

1998-1999 Season Review

All fingers point to Ross in 1998-99

Little Giants picked in GLL

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Back in October, the Great Lakes League boys basketball coaches gathered in Bowling Green to discuss routine preseason matters. Small talk ensued before Sandusky coach Ed Kurt did something unusual: the Blue Streaks boss called for a pre-season vote.

Nobody answered.

"They just went like this," says Fremont Ross coach Mark Gedeon, extending his index finger to make a pointing gesture. Gedeon should know what his peers' gestures looked like — they were aimed at him, and at his emerging Little Giants program.

"I just think that's a sign of respect for our program," he says.

One that is well-deserved. In three years as head coach, Gedeon has created a buzz around his program that was previously missing, both in the community and in the hallways at Ross.

"Not too many years ago, basketball wasn't something people talked about in Fremont," says Gedeon, whose record at Ross is 39-28. "Now we've got people excited about what we're doing."

First and foremost among the excited are his players. Gedeon returns seven players with extensive varsity experience, and adds two talented new players.

Junior guard/forward Juan Vela, for one, welcomes the challenge of living up to his team's pre-season billing, even if the Little Giants haven't won a league or conference title since 1954.

"I think it's a compliment, but there's some pressure on us," says Vela. "We can't worry about pressure, we've just got to play the game and take care of business."

If Ross will be run like a business, Joell Heidelberg will be the team's CEO. Of all the titles the 5-foot-11 senior has picked up for his play — honorable mention all-Ohio, second team all-Northwest Ohio, first team all-GLL, and District 6 — the one his family gave him is most telling: Man, as in The Man.

The Man knows that in addition

to piling up statistics like he piles plates on a bench press bar (he maxes out at 250 pounds), he must show leadership in front of his teammates.

"I'm going to have to show a lot," says Heidelberg, who averaged 16.5 points per game and shot 44 percent from three-point range last year. "We've got a lot of underclassmen, and if they see me not working hard, they'll be like, 'Joell's not working hard.'"

Says Gedeon: "He might be as laterally quick as any player I've seen in the high school game. He can go north-south, but to go east-west is a special attribute."

Guards Robb Ritzman and Andrew Diller also have special attributes, Ritzman his passing ability and Diller his ... stickiness?

"Robb is by far our best passer, our best creator for others," says Gedeon.

And Diller?

"He's probably our best defensive player, he's the glue of the team," says Gedeon. "We know we're not going to get any mental mistakes out of him."

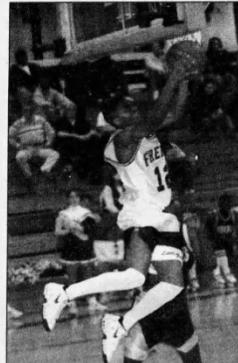
If Diller is the Little Giants' best defender, Vela isn't far behind.

"He's relentless on defense," Gedeon says. "He's somebody you know every single night he steps on the floor he's going to give it his best."

Sophomore Kelly Lytle will split time between JV and varsity.

Up front, Gedeon has five more or less interchangeable parts. Of the five, 6-foot-4 junior Reggie Jones returns the most scoring after averaging 12.5 ppg. and 6.8 rpg. last season.

"In terms of being able to finish around the basket, his body control is exceptional, and now he's starting to blend an outside game as well," says Gedeon, who will play Jones at small forward, and has played him at point guard in



News-Messenger file photo

JOELL HEIDELBURG is Ross's leading returning scorer.

the past.

Also returning is center Tyson Liggins, who started all but Senior Night last year, and is anything but a traditional post player. The 6-foot-2, 210-pound senior will be counted on to man up on point guards and power forwards alike, making the most of his unique blend of strength and quickness.

Liggins says he'd rather be banging with the 6-foot-7 guys.

"It gives me more of a workout," he says.

Wing man Steve Dagg has been giving his teammates a workout ever since re-joining the program in August. After living in Fremont until eighth grade, Dagg moved to North Carolina, where he averaged 17 ppg. and 8 rpg. for Mount Pleasant High School last year.

Since returning to Fremont in August, Dagg's athleticism and intensity has taken the team to another level, says Gedeon.

"He took our regular open gyms up another level, just because of his intensity, nobody wanted to

lose to him," Gedeon says.

Besides, Heidelberg says, the guy can shoot.

"He's got a good jumper; he's really quick, and he can leap," says Heidelberg.

Rounding out the frontcourt are Bryan Root, who Gedeon says has the best footwork of his post players, and Greg Garcia, a "very intelligent, very aggressive player," says the coach.

The Little Giants went 14-8 last year, bowing out in the district semifinals to Toledo St. John's. In the GLL, in which Ross finished fourth last season, Toledo Whitmer looks tough as ever.

Gedeon thinks his team is good enough for 15-16 regular season wins, but he knows his team will be tough on concession sales.

"You don't want to go out and get popcorn, because you don't know what you're going to miss," he says.

1998-99 roster

No.	Player	Ht.	Pos.	Gr.
4	Kelly Lytle	5-10	G	10
10	Robb Ritzman	5-11	G	12
12	Joell Heidelberg	5-11	G	12
14	Andrew Diller	5-11	G	12
22	Juan Vela	5-11	G	11
30	Steve Dagg	6-4	F	11
32	Reggie Jones	6-4	F	11
34	Greg Garcia	6-4	F	11
42	Tyson Liggins	6-2	C	12
44	Bryan Root	6-3	C	10

1998-99 schedule

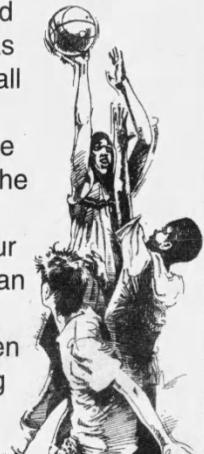
Fri., Dec. 4	BOWLING GREEN
Tue., Dec. 8	at Toledo Waite
Fri., Dec. 11	FINDLAY
Sat., Dec. 12	at Oregon Clay
Fri., Dec. 19	at Whiteman
Tue., Dec. 22	PORTORIA
Tue., Dec. 29	BOWSHIER
Fri., Jan. 8	BEDFORD
Sat., Jan. 9	at Madison
Fri., Jan. 15	at Seneca Valley
Sat., Jan. 16	TIFFIN COLUMBIAN
Fri., Jan. 22	at Findlay
Fri., Jan. 29	OREGON CLAY
Sat., Jan. 30	WHITMER
Fri., Feb. 5	at Fremont
Tue., Feb. 9	at Toledo St. John's
Tue., Feb. 16	at Rogers
Fri., Feb. 19	at Bedford
Sat., Feb. 20	PORT CLINTON

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Little Giants top 'Cats

Ross ties
school 3-point
record in win

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Fremont Ross boys basketball coach Mark Gedeon said he loses approximately five pounds of liquid weight during an average game.

After the Little Giants' 69-58 season-opening victory over Bowling Green Friday night, Gedeon guessed he had lost more than average, **Friday** Ross 69 Bowling Green ..58 **Next** Ross at Toledo Waite, Tuesday, 6 p.m.

With the Bobcats leading 37-34 at half-time, Ross went on a 14-2 run to start the third quarter and never looked back, improving to 1-0.

"We came out with a lot of intensity," Ross guard Joell Heidelberg said of the Little Giants' third quarter explosion. "We got real hyped up in the locker room. We came out there and did what we had to do."

What Ross had to do was simple: defensively, slow down the Bowling Green inside tandem of Josh Almanson and Matt Taylor, and offensively, slow down, get the ball inside, and find the open man outside.

The Little Giants were successful on both fronts. After Almanson and Taylor combined for 23 points in the first half, the pair scored just 13 points in the second half.

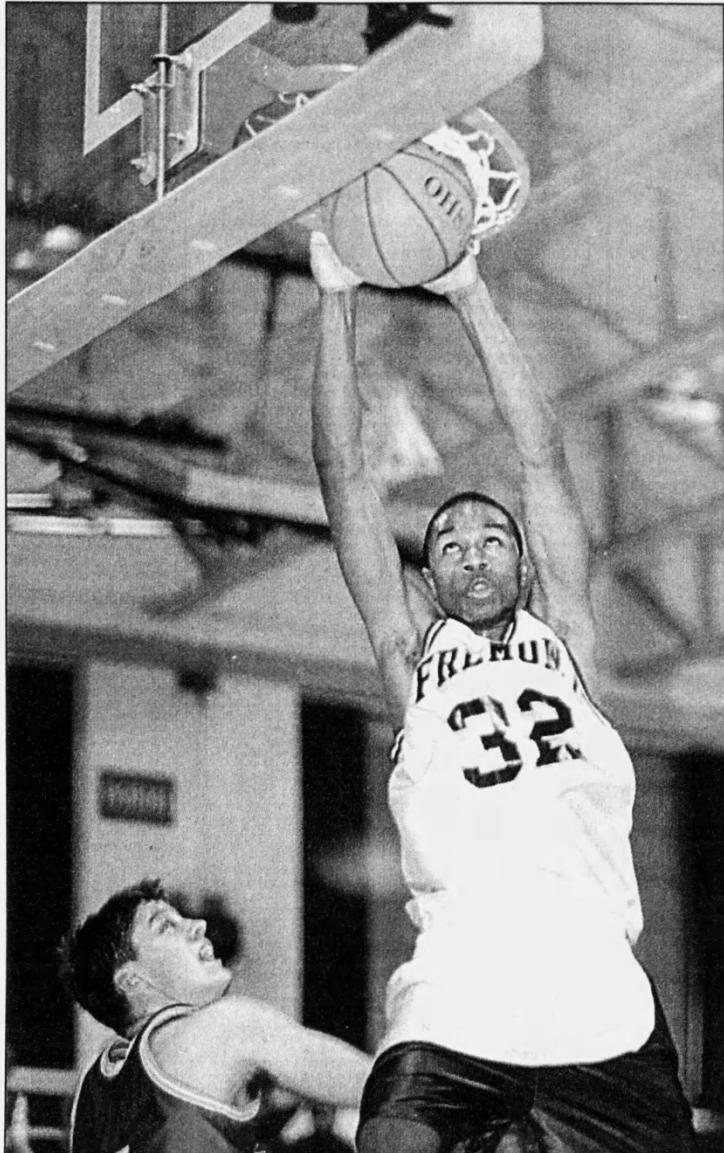
"We needed more intensity on defense," said Heidelberg, who along with Almanson led all scorers with 20 points. "Almanson and Taylor were getting a lot of touches in the paint, and we needed to contain that."

Ross center Tyson Liggins and forward Juan Vela had much to do with slowing Almanson and Taylor. Despite giving up a good deal of height, Liggins and Vela — with help from their teammates — forced the pair into taking much more difficult shots than they were getting in the first half.

"A lot of that is Tyson Liggins, they really had to work hard to get post feeds on him," said Gedeon. "(Vela's) giving up eight inches, a ton of weight, but that's the kind of kid Juan is, he knew he had to play great position defense."

Guard Robb Ritzman, who along with Andrew Diller helped pester Taylor and Almanson in the post, said Ross recognized the need to control the Bobcat stars. "We had to get it out of their hands, they're two good players," Ritzman said.

With the Bobcats' top scoring threats



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

REGGIE JONES dunks during the first quarter of Fremont Ross's 69-58 win over Bowling Green. under control, the Little Giants unleashed their own offensive weapon, a devastating long-range attack. Ross tied a school record with 10 3-pointers, as five Little Giants got in on the act.

Gedeon said the open outside looks were a direct result of an increased emphasis on the inside game.

"Part of that was because of the post touches, we got some kick-out passes because the defense collapsed," said Gedeon, whose team averaged 5.5 made 3-pointers per game last season. "We had some people toe up the three-point line, or

in Joell's case just get the ball inside 23 feet."

Heidelberg had four 3-pointers, Vela and Reggie Jones had two apiece, and Ritzman and Greg Garcia had one apiece.

Ross started out strong, at one point taking a 9-4 lead. Jones, who finished with 16 points despite foul trouble, was the catalyst early, scoring seven points in the first 4:30 of the first quarter, on two offensive rebound putbacks, a 3-pointer and an alley-oop dunk from Ritzman.

See ROSS, B3

Ross wins opener against Bobcats

Continued from B1

"Reggie was our offensive spark early," said Gedeon. "He had a couple offensive rebound putbacks, nice drop steps, a nice backdoor for the dunk, and plus he's showing the other side of his game, the three-pointer."

