

## 2000 Division I District Tournament

## Boys basketball: district semifinals

# New year, same foes

## Bears, Wildcats meet in rematch

By MICHAEL PIDANICK  
Staff writer

GIBSONBURG — Last March 10, Gibsonburg jumped out to an early 11-2 lead in a district semifinal game against Kalida.

But the Wildcats scored 32 of the game's next 43 points and went on to a 70-55 win at Napoleon High School.

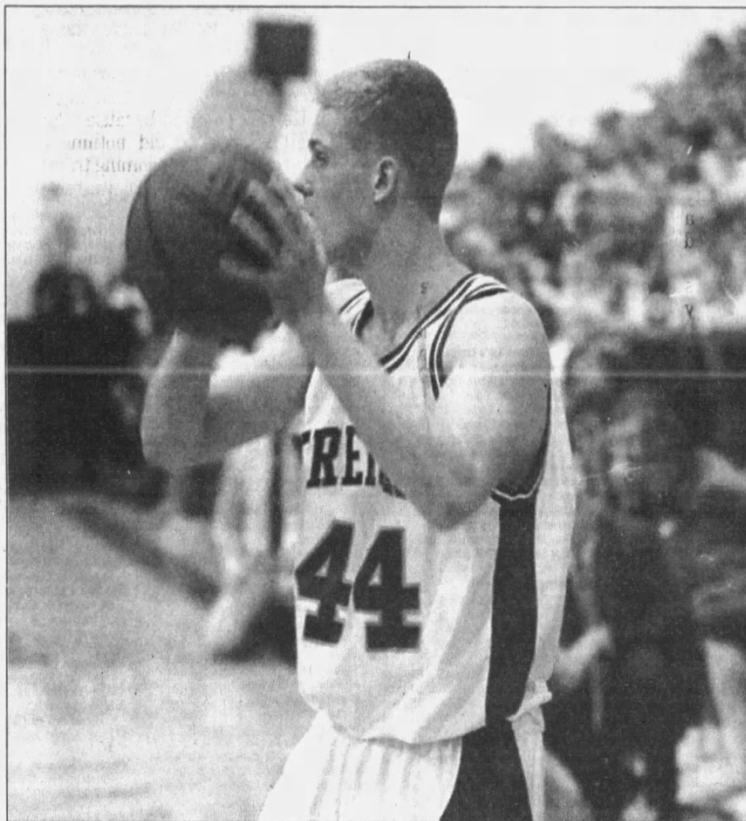
The two teams meet again at 6:30 p.m. today in a district semifinal at Liberty-Benton High School, and Golden Bears coach Keith Diebler is looking for more of that opening spurt, and less of the rest of the half.

"Last year we got off to a real good start, but we didn't finish the job," said Diebler. "If we can play the full 32 minutes we should be all right."

The Wildcats (17-4) went 7-0 and won the Putnam County League. They have won 12 of their last 13 games, including a 44-27 win over Continental in a sectional final on Friday.

Kalida is coached by the legendary Dick Kortokrax, Ohio's all-time winningest coach with a record of 664-223 in 40 seasons. The Wildcats have a deep bench, and some decent size, led by 6-foot-3 senior center John Schmursal, 6-0 senior forward Rod Bockrath, 6-2 junior forward Brian Duling and 5-9 sophomore guard B.J. Slusser.

"It's a typical Kalida team," Diebler said. "They're a fundamentally sound team, and they don't beat themselves. They aren't real big, but they're very active. I'd compare them somewhere in between Eastwood and Otsego."



News-Messenger file photo

BRYAN ROOT and Fremont Ross will meet Mansfield on Wednesday in a district semifinal.

## Ross-Mansfield rivalry continues

By MICHAEL MOHR  
Staff writer

For the third time in four years the Fremont Ross boys basketball team will meet Mansfield Senior for the right to advance in the state boys basketball tournament.

If past games are any indication, Wednesday's Division I district semifinal at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at Willard High School will be a thriller.

■ In 1997, sophomore guard Joell Heidelberg nailed a 3-pointer late in overtime to propel the Little Giants to a 73-68 victory and into the regional tournament, where they fell to No.

2 Lakewood St. Ed.

■ In 1999, Mansfield got its revenge in overtime of a district semifinal game as Marquis Sykes hit a tough bank shot in the lane during overtime and Ross was plagued by turnovers against the Tygers pressure as Mansfield went on to an 81-77 win. The Tygers reached the state final four, and lost to state champion Cincinnati Moeller in the semifinals.

"We've had two great district games in the past three years, hopefully another one this year," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said.

See ROSS, B2

## Hammer out for Little Giants

Fremont Ross junior point guard T.J. Hammer will miss Wednesday's game.

Hammer suffered a torn ligament in his right ankle during play in the first quarter of Ross's 64-61 sectional final win over Ashland.

Filling the void for the Little Giants will be a combination of freshman Terrence Jones, senior Juan Vela, senior Reggie Jones, and sophomore Mike Price. All saw action at the point in Friday's game.

# Ross to play Mansfield Wednesday

Continued from B1

"These are two programs going in the right direction and two schools striving to be the best basketball schools they can be."

The No. 4 state-ranked Tygers are 20-1, with the only loss coming to No. 1 Toledo Libbey. But Tygers coach Gregg Collins said he isn't overly concerned with rankings.

"We don't put much into it," said Collins. "We have six completely different guys in there this year. We have two starters who didn't dress for varsity last year. We are a very inexperienced basketball team."

