same reasons the girls got into coaching.

“Sports were a big part of

our lives,” Logsdon said. “We can’t do it anymore but it’s nice to be with these kids and pass on knowledge. Sports can do a lot for them.”

And Logsdon didn’t mean she wouldn’t invite a shooting challenge right now. Tisza, Wargo and Logsdon all relate to the players they coach well because they are relatively close to them in age.

“Being young, we’re looking to build the program,” Wargo said. “It’s fun to pass your knowledge of the game to somebody else. It’s fun to watch them learn and grow. It’s fun to watch them compete.”

“It’s Vela’s fourth year. It’s hard to follow Sue (Wolf).”

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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Whitmer tops Ross on Senior Night

Toledo power finishes with a win

By Denny Oehlers
News-Messenger correspondent

TOLEDO — When the Whitmer girls basketball team's lone senior Jordan Blood was pulled with only a few minutes to play, the crowd applauded.

That would be the only love shown Thursday night as the Panthers defeated Ross 55-33 in a Three Rivers Athletic Conference tilt Thursday.

Aggressive early, Ross (4-18, 0-14) committed five fouls in the first quarter, showing no signs of slowing down.

The second showed much of the same for Ross, which committed four more fouls. Six of the nine first-half fouls were on Keshyra McCarver, who went 9-of-13 from the line and finished with 17 points.

"We obviously didn't want the ball in her hands," said Fremont Ross coach Juan Vela. "Almost everytime she has the ball, she's either going to make a bucket or draw a foul. She is

really hard to defend."

However hard it was to defend, it didn't seem to affect the Little Giants, who went into the half down by six to the high-rolling Panthers (16-6, 9-5).

The second half was a different story, as anything and everything seemed to go Whitmer's way.

With 5:19 left in the third, McCarver, who was heavily defended in the second half, posted up for a three before passing the ball around the arc and finally finding Blood down low for the easy bucket.

The following possession, McCarver tossed to Samantha Meinen, who again found Blood down low for another easy bucket.

"You guys see her demeanor, her scoring and rebounding," said Whitmer coach Sean Flemings. "But the intangibles, her leadership are what separate her from other players who are as comparable."

Whitmer outscored Ross 30-14 after halftime, despite McCarver scoring only three of her own. Whitmer's second half run included an 18-1 run in the

third quarter, putting an end to any Ross comeback.

Before the fourth quarter began, Vela tried to fire up his team. "I want you to go out and play a full eight minutes," he exclaimed.

Ross did fare better, winning the fourth quarter by one and ultimately ending the regular season on a good note before heading into the playoffs. The Little Giants will play in sectionals in Bucyrus on Feb. 23.

"I try to focus on winning each quarter," Vela said. "If we can do that, we will win."