Defensively, the Little Giants held Almansor and Taylor to two baskets apiece in the first quarter.

But sloppy defense by Ross allowed the Bobcats to score 23 second quarter points, more than they would score in the entire second half. Seven of Bowling Green's points in the quarter came on free throws, as the Little Giants racked up 13 first half fouls.

"We gave them a lot of easy points, especially with our fouls, they got to the foul line and got some easy points there," Gedeon said. "That was a lot of reaching, a lot of hand-checking, we had a lot of people react late to positions, we tried to block some shots that we usually don't try to block, we missed box outs."

After Gedeon gave what Ritzman termed a "good speech" at halftime, Ross started quickly in the third quarter. Liggins hit 1-of-2 free throws, then Heidelberg hit a jump shot to tie the score at 37-37. Ritzman's jumper gave Ross the lead, and consecutive three-pointers by Heidelberg, Vela and Jones stretched the Little Giants' cushion to 48-39.



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

TYSON LIGGINS, left, knocks the ball away from Bowling Green forward Matt Taylor in the Little Giants' 69-58 win Friday night.

"We came out all fired up, we had to do what was expected of us," Jones said.

Said Heidelberg: "That just shows how much pride we've got, we weren't going to let them come in here and beat us in the first game."

After opening up a double-digit lead in the fourth quarter on Steve Dagg's two baskets, Ross saw Bowling Green whittle the lead to 63-55. But Garcia's three-pointer stretched the lead back

to 11 points and iced the win.

Ross travels to Toledo Waite on Tuesday, and Gedeon said he hoped his team could put together two solid halves.

"We saw a little bit of the good and bad of what we're capable of doing," Gedeon said. "The second half we were really able to step it up, disrupt them offensively, and that's what we want our kids to do all the time, not just for 16 minutes."

Basketball

High School

Ross 69, Bowling Green 58

at Ross

ROSS — Joell Heidelberg 7-2-20, Reggie Jones 7-0-16, Tyson Liggins 4-1-9, Juan Vela 2-0-6, Robb Ritzman 2-0-5, Bryan Root 2-0-4, Steve Dagg 2-0-4, Greg Garcia 1-0-3, Andrew Diller 1-0-2. Totals 28-3-29.

BOWLING GREEN — Josh Almanson 5-7-20, Matt Taylor 7-3-18, Tim Campisi 2-0-6, Andrew Saneholtz 2-0-4, Jon Roe 1-1-3, Brian Maienknecht 0-2-2, Micah Wingate 1-0-2, Nate Spitler 1-0-2, Dan Whitmire 0-1-1. Totals 19-14-58.

B. Green	14	23	12	9	—	58
Ross	16	18	23	12	—	69

REBOUNDS — Ross 21 (Tyson Liggins 8, Reggie Jones 6), Bowling Green 26 (Josh Almanson 10, Matt Taylor 8). 3-PT FGs — Ross 10-17 (Joell Heidelberg 4, Reggie Jone 2, Juan Vela 2, Robb Ritzman 1, Greg Garcia 1), Bowling Green 4-14 (Tim Campisi 2, Josh Almanson 1, Matt Taylor 1). Turnovers — Ross 10, Bowling Green 20.

Records: Ross 1-0, Bowling Green 0-1.

Junior Varsity

Ross 59, Bowling Green 35

ROSS — Mike Price 2-0-4, Kyle Myers 1-1-4, Jeremy Scott 1-2-4, Doug Garvey 3-0-6, Mike Ziemke 1-0-2, T.J. Hammer 1-0-2, Jeremy Jones 4-0-8, Alfonzo Vann 5-0-10, Chris Tullis 0-5-5, Greg Burroughs 2-2-6, Kevin Byers 1-0-2, Chris Beard 3-0-6. Totals 24-10-59.

BOWLING GREEN — C. Meyer 1-1-3, Chamberlain 1-0-3, Sharpe 1-0-2, Garaglia 0-2-2, Rappold 1-4-7, Clark 1-0-2, T. Meyer 3-0-6, Mellon 0-2-2, K. Holland 4-0-8. Totals 12-9-35.

Bowling Green	2	13	7	13	—	35
Ross	15	22	9	13	—	59

Records: Ross 1-0, Bowling Green 0-1

Ross presses Waite for easy win

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

TOLEDO — A quick glance at the box score from Fremont Ross's 77-57 win over Toledo Waite would show scoring lines like "Joell Heidelberg 7-23" and "Reggie Jones 6-15."

But the most important trio of numbers for the Little Giants Tuesday night was 2-2-1, as in 2-2-1 press. Ross used the pressure defense to dominate the first and third quarters, and capitalized with a balanced scoring attack in improving to 2-0.

"We put the 2-2-1 press that we put on in the third quarter right on the blackboard in (the locker room at halftime)," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon. "For us to put it on the blackboard, and then have them execute it the way they did ... I think we forced 10 turnovers with that press alone, so I was really, really pleased with that."

Those turnovers helped Ross score on 10-of-11 possessions, stretching a tenuous 40-28 cushion into an insurmountable 65-33 lead. The defense, which is designed to allow opponents to cross halfcourt before a quick trap, forced numerous errant passes and caused several Waite players to simply step out of bounds.

"We have offense," said Ross guard Juan Vela, "but our defense, we worked on that all summer, preseason, during the season. All we work on is defense."

The work paid off early on, as Ross built a 20-10 lead after one quarter. The Little Giants forced nine Indians turnovers, and didn't commit their first turnover until 1:51 remained in the period.

Jones had seven of his 15 points early on, but picked up two fouls early and sat for most of the first half. With Jones on the bench, Bryan Root and Greg Garcia stepped in and played well in the post, Root finishing with eight points, a team-high six rebounds and three assists, Garcia providing four points, three rebounds and solid post defense.

See ROSS, B2

Ross cruises by Waite

Continued from B1

"Bryan Root, I thought, moved extremely well offensively. He got some good looks," Gedeon said. "Greg Garcia's a very good shooter for us, and is very physical as well. They are very necessary for us to be doing some of the stuff we're doing."

Root scored the last four points of the first quarter, giving Ross breathing room.

"I felt pretty good today with my shot," said Root. "I was feeling pretty good in warmups. If I'm open, I'm going to shoot it, unless it's a 3-pointer."

That was left to Vela and Heidelberg, who combined to hit all five Ross 3-pointers. Vela, who made three treys and had his foot on the line for another, said the Little Giants' early post feeds to Jones and Tyson Liggins freed up some shooting room.

"We'd kick it in, and when the defense goes inside then the outside's open, and when you're wide open, it's a good shot," Vela said. "We talk about that all the time in practice: if we want to have a 3-point game, we've got to establish the inside first, the shots will be there."

The shots were there in large part because of the excellent passing out of all five positions. After racking up 19 assists Friday against Bowling Green — 11 by Robb Ritzman — Ross had 17 assists against Waite (0-2), with no Little Giant getting more than Ritzman's four.

"Our kids have very good court sense and very good vision, and when you've got 17 assists and nobody has more than four, that says that everyone's getting involved," Gedeon said. "We scored on 10-of-11 possessions, and some of them had all five guys touching the ball in 2-3 seconds."

One area which Gedeon found disconcerting was rebounding. Waite, which lost its opener to Ross's Great Lakes League rival Toledo Whitmer 71-40, held a 34-21 advantage on the boards.

"We're still having a little trouble with the rebounding," said Gedeon. "We're still trying to get our kids to work for that position, get them on your back, grab the ball with two hands, make the outlet pass and do what we do best, which is the transition game."

Ross hosts Findlay Friday night in the GLL opener for both teams.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 77, Waite 57

ROSS — Joell Heidelberg 7-7-23, Reggie Jones 6-3-15, Juan Vela 5-0-13, Bryan Root 4-0-8, Robb Ritzman 2-0-4, Andrew Diller 2-0-4, Greg Garcia 1-2-4, Tyson Liggins 1-0-2, Steve Dagg 1-0-2, Chris Beard 1-0-2. Totals 30-12-77.

WAITE — Charles Dixon 4-3-11, Rae Gregory 4-1-9, Michael Craig 3-3-9, Daryl Lyons 4-0-8, Bernell Woodmore 2-0-4, John Nihiser 2-0-4, Jeremy Krueger 1-1-3, Lindsey 1-1-3, Keith Rocker 1-0-2, Jason Gladieux 1-0-2, Datwon Sutton 1-0-2. Totals 24-9-57.

Ross	20	20	27	10	—	77
Waite	10	14	13	20	—	57

TEAM REBOUNDS — Ross 21 (Root 6, Dagg 5), Waite 34 (Dixon 8, Gregory 8). 3 PT FGs — Ross 5-15 (Vela 3, Heidelberg 2), Waite 0-12. TURNOVERS — Ross 12, Waite 23.

Records: Ross 2-0, Waite 0-2.

Junior varsity

Ross 46, Waite 44

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 3-2-8, Mike Price 2-1-7, Doug Garvey 1-0-2, T.J. Hammer 1-1-3, Jeremy Jones 2-0-4, Alfonzo Vann 5-1-11, Chris Tullis 1-1-3, Chris Beard 3-2-8. Totals 18-8-46.

WAITE — Brown 2-0-4, Clark 3-3-10, Yates 8-0-18, T. Baldwin 3-3-9, K. Baldwin 1-1-3. Totals 17-7-44.

Ross	14	10	12	10	—	46
Waite	10	6	13	15	—	44

Records: Ross 2-0, Waite 0-2.

Little Giants face Findlay's flex tonight

St. Joe, Clyde battle Saturday

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

When the Fremont Ross boys basketball team takes the court in its Great Lakes League opener against Findlay tonight at approximately 7:30 p.m., the Little Giants will have little doubt what offense the Trojans will be running.

Findlay, coached by Jerry Snodgrass, runs the flex, a continual-motion, cutting offense where all five players assume positions all over the court, with a point guard posting up or a post player passing from the elbow.

"Findlay has done it for years and years and years, and their kids just dream that offense," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon, whose team won its first two games against Bowling Green and Toledo Waite.

"Findlay's very versatile in that all five players will play all five positions at any given time, even more so (than Ross)," said Gedeon, who added that Snodgrass's rotation goes about seven players deep. "Usually in transition you know Tyson (Liggins) or Reggie (Jones) or Bryan (Root) or Greg (Garcia) is going to be on the block, and they'll put the point guard on the block if he's the first person to get to that position."

The Trojans, who lost to Celina 63-41 in their opener, will likely try to take Ross out of its up-tempo, end-to-end game, said Ross guard Juan Vela.

"They don't like to run, so we're going to have to play fundamental defense," Vela said. "What they want to do is get it in the post, and then get the outside shot."

Leading the Trojans' perimeter attack is 6-foot-3 guard Doug Barnes, a second team all-GLL selection last season. Barnes, who averaged 11.2 ppg. last year, will be complemented by Ben Roethlisberger, who played point guard last year, but has since grown three inches to his present height of 6-foot-5.

Inside: Area schedules for all weekend sports. **Page B2**

"They're very good outside shooters, and if we give them the opportunity to shoot from the outside, they're going to hurt us," Gedeon said.

In the loss to Celina, Gedeon said, Findlay made just 5-of-23 first half field goal attempts.

"I know they're not going to shoot that bad against us," he said.

Both the Ross boys and girls teams travel to Oregon Clay for Saturday games.

Also Saturday, the St. Joseph Central Catholic boys basketball team heads to Clyde. Both teams

are in search of their first wins.

The Crimson Streaks were plagued by poor shooting in their opening loss to Mansfield St. Peter's, hitting just 26.3 percent of their field goal attempts. Wing Roger Kuns and post Jason Eberly stepped up with 19 and 11 points, respectively, but the Streaks' leading returning scorer, Nick Hasselbach, was held to just two points.

The Fliers were also plagued by poor shooting in their opening loss to Tiffin Columbian, hitting just 11-of-29 free throws. The Fliers, who were led by Lucas Messer's 20 points, fell into a 16-point halftime hole before rallying, but could not complete the comeback.

Ross reverses role in win

Heidelberg, Vela each score 14

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Following Fremont Ross's 60-52 win over Findlay Friday night at the Purple Pit, Trojans coach Jerry Snodgrass joked with Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon that the game represented something of a role reversal from the past.