Last Friday against Ashland, the Little Giants dealt with a combination of height and strength. This week's test will feature the same height problems, but instead of the bull-dozer attitude of the Ashland post players, Herman Davis (a 6-foot-6 senior post) and 6-7 Lance Hood are

players who look more to the air.

The Tygers most prolific offensive weapon, however, is 6-4 senior wing and District 6 player of the year Rick Minard.

He averages 22 points, 8.2 rebounds, 3 steals, and 3 assists per game.

Davis is the second option on offense, averaging 16 points, 5.4 rebounds, and is a very good shot blocker. Hood averages 5 points and 6 rebounds per contest.

"That's why teams call them one of the best rebounding team in all of Ohio," Gedeon said. "Because they have three kids who can go get it at any given time. Our guards are going to need to help out with the rebounds as well, I thought our guards did a good job of getting rebounds against Ashland, but we're going to need a total team effort in order to rebound with them."

"It is going to take a huge

"Fremont can hurt you in a lot of ways, in the post or with the perimeter shot."

— Gregg Collins, Mansfield coach

effort to keep them off the boards and that's something we've got to concentrate on. That probably will be our No. 1 objective."

Offensively, Ross is going to see the same type of pressure it has seen in the past two meetings with the Tygers.

"They are going to play man-to-man," said Gedeon. "They want to make sure they always have pressure on the basketball whether its full or half court, they do not want the offense to relax at all."

It's going to be very important for us to make sure that we can go from getting the ball past half court to initiating our offense. We've

worked very hard on trying to get our timing between our post players, our wing players, and our point guard so that we can get in the offense and let our offensive structure dictate the game rather than Mansfield's pressure."

Offensively the Tygers will need to solve a Ross zone that has puzzled many teams this year.

"They have a great deal of success playing a lot of different defenses," Collins said.

"They play a very good zone and solid man-to-man. We have to execute, try to find openings, and then hit open shots."

"We are going to have to play excellent defensive game. Not too many of the teams we have played this year have both the inside and outside game. We play a lot of one-dimensional teams. Fremont can hurt you in a lot of ways in the post or with the perimeter shot."

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B1

## Boys basketball: District semifinal

# Tygers' rally stuns Little Giants

## Mansfield wins in double OT

By MICHAEL PIDANICK  
Staff writer

WILLARD — With 43 seconds left in the second half of Wednesday's Division I district semifinal, things were looking good for Fremont Ross. The Little Giants held a 10-point lead and Ross fans were raucously chanting, "It's all over."

Reggie Jones knew better. The Little Giants' senior had seen the Tygers pull out miracles against his team

before, and he was about to see it again.

Mansfield went on a 12-2 run in the final 43 seconds, tied the game on a 40-foot shot at the buzzer by John Brooks, and held off the Little Giants for a 72-69 win in double overtime in a battle for the ages at Willard High School.

"I think a couple guys thought it was over," said Jones. "But all I kept thinking about was the last two times against them, with them coming back in the last minute, and sending the game to overtime."

For the third time in four

### Wednesday

Mansfield .....	72
Ross .....	69

years, the Little Giants met the Tygers in the district tournament, and for the third time it was an overtime classic.

Brooks, a 6-foot junior guard, carved his place in the Mansfield basketball history books with one of the most dramatic shots in school history. After Jones hit a pair of free throws with 3.2 seconds left, Brooks brought the ball just past half-court and let fly as the buzzer sounded. His shot hit nothing but net,

sending the game into overtime and the Mansfield crowd into hysterics.

The Little Giants had the big play in the first overtime, as Jones scored off an offensive rebound with seven seconds to play to tie the game.

Ross almost had one miracle left, but Juan Vela's 3-pointer at the second overtime buzzer bounced off the front of the rim, and the fourth-ranked Tygers escaped.

"I'm definitely very proud of my team," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon. "They laid it all on the line. We wanted them to have to hit a



"I'm definitely very proud of my team. They laid it all on the line. We wanted them to have to hit a prayer at the buzzer, and their prayers were answered."

— Ross coach Mark Gedeon

prayer at the buzzer, and their prayers were answered. But both teams had opportunities and both teams made big plays, unfortunately we came out on the short end."

The Tygers (21-1) advanced to the district final at

11 a.m. Saturday against No. 7 Lima Senior at the University of Toledo's Savage Hall. The Spartans beat Celina 77-68 in a district semifinal Wednesday at Liberty Benton High School.

See ROSS, B3



# Basketball

## High School Boys

**Mansfield 72, Ross 69 (2OT)**

Division I District Semifinal

At Willard

ROSS — Terrence Jones 0-2-2, Juan Vela 9-1-21, Steve Dagg 8-4-20, Reggie Jones 4-6-14, Alfonso Vann 2-2-6, Bryan Root 3-0-6, totals 26-16-69

MANSFIELD — Aunre Shaw 6-0-13, John Brooks 3-2-11, Rick Minard 7-10-25, Maurice Bradley 1-2-4, Herman Davis 3-4-10, Carlos Smith 1-0-2, Lance Hood 3-0-6, Joe Allen 0-1-1, totals 24-19-72

Ross	8	14	12	21	10	4	—	69
Mansfield	12	16	7	20	10	7	—	72

3-point goals: Ross 2 (Vela 2), Mansfield 5 (Brooks 3, Shaw, Minard). Rebounds: Ross 46 (R. Jones 10) Mansfield 40 (Davis 9). Turnovers: Ross 28, Mansfield 17.

Records: Mansfield 21-1, Ross 17-5.