It was Ross, not Findlay, which came up with enough halfcourt execution needed to pull out the win.

It was Findlay, not Ross, which fared miserably at the foul line, although the Little Giants were no Calvin Murphy there, either.

It was Ross, not Findlay, which came away with the Great Lakes League victory. The Little Giants improved to 3-0 overall, 1-0 GLL, while Findlay falls to 0-2, 0-1.

Guards Joell Heidelberg and Juan Ross each had 14 points to lead Ross, yet the Little Giants never found the consistency inside, outside or in transition that they had found at times during wins over Bowling Green and Toledo Waite.

"Offensively, we didn't have any consistency, and that goes back to (Findlay)," Gedeon said. "As long as I've been head coach they've had great halfcourt defense. They rotate that backside (to the post) so well that it took away our major offensive emphasis."

For the second time in three games, Ross also learned how to deal with a little bit of adversity in the early going. Led by guard Doug Barnes' eight points — six off of offensive rebounds — Findlay grabbed a 14-12 lead after one quarter.

Barnes, who led all scorers with 21 points, had help from Ben Roethlisberger and Jason Wenner, who each hit 3-pointers in the quarter. The Trojans' early offensive efficiency caused Gedeon to extend the Little Giants' perimeter defense.

The ploy worked well, as Ross took a 25-23 lead on Vela's 3-pointer in the second quarter, and the Little Giants never trailed again.

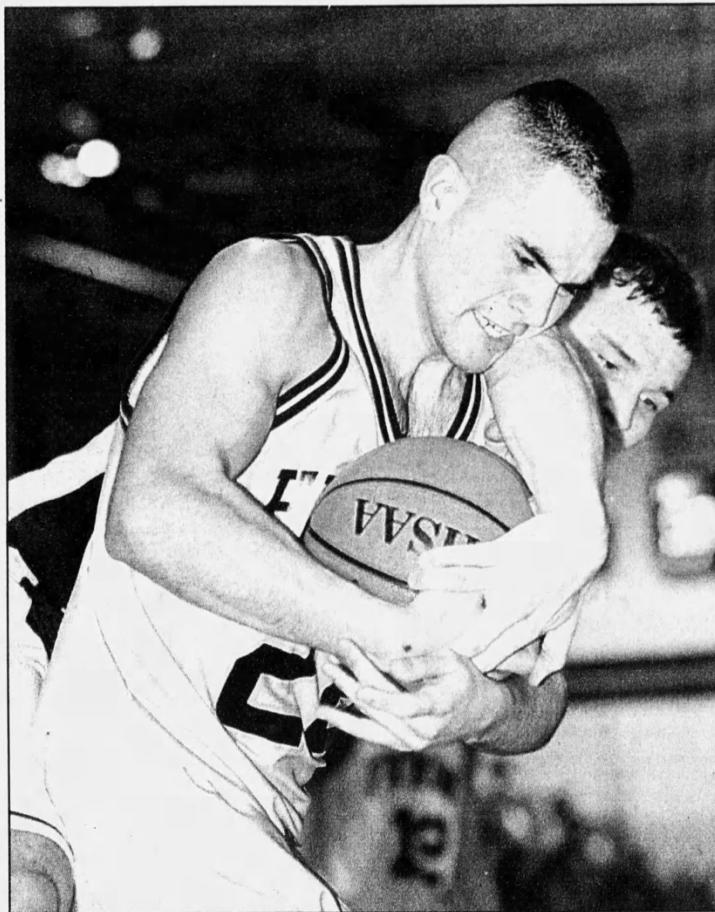
"What we were trying to do with our zone defense is extend out our wings to cover their 3-point shooters," Gedeon said. "With the first two threes that they had, we just didn't recognize where we had to be."

Findlay's shooters went cold, as the Trojans made just one 3-point shot in the last 20 minutes of the game. Overall, Findlay was 4-for-18 from behind the arc.

"Their zone just inched out, and inched out and inched out, and we had to attack that a lot better," Snodgrass said.

The Little Giants also prevented Findlay's high postmen from getting open looks.

"We talked about extending out a bit to contain, and we had to make sure that when the ball went in the high post we did-



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

JUAN VELA fights for the ball with Findlay's Jason Wenner in Ross's 60-52 win Friday night.

n't collapse on him," Gedeon said.

Also in the second quarter, Findlay started missing free throws. Roethlisberger missed two and Barnes missed three before converting, and the Trojans finished 4-of-14 from the line for the game.

"We're good shooters," Snodgrass said. "If we played (Saturday) night, we could go out there and make 17-of-17."

Ross made just 3-of-12 3-pointers for the game, and just 7-of-15 free throw attempts.

"For both teams to shoot the low percentage that we did was definitely a surprise," Gedeon said. "Both teams had plenty of opportunities to score, they just didn't take advantage of them."

Ross did take advantage early in the third quarter, as six different Little Giants scored during a 13-7 run. Reggie Jones, Heidelberg, Vela, Robb Ritzman, Bryan Root and Steve Dagg all helped build the Ross lead into double digits on several occasions.

Jones finished with 11 points and led all

rebounders with 13, and Ritzman had eight assists.

Findlay stormed back to start the third quarter, cutting the lead to 49-46 on Wenner's leaner with 4:10 to play.

"Once we got that 10-point lead, we were in the driver's seat, but we could not put them away," Gedeon said.

But baskets by Heidelberg and Tyson Liggins pushed the Ross lead back to seven points, and Heidelberg and Vela combined for six points in the last 1:30 to ice the win.

After forcing 23 turnovers Tuesday against Waite, Ross caused just 10 Findlay turnovers Friday, but the Little Giants' pressure helped wear down a Trojans lineup which included three football players.

"We thought they were starting to wear down a little bit," Gedeon said. "We didn't think we could take the ball away from them, but maybe we could wear them down and bring their shooting percentages down."

Ross travels to Oregon Clay tonight for a boys-girls doubleheader. Junior varsity action begins at 4:30 p.m., with the girls game following and the boys game capping off the night.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 60, Findlay 52

ROSS — Joell Heidelberg 6-2-14, Juan Vela 5-2-14, Reggie Jones 5-1-11, Steve Dagg 3-0-6, Robb Ritzman 1-2-4, Bryan Root 2-0-4, Greg Garcia 1-0-3, Tyson Liggins 1-0-2, Andrew Diller 1-0-2. Totals 25-7-60.

FINDLAY — Doug Barnes 9-1-21, Mike Iriti 5-2-12, Jason Wenner 4-1-10, Ben Roethlisberger 3-0-7, Ryan Truax 1-0-2. Totals 22-4-52.

Findlay	14	10	11	17	—	52
Ross	12	15	17	16	—	60

TEAM REBOUNDS — Ross 40 (Jones 13, Vela 7), Findlay 31 (Wenner, Barnes 7).

3 PT FGs — Ross 3-12 (Vela 2, Garcia 1), Findlay 4-18 (Barnes 2, Roethlisberger 1, Wenner 1).

TURNOVERS — Ross 12, Findlay 10. Records: Ross 3-0, Findlay 0-2.

Junior varsity

Ross 42, Findlay 26

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 2-0-4, Mike Price 3-0-6, Kyle Myers 1-2-4, Doug Garvey 1-0-2, T.J. Hammer 1-2-5, Jeremy Jones 1-0-2, Alfonzo Vann 2-1-5, Kevin Byers 3-0-6, Chris Beard 4-0-8. Totals 18-5-42.

FINDLAY — Paul 1-2-4, Webb 1-0-2, Friday 2-3-7, Parker 3-0-7, Dillon 1-4-6. Totals 8-9-26.

Findlay	8	7	7	4	—	26
Ross	12	11	7	12	—	42

3 PT FGs — Ross 1 (Hammer), Findlay 1 (Parker).

Records: Ross 3-0, Findlay 0-2.

Jones' 20 points lead Ross past Clay

Little Giants move to 4-0 with victory

By SCOTT TAPPA

Sports editor

OREGON — The Fremont Ross boys basketball team came out of its locker room midway through the fourth quarter of the girls team's game with Oregon Clay Saturday night.

Little did the Little Giants know that the game unfolding in front of them would not be over for another 1½ hours.

"I liked it, but we got tired sitting there," said center Tyson Liggins of the girls' 76-66, five-overtime loss.

Not too tired, apparently. Ross started quickly, withstood a second quarter Clay challenge and pulled away in the second half, beating the Eagles 61-54.

"The first overtime was tough, the second overtime was tough, but after that you knew you were seeing something special," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon, whose team improved to 40 overall, 20 in the Great Lakes League. "Our kids just got so excited seeing our girls lay it out on the line, and I think it helped get our kids motivated."

The Little Giants jumped out to an 8-0 lead in the first 1 minute, 46 seconds of the game on baskets by Liggins, Juan Vela and two from Reggie Jones. Robb Ritzman assisted on three of the first four field goals, and finished with four in the quarter, seven for the game.

But the Eagles stormed back in the second quarter, and Ben Tobias's basket with 1:20 remaining in the half gave Clay its first and only lead. Tobias, who was a first-team all-GLL pick last season after averaging 19.1 points per game, scored 10 points in the quarter, and led all scorers with 28 points.

Still, Tobias at no point took control of the game, as his final eight points came late in the fourth quarter, when Ross had opened a comfortable lead.

"We controlled him a little bit, we did all right overall," said Jones, who led Ross with 20 points.

Said Gedeon: "I thought, especially early, that we did a good job (on Tobias). In the fourth quarter, a lot of the points he got were when they needed points quick and our kids didn't want to stop the clock."

Saturday
Ross 61
Clay 54

Friday
Ross at Whitmer, 6 p.m.

Vela had a second straight solid shooting night, finishing with 15 points.

"I thought Juan Vela really stepped up, he gave us back-to-back very consistent nights on both ends of the floor," said Gedeon.

Also consistent was Jones, who was virtually unstoppable in the third quarter, scoring 10 points to help Ross open up a 43-36 lead. Maneuvering his way through the bulkier Clay defenders, Jones used a wide array of moves to record his season-high point total.

"We knew he'd be tough to match up inside with, we don't have anyone to match up with him," Clay coach Joe Guerrero said of Jones, who capped the game with a two-handed dunk.

Ross guard Joell Heidelberg finished with 11 points, but was hampered by several injuries. The Little Giants' leading scorer had a jammed wrist, pulled groin and a toe injury, at least partially due to the intentional foul by Findlay's Ben Roethlisberger in Ross's Friday night win.

"We really wondered how much he was going to be able to play tonight," Gedeon said. "He couldn't do some of the things he's capable of doing tonight, everything was basically a quick, short move as opposed to the long strides."

Ross next plays Friday at Toledo Whitmer, an 83-75 loser to Sandusky on Saturday.

In other boys action Saturday:

Monroeville 79, Bettsville 68

BETTSVILLE — Chris Vallejo's 34-point effort was not enough as Monroeville knocked off Bettsville 79-68 in a non-league battle.

Brian Kimmell added 15 points for the Bobcats, who fell to 0-3.

Margaretta 59, Danbury 52

CASTALIA — Margaretta (2-2) outscored Danbury 12-5 in overtime and pulled off a 59-52 win.

Nick Kane had 24 points to pace Margaretta, which also got 12 points from Andy Keimer.

Bellevue 83, Perkins 81

SANDUSKY — Nate Artino's bucket with one second left lifted Bellevue to a thrilling 83-81 win over Perkins.

Jerry Gonzales scored 19 points, Sherm Sackett tossed in 16, Jonah Schneider netted 13 and Pete Lepley added 12 for the Redmen (1-2).

High School Boys

Ross 61, Clay 54

ROSS — Reggie Jones 10-0-20, Juan Vela 5-4-15, Joell Heidelberg 5-1-11, Robb Ritzman 2-2-6, Steve Dagg 2-1-5, Tyson Liggins 2-0-4. Totals 26-8-61.

CLAY — Ben Tobias 13-1-28, Bob Nowacki 4-1-9, Derek Besgrove 2-3-7, Joe Romano 1-2-4, Eric Huguely 1-1-3, Josh Morris 0-3-3. Totals 21-11-54.

Ross	16	7	20	18	—	61
Clay	9	15	12	18	—	54

TEAM REBOUNDS — Ross 31 (Liggins 8, Jones 6), Clay 18 (Tobias 9).

3 PT FGs — Ross 1-10 (Vela 1), Clay 1-12 (Tobias 1).

TURNOVERS — Ross 20, Clay 20.

Records: Ross 4-0, Clay 2-2

Junior varsity

Ross 63, Clay 47

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 1-0-3, Mike Price 2-2-6, Kyle Myers 0-1-1, Jeremy Scott 0-2-2, Doug Garvey 3-0-7, Mike Ziemke 1-1-3, T.J. Hammer 1-0-3, Jeremy Jones 0-1-1, Alfonzo Vann 3-1-7, Chris Tullis 1-5-7, Greg Burroughs 2-3-7, Kevin Byers 1-2-4, Chris Beard 6-0-12. Totals 21-18-63.

CLAY — Ramsey 3-0-7, O'Shea 4-0-8, Johnston 1-0-2, Wasserman 0-2-2, Fox 2-1-5, Zakrzewski 1-0-2, Stager 3-0-6,

Can Ross end Panther run?

Little Giants play at Whitmer Friday

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

When the subject is Fremont Ross-Toledo Whitmer boys basketball, the subject of stigmas is sure to follow.

That's what happens, after all, when the Little Giants haven't beaten the Panthers since the 1990-91 season. That's what happens when Whitmer ekes out three- and five-point wins at the Purple Pit in back-to-back seasons.

That's what Ross coach Mark Gedeon hopes will be a non-issue after Friday, when the Little Giants (4-0 overall, 2-0 GLL) travel to Toledo to face three-time defending Great Lakes League champion Whitmer (3-1, 0-1).

"Is there a stigma there? I think there's a stigma there," said Gedeon, who is 0-6 against Whitmer. "If you look at our last two home games with **Inside: A look at weekend Whitmer, we lost by three and five, they've found a way to win.**"

Gedeon likened playing Whitmer in basketball to the lopsided football relationship between Fostoria and Ross in the early 1990s, or the "big game" importance that comes with playing parochial school basketball teams from Toledo and Cleveland. Still, it is only December, but while Gedeon won't classify Friday's game as "must-win," the Little Giants can shake a rather large monkey off their collective backs with a win Friday.

"For us, this is a game in December that has a lot of importance to us," Gedeon said. "If we would win the game, great, that's another step for us to build on. If we don't, then it's going to show a lot of the weaknesses that we have."

"I don't think we're hyping this up as a must-win situation, but rather it is a very important game if we want to accomplish the things these kids want to accomplish."

For their part, Ross players think beating Whitmer is an attainable accomplishment.

"We haven't gotten them for awhile, and I think this is our year," said Ross guard Juan Vela, who is averaging 12 points per game through four games. "We've got to contain Mike Kurdziel, Cedric Jaynes and B.J. Barre. They shoot a lot of threes, and they're real aggressive on the boards."

A quick glance at the Whitmer scouting report backs Vela up. The Panther attack is led by Kurdziel, a 6-foot, 160-pound senior who has filled in nicely for departed GLL Player of the Year Floyd Campbell, averaging 23 ppg.

"He was Floyd Campbell's outlet man," Gedeon said. "What Floyd did very well was create shots off the dribble, as well as posting up and shooting the three. What Kurdziel has done, in addition to being a



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

MARK GEDDON'S Fremont Ross boys basketball team hasn't beaten Toledo Whitmer since the 1990-91 season. The 4-0 Little Giants travel to Toledo Friday for a showdown with the Panthers.

Stigma? What stigma?

A look at how the Fremont Ross boys basketball team has fared against Toledo Whitmer under coach Mark Gedeon.

Date	Site	Score
Jan. 1, 1996	Fremont	Whitmer 80-59
Feb. 9, 1996	Toledo	Whitmer 76-54
Jan. 3, 1997	Toledo	Whitmer 74-65
Feb. 11, 1997	Fremont	Whitmer 78-73
Dec. 19, 1997	Fremont	Whitmer 67-64
Jan. 31, 1998	Toledo	Whitmer 74-53

very good 3-point shooter, is he is now able to take things off the dribble."

Kurdziel has scored at least 20 points in all of Whitmer's games this year, hitting six 3-pointers in one game.

Coach Bruce Smith's muscle inside comes from Jaynes, who Gedeon said was comparable in size and style to Ross's Tyson Liggins.

"Cedric Jaynes on the inside is just a workhorse," Gedeon said. "He had 15 points in the first half (in the game at Whitmer) last year just on being active and strong. We're going to have to do a good job limiting his touches, and making sure we have a body on him."

Vela said he thinks Ross has just the guys for the job.

"We've got to stop him, and I think Reggie (Jones), Tyson and Bryan (Root) will take care of that," Vela said.

See LITTLE GIANTS, B3

Little Giants look to end Whitmer's winning streak

Continued from B1

Running the show at the point is Barre, who Gedeon said excels in an open-court setting. Also a standout football player, Barre will test Ross guards Joell Heidelberg and Robb Ritzman.

"I've got to be physical with him, be aggressive," said Heidelberg, who is averaging 17 ppg.

Heidelberg is still hampered by injuries to his wrist, groin and foot that happened on an intentional foul by Findlay's Ben Roethlisberger at the end of Friday's Ross win. Heidelberg estimated his health to be at 65-70 percent.

Gedeon would like the Little Giants' free throw shooting to be in the 65-70 percent range, but after four games Ross is shooting 54 percent from the line. And while the Little Giants' rebounding improved markedly against Oregon Clay (with Ross holding a 31-18 edge), Gedeon would like to see his team's defense improve.

After playing four games in eight days, Ross needed the six days off between Saturday's

Clay win and Friday's showdown with Whitmer, Gedeon said. Helping the team cope is its depth, as nine Little Giants have seen regular playing time this season.

By contrast, Whitmer has little depth beyond its five starters, although the top three reserves are all seniors.

"If this game is allowed to go helter-skelter, up-and-down, score in the 80s, I would say it's to our advantage," Gedeon said. "Whitmer plays great halfcourt man-to-man defense, they play hard. If it turns into an execution-type game, our depth advantage isn't going to matter that much."

Still, Heidelberg said Ross is comfortable in a slower-paced game.

"Most teams think we're a run-

"If this game is allowed to go helter-skelter, I would say it's to our advantage."

— Mark Gedeon
Ross coach

and-gun team, but we've got a good halfcourt game," he said.

The stat sheet backs him up. Ross has made 48 percent of its field goal attempts — 35 percent from 3-point range, 52 percent from 2-point — but its 3-point percentage has dropped in each game so far, a likely result, Gedeon said, of the Little Giants' rigorous early schedule.

Fatigue shouldn't be a problem tomorrow, though.

"We're excited about Friday," Vela said.

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Same opponent, same result for Ross

Whitmer downs Little Giants 77-70

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

TOLEDO — There's no getting around the obvious: the Toledo Whitmer boys basketball team has owned Fremont Ross in the 1990s.

The Panthers won the latest in this getting-hotter-by-the-game Great Lakes League rivalry 77-70 Friday night at Whitmer, but it would be inaccurate to say that jinxes or hexes had anything to do with the outcome.

No, Whitmer would have handed Ross its first loss of the season

even if Mike Kurdziel, Cedric Jaynes, B.J. Barre and friends had worn jerseys reading "Joe's Garage and Taxidermy" and the game had been played at Lutz Elementary School.

"It had ~~nothing to~~ **Friday**
do with the
name, it
Ross 70

had every-
thing to do
with the
Tuesday
Fostoria at Ross, 6 p.m.

"We played on the floor," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon, whose Little Giants fell to 4-1 overall, 2-1 in the GLL. "Whitmer out-hustled us, definitely out-executed us, they were the team that deserved to win the ballgame."

The Panthers out-rebounded Ross 39-31, shot 34 free throws compared to Ross's 12, and withstood several brilliant Little Giants runs to improve to 4-1 overall, 1-1 in the GLL. The win was especially crucial for Whitmer, which lost at home to Sandusky last Saturday.

"This feels great, it gets us back in the GLL," said Kurdziel, who led the Panthers with 24 points.

A back-and-forth first quarter saw Whitmer emerge with a 19-15 lead. Steve Dagg came off the bench to score six points in the quarter for Ross, while Jaynes had six points for Whitmer.

Jaynes, a certified glass-eater on the boards, sparked Whitmer

at the start of the second quarter, hitting a pair of free throws and scoring twice on offensive rebounds. Jaynes, who finished with a game-high 12 rebounds, helped Whitmer score 14 points on offensive putbacks.

"I see everybody trying to box me out, and I just go through them or go around them, one of the two," Jaynes said.

From there, Barre's penetration carried the Panthers, as the point guard slashed through the Ross defense en route to a layup and five free throws. Relying on dribble penetration was nothing new for Whitmer, said coach Bruce Smith.

"It's our game plan every week, not necessarily against

Inside: Woodmore loses two-point game. **Page B3**

Ross," Smith said.

Dagg scored four points on putbacks to keep Ross within striking distance during the middle part of the quarter.

"Steve has been a player that's been improving a lot for us, especially in the last week of practice, he's starting to get comfortable in the system, and it showed tonight," Gedeon said.

"He had a really good second quarter, really kept us within shooting distance for awhile there."

See WHITMER, B4

Whitmer beats Ross to even GLL record

Continued from B1

Ross took advantage of Whitmer's inability to stretch its lead, and frantically rallied in the last two minutes of the quarter to tie the game at 37-37. The 10-2 run started when Bryan Root scored on a feed from Reggie Jones, and Jones followed with a basket himself.

Joell Heidelberg hit a 3-pointer, and Root was fouled by Whitmer's Jay Watt on the play. Root missed the free throw, but Jones rebounded and scored. Andrew Diller's 3-pointer capped the rally, but Gedeon said he knew the Little Giants could not sustain that style of play.

"In the second quarter, we were trying on one possession to make up 10 points, we got away from what we do best, which is making sure that all five players are offensive threats," Gedeon said. "We wound up shooting the first shot, and that's not when we're at our best."

With his team somewhat shell-shocked, Smith worked damage control in the locker room.

"We worked very, very hard in the first half to establish that 10-point lead, but we knew that as talented as they are and as streaky as they are, that they would come back on us," said Smith. "Out of the 16 minutes, I thought we had outplayed them 14 of them. I told them we were in control, and if we continued to play the way we did in the first half we'd be OK, and it turned out we were."

But not before another stiff challenge by Ross.

Jones started the third quarter hitting 1-of-2 free throws to tie the game, and after Jason Wagner gave Whitmer a brief lead, Jones' emphatic reverse dunk off an alley-oop from Robb Ritzman tied the game at 40-40. The 6-foot-4 junior stayed out of foul trouble for the first time this season, and

responded in a big way with a team-high 24 points and 11 rebounds.

"We tried to exploit Reggie's shot-blocking and draw fouls, but I've got to give that young man some credit, he stayed out of foul trouble, and he was a force from the beginning to the end," said Smith.

Ross even took a 46-44 lead on Heidelberg's 3-pointer with 5:30 to play in the third quarter, but the Little Giants hurriedly took 3-pointers on their next five possessions.

On the other end, Wagner was hitting layup after layup. Perhaps the fourth or fifth offensive option for the Panthers, Wagner scored 12 of his 15 points in the third quarter, the last six coming on successive three-point plays.

"He did an outstanding job, he really came through for us that quarter," Jaynes said.

His coach agreed.

"What Jason gave us was absolutely huge, because with the absolute studs that Ross has inside, he played very intelligently," Smith said. "When we get what we got out of him tonight, we're going to be pretty tough to beat."

Whitmer took a 57-48 lead into the fourth quarter, and Kurdziel

took over. The 6-foot senior, an all-GLL pick last season, scored the Panthers' first nine points of the quarter, and his penetration in the final five minutes helped foul out Ross guards Heidelberg and Ritzman.

"That was our game plan, to keep driving and make them foul out, and they had two or three people foul out," Jaynes said.

Whitmer iced the game down the stretch at the line, making 9-of-14 free throws.

In addition to Jones' 24 points and Dagg's 11, Root added a season-high 10 points, and Heidelberg added 10. Jaynes finished with 18 points for Whitmer, and Barre chipped in 11.

Ross hosts Fostoria Tuesday, with JV action starting at 6 p.m.



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Basketball

High School Boys

Whitmer 77, Ross 70

ROSS—Kelly Lytle 1-2-4, Robb Ritzman 1-1-3, Joell Heidelberg 4-0-10, Andrew Diller 1-0-3, Juan Vela 1-0-3, Steve Dagg 5-1-11, Reggie Jones 10-3-24, Tyson Liggins 1-0-2, Bryan Root 5-0-10. Totals 29-7-70.

WHITMER—Mike Kurdziel 7-9-24, David Veres 3-2-9, Jason Wagner 6-3-15, Cedric Jaynes 7-4-18, B.J. Barre 3-4-11. Totals 26-22-77.

Ross	15	22	11	22	—	70
Whitmer	19	19	19	20	—	77

TEAM REBOUNDS — Whitmer 39 (Jaynes 12, Barre 9), Ross 31 (Jones 11).

3 PT FGs — Ross 5-19 (Heidelberg 2, Vela 1, Jones 1, Diller 1), Whitmer 3-11 (Veres 1, Kurdziel 1, Barre 1).

TURNOVERS — Ross 10, Whitmer 10.

Records: Ross 4-1 (2-1), Whitmer 4-1 (1-1).

Junior varsity

Ross 67, Whitmer 54

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 4-4-12, Mike Price 0-3-3, Jeremy Scott 1-0-2, Doug Garvey 4-0-9, Mike Ziemke 0-2-2, T.J. Hammer 3-4-11, Alfonzo Vann 8-3-19, Chris Tullis 1-0-2, Chris Burroughs 2-1-5, Chris Beard 1-0-2. Totals 24-17-67.

WHITMER — Fletcher 1-0-2, Alexander 7-3-20, Moseley 3-5-12, Hice 2-2-6, Sabin 3-1-7, Wosielewski 1-2-4. Totals 18-14-54.

Ross	22	11	16	18	—	67
Whitmer	12	14	16	12	—	54

Record: Ross 5-0

Ross cruises past Fostoria

All 12 Little Giants score in GLL win

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Fremont Ross guard Steve Dagg found out he was starting against Fostoria Tuesday night at halftime of the junior varsity game. It was the junior's first start for the Little Giants, and it came as somewhat of a surprise.

"I was kind of wondering why, but I had a good week of practice and a good week last week, so I think I deserved it," Dagg said.

The move by coach Mark Gedeon paid off, as Dagg scored five of Ross's first seven points of the game, and the Little

Giants never looked back, beating the Redmen 77-38. With the win, Ross improves to 5-1 overall, 3-1 in the Great Lakes League, while Fostoria falls to 1-5, 0-3.

Dagg finished **Tuesday** with 11 points and **Ross** 77 nine rebounds for Ross 77 Ross, and **Reggie Fostoria** 38 Jones had 14 points **Tuesday** and nine rebounds. **Bowsler at Ross**, 6 p.m. All 12 Ross players

that suited up for the game scored.

"I thought offensively we executed better, we made some efforts in practice to reverse the basketball, to not take the first available shot," said Gedeon. "I thought we did a much better job getting people involved.

"Obviously when you have all 12 play-

ers score, that's a good sign."

All five Ross starters scored in the first quarter as the Little Giants took a 16-3 lead. Dagg and Joell Heideburg had five points apiece in the quarter.

It was the second straight 11-point game for Dagg, a transfer from North Carolina who had come off the bench in each of the first five games.

"I just moved, so it was kind of weird coming into a whole new system," said Dagg. "It's just like starting all over, but I'm starting to pick up on it now, and my game's starting to come back."

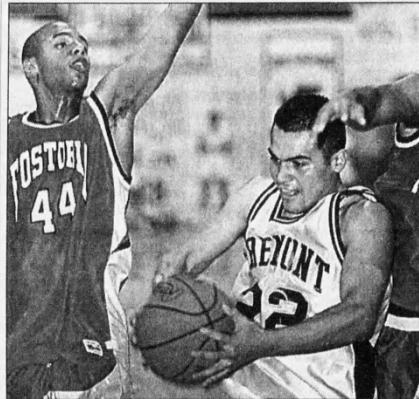
Starting in place of center Tyson Liggins, Dagg moved from the wing to the post at times, dusting off a low-block game he hasn't had to use in some time.

See ROSS, B2



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

STEVE DAGG scores two of his 11 points against Fostoria's Paul Beeson (24).



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

JUAN VELA battles for position with Fostoria's Jame Smith in Ross's 77-38 win Tuesday night.

Ross pounds Fostoria

Continued from B1

"It's the first time I've played post in awhile," Dagg said. "I used to play it when I was younger, because I was bigger than everybody, but it felt good to be able to get down there."

Liggins picked up the pace in the second quarter, scoring six points off feeds from Jones and Heidelberg, and Ross led 47-16 at halftime. Heidelberg and Robb Ritzman each finished with six assists.

The Little Giants shot a blistering 14-of-20 (70 percent) from the field in the quarter en route to a 31-of-55 (56.3 percent) performance.

By contrast, Fostoria was ice cold, shooting 3-of-22 (13.6 percent) in the first and fourth quarters. Ross's relentless defense forced 21 Fostoria turnovers and limited their guests' open looks.

"We've got a pretty good defense, but there's still a lot we can improve on," Dagg said. "We work on it every day in practice 90 percent of the time, and hopefully it'll pay off by the end of the year."

The depth Ross has shown will definitely pay off down the road, said Fostoria coach Jim Rutter.

"They obviously can wear you down with that depth," said Rutter, who lost seven of his projected top eight players for this season because of injuries and transfers. "Ever since Mark Gedeon's been here it seems like he's played a lot of kids, and that certainly helps keep the morale up. He has depth and we have none."

That depth extended to sophomore guard Kelly Lytle, who played well in his first extensive varsity action. Spelling Ritzman for most of the second and fourth quarters, Lytle finished with eight points, four assists and two rebounds.

"That was one of our goals when we were setting up for this game. We wanted to get Kelly Lytle some playing time," Gedeon said. "I thought he started off a little tentatively, like you would expect, but he went back in there and did exactly what he needed to do. He was aggressive, he was assertive, it was nice to see him have some success."

Greg Fleming had the most success for Fostoria, leading all scorers with 21 points. After three quarters, Fleming had scored 20 of his team's 32 points.

"I thought he was a little nervous early when he got his first shot sent back at him (by Jones), but then I thought he gathered himself pretty well," said Rutter.

Juan Vela also had 11 points for Ross, Bryan Root had five points and Andrew Diller had four points. Junior varsity call-up Anthony Vann had four points, and cohorts T.J. Hammer and Chris Beard had two points apiece.

"Everybody who stepped on the floor gave us something positive," Gedeon said.

Ross takes the holidays off before hosting Toledo Bowsher next Tuesday in a non-league game.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 77, Fostoria 38

ROSS — Reggie Jones 6-0-14, Steve Dagg 4-3-11, Juan Vela 4-2-11, Kelly Lytle 3-2-8, Tyson Liggins 3-0-6, Robb Ritzman 2-1-5, Joell Heidelberg 2-0-5, Bryan Root 2-1-5, Andrew Diller 2-0-4, Alfonzo Vann 1-2-4, T.J. Hammer 1-0-2, Chris Beard 1-0-2. Totals 31-11-77.

FOSTORIA — Greg Fleming 9-3-21, Dane Bringman 2-0-4, Carey Wade 2-0-4, Ryan Gerritsen 1-1-3, Jim Rivera 1-0-3, Chris Gahris 1-0-2, Jamie Smith 0-1-1. Totals 16-5-38.

Fostoria	3	13	16	6	—	38
Ross	16	31	16	14	—	77

REBOUNDS — Ross 42 (Dagg 9, Jones 9), Fostoria 23 (Fleming 6, Smith 5).

FGs — Ross 31-53, Fostoria 16-51.

3 PT FGs — Ross 4-10 (Jones 2, Heidelberg 1, Vela 1), Fostoria 1-9 (Rivera 1).

ASSISTS — Ross 26 (Ritzman 6, Heidelberg 6, Lytle 4).

TURNOVERS — Ross 16, Fostoria 21.

Records: Ross 5-1 (3-1), Fostoria 1-5 (0-3).

Junior varsity

Ross 57, Fostoria 47

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 2-2-6, Mike Price 3-0-6, Alfonzo Vann 2-0-4, T. J. Hammer 3-1-8, Chris Beard 7-0-14, Chris Tullis 1-1-3, Kevin Byers 3-0-6, Kyle Myers 0-2-2, Greg Burroughs 1-0-2. Totals 22-6-57.

FOSTORIA — Brice Moore 1-0-3, Ernesto Gonzales 8-2-21, Rob Downing 4-0-8, Jim Rivera 1-0-3, Chris Gahris 0-2-2, Josh Newlove 1-0-2, Jeremy Smith 0-1-1, Mike Tucker 1-0-2, Omar DeLaRose 1-0-2, Josh McClellan 1-0-3. Totals 18-5-47.

Fostoria	7	9	9	22	—	47
Ross	19	6	19	13	—	57

Record: Ross 6-0.

Ross puts on a show

Dagg, Heidelberg, Root bury Bowsher

By KYLE TIMMONS
News-Messenger correspondent

Showtime.

Ross fans of all ages had to enjoy Fremont Ross's 88-50 victory over Toledo Bowsher Tuesday night at the Purple Pit, as the Little Giants put on a show that will be hard to forget.

"That was the best we've played all year," said Ross guard Steve Dagg.

Dagg, who finished with 20 points, awed those in attendance with two thunderous dunks.

"Steve thrives in the open court game," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon. "This game fit perfectly into his skills. That's the type of performance that we know Steve is capable of having."

The Little Giants (6-1) struggled during the first quarter before finally taking the lead on a one-handed slam from Joell Heidelberg.

"That dunk by Heidelberg seemed to set the tone there, because it proved that we could run the transition," Gedeon said. "Our kids knew if they got some rebounds, that would allow our break lanes to open up, and from there it just sort of steamrolled."

Heidelberg finished with 19 points. Ross 88

Gedeon also attributed the slow start to his team's attention on Bowsher forward Keith

Tuesday

Tol. Bowsher..... 50

Tuesday

Bedford (Mich.) at Ross, 6 p.m.

Triplett. "Early we're trying so hard to take away Triplett's touches," Gedeon said. "Obviously he's an outstanding basketball player and we wanted to see what (Bowsher) would do from the perimeter."

Triplett, who was averaging 31.6 points a game, finished with a team-high 20 points.

"We knew who we had to stop and everybody knew who we had to stop," Dagg said. "He scored 20 points, but he's going to get his. He's a really good player. But we played really good defense."

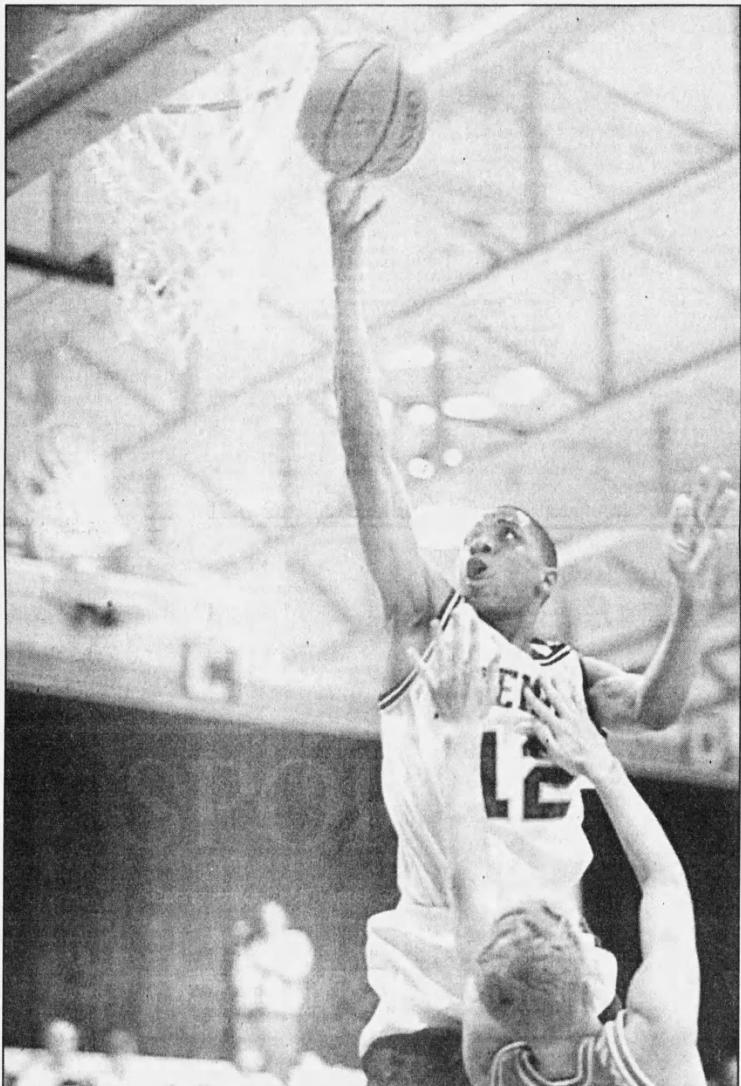
Leading 13-11 after one quarter, Ross got things rolling in the second quarter as Bryan Root scored 10 of his career-high 19 points as the Little Giants cruised to a 38-17 lead at the half.

"The last couple of games I didn't score very much," Root said. "So it feels pretty good."

Bowsher coach Dave Ross complimented Root's and Dagg's play.

"Dagg played a great game," Ross said. "(Dagg and Root) were big."

"They beat us down court and got layups after one or two passes. Some of our possessions in the second half we worked our butts off to just get two points and then (Ross) throws two passes, laying it up at the other end. That's really tough to



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

JOELL HEIDELBURG drives over Bowsher's Chad Lowe for a first-quarter basket.

rebound from."

Gedeon also praised the play of Root.

"He works very, very hard," said Gedeon. "He has great foot work and has a great feel around the basket."

"It's tough to have someone consistently make that five- to eight-foot shot, and he specializes in that."

Gedeon said he was pleased with Ross' second-quarter execution.

"The second quarter I think we played some outstanding basketball," said Gedeon. Juan Vela added eight points and Tyson Liggins and Chris Beard also added six points apiece for Ross.

"Fremont throws a lot of obstacles at

you," said Ross. "They've got some guys who can cover some ground real well."

Gedeon said he was also pleased with his team's unselfishness.

"We had some guys make some great passes," said Gedeon. "It was a total team effort."

Ross was able to involve some of its younger players as Kelly Lytle, T.J. Hammer and Beard got valuable playing time.

"It's great for next year and the year after that," Lytle said. "I'll be more experienced and know what's happening."

The Little Giants will return to action Jan. 8 as they host Great Lakes League foe Bedford.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 88, Toledo Bowsher 50

BOWSHER—Drayton Rouse 2-0-4, Rashad Cooper 3-0-8, Chad Lowe 1-0-3, Mark Triplett 2-0-4, Shawn Sanders 1-2-4, Josh McCloud 3-1-7, Keith Triplett 9-2-20. Totals 21-5-50.

ROSS—Robb Ritzman 1-0-3, Joell Heidelberg 7-3-19, Andrew Diller 2-1-5, Juan Vela 4-0-8, Steve Dagg 9-2-20, Reggie Jones 1-0-2, Tyson Liggins 3-0-6, Bryan Root 9-1-19, Chris Beard 3-0-6. Totals 39-7-88.

Bowsher	11	6	15	18	—	50
Ross	13	25	27	23	—	88

3-Pt FG's: Ross 3 (Heidelberg 2, Ritzman); Bowsher 3 (Cooper 2, Lowe 1).

Rebounds: Ross 34, Bowsher 12

Turnovers: Bowsher 20, Ross 12

Records: Ross 6-1, Bowsher 3-3.

Ross 66, Toledo Bowsher 42

BOWSHER—Mike Menchaca 7-6-22, Dartell Jenkins 3-2-9, Jamaal Jones 3-0-7, Adam Ignatowicz 0-2-2, Michael Gause 0-2-2. Totals 13-12-42.

ROSS—Kelly Lytle 1-0-2, Mike Price 1-5-8, Jeremy Scott 3-0-6, Doug Garvey 2-2-7, T. J. Hammer 3-0-6, Jeremy Jones 1-0-2, Alfonzo Vann 1-2-4, Chris Tullis 1-1-3, Greg Burroughs 2-1-5, Kevin Byers 3-1-7, Chris Beard 7-2-16. Totals 25-14-66.

Bowsher	6	8	10	18	—	42
Ross	18	13	14	21	—	66

Record: Ross 7-0.

Quick start lifts Little Giants

Vela, Dagg key win over Columbian

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

The Fremont Ross boys basketball team had not played in 17 days before Saturday's 75-54 win over Tiffin Columbian, a stretch that saw three games postponed, two practices canceled and numerous rides on the emotional roller coaster.

But one thing the winter weather could not take away from the Little Giants was their quick-start mindset.

Ross (7-1) jumped out to a 10-0 lead after just one minute, 50 seconds of play, and cruised to its third straight victory.

"That's just our mentality, we want to come out and put it to them early," said Ross guard Steve Dagg, who had 18 of his 19 points in the first half. "If they can take it, it's going to be a good game. If they can't, then we're going to take a lead quick."

Apparently, the Tornadoes couldn't take it. Five seconds after Reggie Jones won the

Boys basketball

opening tip, Dagg took Robb Ritzman's pass to score on a three-point play, and seconds later Dagg's steal and dunk gave Ross a 5-0 lead.

Juan Vela followed with his first of five 3-pointers to force a 20-second timeout from Columbian coach Matt Hutchinson, and with 6:10 to play in the first quarter Jones' big dunk stretched the Little Giants' lead to 10-0.

"I told the kids that the Tyson fight was (Saturday night), and we took several blows to the face early and had a tough time recovering," said Hutchinson, whose team fell to 4-3. "It was huge, not so much the 10-0 lead, but allowing 21 points in the first quarter. We talked coming in about wanting the game to be in the 50s, and when you give up 21 points in the first quarter it's hard to keep the game in the 50s. We scored 54 points, and if you keep them in the 50s, it's a ball-game."

See ROSS, B3

Ross cruises past Tiffin

Continued from B1

Dagg and Vela would have no part of that, combining for 40 points themselves. Dagg hit two more shots to finish the first quarter with nine points, and Vela hit his last three 3-pointers to stretch the Ross lead to 31-15 midway through the second quarter.

Vela, who finished with a game-high 21 points, said he had shot better in summer league play, but never in a varsity setting.

"(My teammates) gave me good picks, and I was open, and if I'm open, most of the time I'm going to make it," said Vela, whose previous game-high was four 3-pointers.

Ross coach Mark Gedeon said Vela's bombs came in the natural flow of the game.

"He was in the right place at the right time to get good looks, two of them were right off transition, and that tells me he feels very comfortable with his shot," Gedeon said. "We ran two specials for him, but most of it just came out of the flow."

Dagg put an exclamation point on the dominant first half with a monster reverse dunk, taking Jones' baseball pass to give Ross a 40-22 lead at the intermission. Dagg's dunk came after three of Jones' previous long passes had sailed just out of Dagg's reach.

"It felt good, because he was getting frustrated that he threw a couple long, because it was there," Dagg said.

Ross shakes off rust

The layoff the Fremont Ross boys basketball team was nothing unusual, considering the rash of postponements that hit all Northwest Ohio high schools in the last two weeks. The degree of success the Little Giants enjoyed directly on the heels of the layoff — jumping to a 10-0 lead en route to a 75-54 win over Tiffin Columbian Saturday night — may have seemed curious.

"Tonight you saw at times the play get a little sloppy, but the ener-

Jones, who finished with 10 points, would add another highlight-film dunk in the fourth quarter, a one-handed effort that gave Ross a 61-36 lead. Gedeon said each of the Little Giants' four dunks led directly to several more positive plays.

"You look at Reggie's last dunk, Andrew Diller gets a steal, then we get something else and then Diller hits a three," Gedeon said. "We are a team that plays on momentum, and we are capable of putting together a little stretch of four or five possessions and playing high-quality basketball.

"I don't think (Columbian's) kids were demoralized by it at all. Conversely, though, I think it gives our kids that much more energy, because when you get our crowd going — how can you not get excited by that?"

The Ross players, namely Dagg, were also excited by the several possessions Jones spent playing point guard. With the 6-foot-4 Jones bringing the ball up the court, Ross has the potential to play tall lineup of Jones, Dagg, Tyson Liggins, Bryan Root and Greg Garcia.

"We've been working on that, it would be exciting to put all five big men in there," Dagg said.

Ross guard Joell Heidelberg did not play against Columbian, serving a one-game team suspension. Heidelberg, who is expected to play Friday against Findlay, missed a practice after an out-of-school suspension Monday and Tuesday, Gedeon said.

gy was there," Gedeon said.

Much of the energy was likely carried over from the build-up to Friday's scheduled Great Lakes League showdown with Sandusky, which became the third Ross game to fall victim to poor weather.

"It's been hard," said Ross guard Juan Vela, who finished with a game-high 21 points. "We've been preparing for Sandusky all week, and then that game gets canceled. You build up for a game, and then every time it gets canceled you come down. It's crazy."

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 75, Columbian 54

ROSS — Juan Vela 8-0-21, Steve Dagg 8-2-19, Reggie Jones 5-0-10, Andrew Diller 3-0-7, Chris Beard 1-3-5, Bryan Root 2-0-4, Tyson Liggins 1-2-4, Robb Ritzman 1-0-3, Doug Garvey 0-2-2, Kelly Lytle 0-0-0, Alfonzo Vann 0-0-0, Kevin Byers 0-0-0. Totals 29-9-75.

COLUMBIAN — Beau Carmon 4-2-10, Nate Nahm 4-2-10, Craig Hill 4-0-8, Kyle Albert 3-0-7, Greg Hoke 2-2-6, Todd Focht 2-0-5, Nick Schultz 2-0-4, David Price 0-2-2, John Slosser 0-2-2. Totals 21-10-54.

Columbian	10	12	12	20	—	54
Ross	21	19	17	18	—	75

3 PT FGs: Ross 8-18 (Vela 5, Ritzman 1, Diller 1, Dagg 1). Columbian 2-8 (Focht 1, Albert 1).

REBOUNDS: Ross 31 (Jones 7, Vela 6, Liggins 6, Root 5), Columbian 30 (Carmon 6, Nahm 6).

TURNOVERS: Ross 18, Columbian 23.

Records: Ross 7-1, Columbian 4-3.

Junior varsity

Ross 59, Columbian 49

ROSS — Mike Price 7-0-15, Doug Garvey 2-2-6, Mike Ziemke 0-4-4, T.J. Hammer 3-0-6, Jeremy Jones 5-0-10, Alfonzo Vann 2-0-4, Chris Tullis 0-2-2, Greg Burroughs 2-0-4, Kevin Byers 2-0-4, Chris Beard 2-0-4. Totals 25-8-59.

COLUMBIAN — Martin 3-0-8, Eachus 3-2-9, Cox 2-0-4, Clouse 6-4-14, Buckner 2-4-8, Powers 1-0-2, Price 2-0-4. Totals 18-10-49.

Ross	9	17	13	20	—	59
Columbian	13	8	7	21	—	49

Records: Ross 8-0

Boys basketball

Balanced Little Giants rout Findlay

Ritzman, Jones lead Ross

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

FINDLAY — At first glance, Fremont Ross point guard Robb Ritzman doesn't look like the type of guy who can take over a basketball game.

Ritzman, who Ross coach Mark Gedeon has said resembles a prototypical "waterboy," wears his socks high, and weighs 150 pounds dripping wet.

Yet Ritzman, along with Reggie Jones and Tyson Liggins, helped Ross dominate Findlay Friday night, as the Little Giants beat the Trojans 64-43 to improve to 4-1 in the Great Lakes League, 8-1 overall.

Ritzman hit three 3-pointers and three layups on his way to a season-high 15 points, and dished out seven assists, with Jones converting several of those passes into his own season-high 25 points. Liggins also hit a season-high scoring mark with 10 points.

"I think a lot of that goes

Friday
Ross 64
Findlay 43

Tonight
Bedford at Ross, 6 p.m.

to Robb Ritzman, he had a simply outstanding game in all facets," said Gedeon.

Ritzman's presence was felt not only on the offensive end, but defensively, as he combined with guards Joell Heidelberg and Juan Vela to shut down Findlay's backcourt.

"Ritzman had, I thought, a great game," said Findlay

coach Jerry Snodgrass, whose team fell to 3-5 overall, 2-3 in the GLL. "On every single pass they had us turning away from the basket, and we didn't handle it very well. We didn't attack, some of our shooters didn't shoot, we shied away from things."

Heidelberg didn't shy away from anything early, scoring the first five Ross points on 3-pointer and a breakaway layup. The points would be the last scored by Heidelberg, the team's leading scorer this season and Vela, the third-

leading scorer, was shut out, making the 21-point margin of victory seem even more improbable.

"Amazing," said Snodgrass, "but there again, that shows you their depth."

Said Gedeon: "If you would have told me that Juan Vela and Joell Heidelberg would have five points between them and we win by 21, I'd laugh at you, but Robb Ritzman stepped up and was very assertive, taking very good shots."

Ritzman's first 3-pointer gave Ross an 8-4 lead, and

two layups helped stretch the lead to 14-6.

"It was just there," Ritzman said. "I've been shooting better in practice this week, and a couple of them fell for me, so I just kept shooting."

Ritzman's second layup came off a steal, capping a Findlay possession in which the Trojans held the ball for approximately 1:30 without shooting.

Jones may have had something to do with Findlay's reluctance to shoot.

See ROSS, B3

Ross moves to 4-1 in GLL with win

Continued from B1

Immediately preceding Findlay's shot-less possession, Trojan center Jason Wenner put up a floater which Jones redirected into the fifth row, smacking a female spectator in the head.

When asked if he saw a change in the Trojans' demeanor after the block, Jones said, "Yeah, I think they were a little scared."

Jones was anything but scared in his first appearance off the bench this season. After adjusting to the game's flow, Jones nailed a pair of 3-pointers, and scored three of the Little Giants' last five points in the first half, as Ross took a 30-20 halftime lead.

Coming off the bench provided an interesting challenge for the 6-foot-4 junior.

"It's hard, but you've got to adjust to it, and I think I adjusted very well," said Jones. "I had to bring more to the team off the bench, and when I was on the bench I had to keep my teammates up."

Gedeon, who has not hesitated to shuffle his starting lineup this season, said he thought bringing Jones off the bench added an element of surprise.

"I think it gives us a different avenue," he said. "They're probably out there thinking 'Where's Reggie?' and maybe they relax a little bit. He came in with a lot of energy, and those are the type of things that make him a special ballplayer."

In the third quarter, Ritzman picked up right where Jones had left off, hitting a layup on the Little Giants' first possession. Ross would score its first 12 points of the quarter on layups, with Jones adding six points and Liggins

chipping in four.

"Whoever was guarding me, I thought I could get position on them a little bit, so I thought I'd take advantage of it," said Ritzman.

Defensively, Ross mixed looks, switching between various zones and man-to-man. Findlay attempted just four shots in the first four minutes of the third quarter, including a 24-foot air-ball by leading scorer Doug Barnes and a 3-point attempt by the post-oriented Wenner.

"We did a pretty good job, our defense especially, because we ran defense (in practice) the whole week," said Liggins.

Said Gedeon: "Defensively, they got very little penetration from the top. Then you look at Tyson Liggins, coming in not only with 10 points but what a good job he did defensively. When you play that zone, you've got to have an enforcer in the middle, someone who does that dirty work, and Tyson does that for us."

Trailing 45-29 starting the

fourth quarter, Findlay made a run, as baskets by Ben Roethlisberger, Wenner and Chad Baxter cut the deficit to 45-35.

"I think we got away from things we like to do at times, we didn't get the ball inside enough, we took a couple quick shots," said Gedeon.

After Gedeon called a timeout with 6:11 remaining, Liggins and Jones scored the next 14 Ross points, with Ritzman assisting on three baskets.

"Down the stretch, when we needed to execute, we did a good job," Ritzman said.

Ritzman hit his third 3-pointer to push the lead to 62-43, and Steve Dagg's putback basket accounted for the final margin of victory.

"I think when you go into an opponent's gym and you dominate them, you deserve all the credit in the world, and that's what Fremont did," said Snodgrass.

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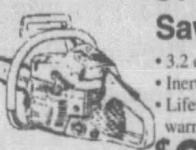


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FREE

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 64, Findlay 43

ROSS — Reggie Jones 8-3-25, Robb Ritzman 6-0-15, Tyson Liggins 4-2-10, Steve Dagg 3-0-7, Joell Heidelberg 2-0-5, Bryan Root 1-0-2. Totals 23-5-54.

FINDLAY — Doug Barnes 6-0-15, Jason Wenner 5-1-11, Ben Roethlisberger 3-0-6, Clayton Acheson 1-0-3, Mike Iriti 1-0-2, Bob Skulina 1-0-2, Andy Hardy 1-0-2, Chad Baxter 1-0-2. Totals 19-1-43.

Ross 14 16 15 19 — 64

Findlay 9 11 9 14 — 43

3 PT FGs: Ross 7-17 (Ritzman 3, Jones 2, Dagg 1, Heidelberg 1), Findlay 4-18 (Barnes 3, Acheson 1).

REBOUNDS: Ross 31 (Jones 9, Liggins 6), Findlay 30 (Wenner 13).

ASSISTS: Ross 16 (Ritzman 7), Findlay 8 (Roethlisberger 3).

TURNOVERS: Ross 10, Findlay 16.

Records: Ross 8-1 (4-1), Findlay 3-5 (2-3).

Junior varsity

Findlay 54, Ross 38

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 3-0-6, Mike Price 2-1-5, Doug Garvey 0-2-2, T.J. Hammer 2-0-4, Jeremy Jones 1-0-2, Alfonzo Vann 1-2-4, Greg Burroughs 1-0-2, Chris Beard 6-1-13. Totals 16-6-38.

FINDLAY — Paul 1-12-14, Webb 1-2-5, Friday 6-2-14, Lawson 1-2-4, Parker 0-2-2, Alexander 0-3-3, Dillon 3-6-12. Totals 12-29-54.

Ross 8 4 16 10 — 38

Findlay 10 8 16 20 — 54

Records: Ross 8-1, Findlay 5-3.

Vela keys Ross win

Junior ties 3-point record

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Just call Juan Vela Mr. Saturday Night.

One week after setting a career high with five 3-pointers in a win over Tiffin Columbian, Fremont Ross's 5-foot-11 junior guard tied a school record with seven 3-pointers as the Little Giants beat Bedford 76-55 Saturday in a Great Lakes League game at the Purple Pit.

Vela, whose 24 points led all scorers, tied the Ross record set by Brad Hammer in the 1987-88 season.

"I love this gym," said Vela. "The rims, you get easy

Saturday	
Ross	76
Bedford	55

Friday	
Oregon Clay at Ross, 6 p.m.	

rolls. My teammates were setting great picks for me tonight, and they just fell."

Vela, who had 21 points against Columbian and 15 in Ross's Saturday night win over Oregon Clay in December, hit his first 3-pointer 15 seconds into the game and never looked back.

"Part of the reason he likes the gym is we can't kick him out of the gym," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon, whose team improved to 9-1 overall, 5-1 in the GLL and 6-0 at home. "He's always in here working

Inside: Ross girls beat Notre Dame. **Page B3**

hard, spring, summer or fall, before practice, after practice, he's always in the gym, so he does feel comfortable here. I think it's a nice gym as well, the rims suit our shooters well."

They certainly did Saturday night. Joell Heidelberg got off to a quick start for the second straight night, following Vela's opening 3-pointer with a layup and dunk of his own.

Like Friday night, Heidelberg would not score again, but would play an instrumental role in the Little Giants' offensive efficiency.

See QUICK, B3



News-Messenger/Guy Schultz

ANDREW DILLER shoots a layup during first-half action.

Quick start pushes Ross past Mules

Continued from B1

Heidelberg and point guard Robb Ritzman each had eight assists, creating open looks for Vela, Steve Dagg and Tyson Liggins.

"I'm trying to get my teammates involved," Heidelberg said. "If I don't have it, I'm going to give it to my teammates."

The teammate Heidelberg gave it to most often Saturday was Vela. Heidelberg assisted on three of Vela's first four 3-pointers.

"Jo Jo, he's real quick, he can take anybody to the hole, and he'd drive and take two defenders with him," Vela said.

Said Heidelberg: "I knew that if they collapsed on me, I was going to kick it out to him. I wanted him to get the record."

So did Gedeon and the Ross coaches, who called four special plays setting Vela up for a 3-point attempt. Vela got three shots off on those plays, and one of the three — the record-tying shot — was successful.

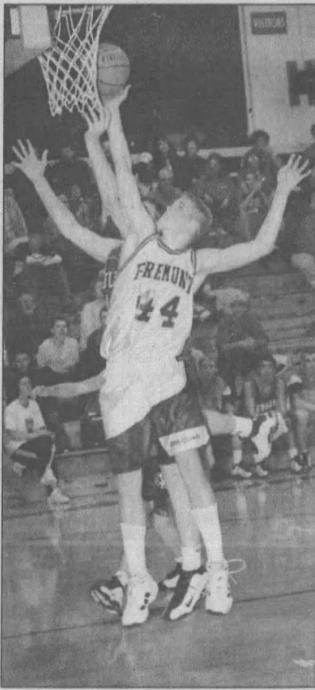
"I think everyone wanted to see if they could get Juan a shot at it," Gedeon said.

When Gedeon pulled Vela with 1:54 remaining, the crowd voiced its displeasure. Then again, it was the first time the home folks had much to boo about all night.

Led by Bryan Root's six early points, Ross took a 23-9 lead after one quarter. Bedford, which lost to GLL contenders Sandusky and Toledo Whitmer by seven and four points, respectively, hung around, thanks in large part to the inside play of Anthony Peake. Gedeon said he was slightly concerned with his team's interior defense.

"It just shows you have to have five people playing defense, and if one person loses focus, they'd get it into him," he said, "and let's face it, he's a strong boy, and if he gets the ball down low, he's going to be able to score."

Peake's performance was not enough to keep the Kicking Mules close much longer. With Vela knocking down five of his 3-pointers in the first half, Steve Dagg scored 10 of his 18 quiet points, with Liggins adding five



News-Messenger/Guy Schultz

BRYAN ROOT shoots a layup in the first half of Fremont Ross's 76-55 win over Bedford Saturday night.

of his nine.

"Certainly, we wanted to be fundamentally sound, not make mistakes, because we really don't match up athletically," said Bedford coach Frank Scheuer, whose team fell to 3-7 overall, 2-5 in the GLL. "Obviously, I'm impressed, but at the same time, I don't think we were on in the first half."

Ross sputtered in the third quarter, committing turnovers on several straight possessions. The Little Giants had just eight field goal attempts in the quarter, but converted on six of them.

By the fourth quarter, the only question left unanswered was whether or not Vela would break Hammer's record. Vela admitted the record was on his mind in the game's latter stages.

"Last game (against Columbian), it came up, and a lot of people knew it was seven," Vela said. "Once it got to six and seven, that's when I started thinking about it. I'm trying to make the shot, but if I don't, there's always next year."

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 76, Bedford 55

ROSS — Juan Vela 7-3-24, Steve Dagg 8-0-18, Reggie Jones 4-2-10, Tyson Liggins 3-3-9, Bryan Root 3-0-6, Robb Ritzman 2-0-5, Joell Heidelberg 2-0-4. Totals 29-8-76.

BEDFORD — Andy Francis 4-3-13, Anthony Peake 4-1-9, Chad Funk 2-0-4, Tim McKibbon 2-3-7, Aaron Wiens 1-0-2, Tony Nicol 1-4-6, Chris Morris 1-0-2, Devin Smith 2-0-4, Bruce Welch 3-0-6, Brad Scheroian 1-0-2. Totals 21-11-55.

Bedford	9	10	18	18	—	55
Ross	23	21	16	16	—	76

3 PT FGs: Ross 10-18 (Vela 7, Dagg 2, Ritzman 1), Bedford 2-14 (Francis 2).

REBOUNDS: Ross 30, Bedford 30

ASSISTS: Ross 24 (Heidelberg 8, Ritzman 8), Bedford 9.

TURNOVERS: Ross 17, Bedford 15.

Records: Ross 9-1 (5-1), Bedford 3-7 (2-5)

Junior varsity

Ross 58, Bedford 39

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 1-1-3, Doug Garvey 1-0-2, T.J. Hammer 1-4-6, Jeremy Jones 4-0-8, Alfonzo Vann 4-1-9, Chris Beard 2-2-6, Mike Price 2-0-4, Greg Burroughs 3-1-7, Chris Tullis 2-1-5, Kevin Byers 2-0-4, Jeremy Scott 2-0-4. Totals 25-10-58.

BEDFORD — Nick Brillhart 1-0-3, Philip Peake 5-4-16, Andy Grove 0-1-1, Shawn Dashner 1-2-4, Scott Pelhank 1-0-2, Eric Tippin 4-2-10, Matt Adamski 0-3-3. Totals 12-12-39.

Ross	22	15	11	10	—	58
Bedford	11	10	7	11	—	39

Record: Ross 9-1

Ross's Jones on a roll

Junior leads team in scoring, highlights

By SCOTT TAPPA

Sports editor

Each time he steps on the basketball court, Fremont Ross forward Reggie Jones is a young man waiting to break rules.

But Jones, this week's News-Messenger Athlete of the Week, isn't one to break the rules set down by the men in stripes, the chargings or the blocks that referees call.

No, the 6-foot-4 Jones likes to break the rules of physics set forth by Sir Isaac Newton.

The rules of gravity.

OK, so Jones doesn't flat-out break Newton's laws of gravity, but he takes his time obeying them, and his leaping ability unleashes itself in many different ways.

■ In Saturday's win over Bedford, Kicking Mules guard Andy Francis threw a lob pass upcourt, but was startled when Jones promptly snatched the ball out of mid-air, starting a fast break the other way.

■ In Friday's win at Findlay, Trojans forward Jason Wenner challenged Jones on a drive. Jones responded by challenging a female spectator's reaction time, swatting Wenner's shot into the fifth row.

In Ross's first game against Findlay, Jones, who was guarding Wenner in the post, took one step, leaped and blocked Doug Barnes' 3-point attempt, leading to a Joell Heidelberg basket.

"If I get a big block, they'll shy away from trying to score inside," says Jones. "It wakes me up a little bit, gives me some momentum."

■ In last Saturday's win over Tiffin Columbian, Jones threw down a dunk reminiscent of a mid-1970s Julius Erving, taking off from just inside the foul line and gliding in for a one-handed slam.

"You don't know how good it was until someone

tells you about it," Jones says.

Jones has been putting together spectacular plays ever since sixth grade, the first time he dunked. Although he admits he didn't take basketball seriously — or any sport, for that matter — until he was in seventh grade, the challenge was just too great to pass up.

"Everyone was saying I was so tall, and they were like, 'Hey, can you dunk?'" Jones says. "Then, at recess, I would just go out and try."

He succeeded, albeit with a small ball. By seventh grade, however, Jones was dunking with a regulation ball, marking him as a talent to be watched.

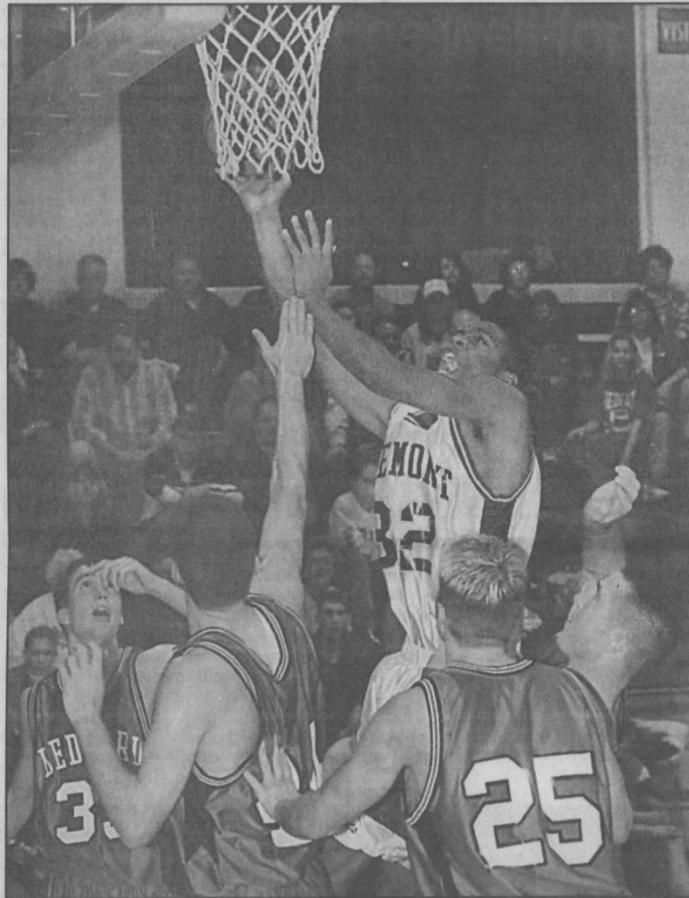
"It felt good, because some people at the varsity level can't even do that," Jones says.

Now, in his third year on the varsity level, Jones is doing lots of things his peers can't do. A second team all-Great Lakes League selection last season, Jones is posting the kind of all-around numbers that will most likely earn him postseason honors again this season: 14.7 points per game, 6.5 rebounds per game, 1.9 blocks per game, 1.6 assists per game — all in just 20.1 minutes per game.

"He makes me look good," says Ross point guard Robb Ritzman says of Jones, who also holds the GLL high jump record of 6-6. "He can pretty much do anything."

This includes scoring around the basket in post up situations. While the 180-pound Jones gives up 10-20 pounds to other area big men, his body control and timing make him lethal in the paint, says Ross coach Mark Gedeon.

"Offensively, he's one of the best interior finishers around," says Gedeon. "For him to twist and turn his body, take the hit, and still finish — he's shooting



News-Messenger/Guy Schultz

REGGIE JONES leads Fremont Ross in scoring this season at 14.7 points per game.

66 percent from two-point range — is incredible."

Jones has also added more of a perimeter flavor to his offensive game, taking 3-point shots in the rhythm of the offense, as well as assuming point guard responsibilities on occasion.

"It's important because it makes the defense make a decision: either come out and guard me, or stay off," Jones says.

When the defense stays off, Jones is shooting 41 percent from 3-point range, making multiple 3-pointers against Findlay and Bowling Green. When defenders come out on him, the result is often highlight film material.

"It's nice, all you have to

do is put the ball up by the rim and he can go get it," says Ritzman. "He can out-jump anybody."

At one point last year, it looked like Jones might be outjumping opponents for a team in Florida. Near the end of the 1997-98 school year, Jones decided to move in with Georgia Woodson — cousin Charles' mother — near Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and play for highly-regarded Deerfield High School.

Jones quickly learned he was not happy in Florida. Part of it was the warm weather — "you couldn't go outside until 8 o'clock," he says — part of it was missing his teammates.

Athlete of the week

Reggie Jones profile

School: Ross.
Grade: Junior.
Sports: Basketball, track and field.

Nickname: Bone.
Family: Mother Anita Jones; Brothers Tadara 23, Hayward 22, Jerry 21; Sister Tiffany 19.

Favorite TV show: Family Matters.
Favorite character: Steve Urkel.
Favorite music group: No Limit.

See JONES, B2

Jones leads 9-1 Little Giants in scoring and rebounding

Continued from B1

"He was calling me from Florida saying, 'When's the next tournament? Can I go to the tournament?' Here's when my plane's getting off. I'm going to be there," says Gedeon.

Gedeon and the Little

Giants could not have been happier. For the coach, it meant a chance to continue the relationship he and Jones started when the latter was a fourth grade student of Gedeon's wife Mindy at Otis Elementary

School.

Coach and player began to develop a camaraderie, and Gedeon began to see what Jones' classmates had seen on the playground at recess.

"My initial reaction

was, here's a player

with some special ath-

letic talent, fairly raw

fundamentally, but he did have some basketball skills. Did he want the challenge or not?" Gedeon says. "We took

him to a couple tournaments that (eighth

grade) summer and

found out yes, he did want that challenge,

yes, he did want to compete."

That competitiveness carries over into the classroom, where Gedeon says Jones is a 3.0 student. It may also help Jones down the road, as he hopes to go into business in the future.

"He's a people person, his smile, his laugh, his personality, he's going to be doing something where he's interacting," says Gedeon.

First, Jones hopes to play collegiately and professionally, and Gedeon says universities such as Boston Col-

lege, Oregon State and Marquette have sent preliminary letters expressing interest. Whatever path Jones chooses to follow, Gedeon says he's confident he'll succeed.

"Reggie can do what-

ever he wants to do," he

says.

Ross designates student sections

The Fremont Ross athletic department has announced that sections H and I will be designated student sections during Ross basketball and football games. Adults or alumni sitting in these sections will be asked to leave and find another seat.

Boys basketball

Ross slams Clay



News-Messenger/Rachel Rice

JOELL HEIDELBURG throws down a dunk in the first quarter of Fremont Ross's 80-50 win over Oregon Clay on Friday.

Heidelberg, Jones lead sixth straight win

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Fremont Ross boys basketball coach Mark Gedeon has said that Joell Heidelberg and Reggie Jones are the two most talented players he's coached.

It would be no stretch, then, to say that Heidelberg and Jones are two of the most talented players Oregon Clay coach Joe Guerrero has had to coach against.

Friday night at the Purple Pit, Heidelberg and Jones combined to equal the Eagles' point total as the Little Giants beat Clay 80-50 in a Great Lakes League game.

"I'm glad that Joell is a senior — I wish Reggie was," said Guerrero. "I've seen Joell enough."

Jones, who recorded a season-high 29 points, and

Heidelberg, who finished with 21, each had 14 in the first half, and were key in a third quarter run that put the game away for Ross (10-1, 6-1).

For the third straight game, Heidelberg got off to a quick start, feeding Tyson Liggins for a jumper and throwing down a one-handed dunk off a steal. Another Heidelberg basket made it 8-4 before Guerrero called a timeout.

The timeout did Clay wonders, as the Eagles (6-6, 2-5) inched ahead on a Tony Katschke free throw.

"We were running our offense and being patient, which is what we wanted to do, because we can't match them athletically," said Guerrero. "We tried to get a good shot every time."

Gedeon and Ross tried to do the same for Jones, and after a dry spell, the 6-foot-

Friday

Ross 80

Clay 50

Tonight

Whitmer at Ross, 8 p.m.

4 junior responded with 12 straight points, including eight in a 1 minute, 16 second span, a spurt capped by a thundering one-handed dunk.

"It felt pretty good to come out on a spree like that, like I did," said Jones, who missed just two of his 14 field goal attempts.

Gedeon said working Jones free was just a matter of patience on the part of Jones and the Ross guards. While Jones was slowed slightly by an arch injury, he had few problems working himself into scoring situations.

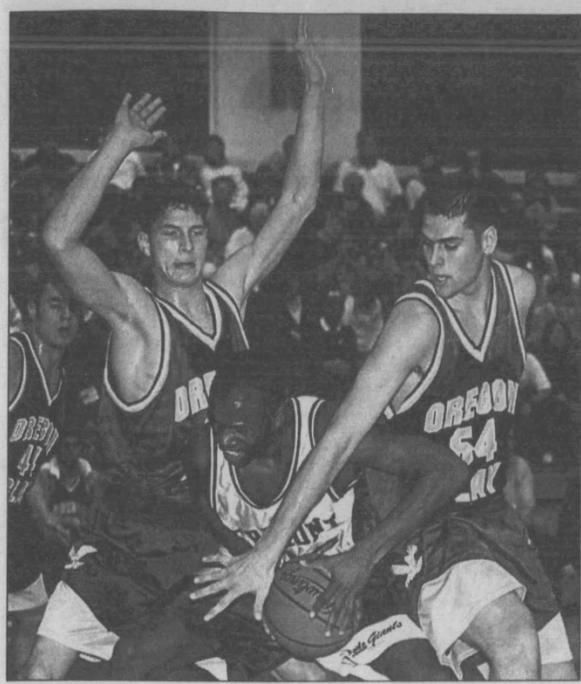
"We knew he was going to be a meal ticket for us,

and if we could isolate him one-on-one on the block, with his athleticism, he was going to convert," said Gedeon. "We were sputtering a little there, and he gave us focus. It was just a situation of moving him around the floor.

"We had him in the post spot for awhile, moved him to the 3 spot for awhile in the second quarter, to isolate him outside and inside. That's the diversity we can bring with a Reggie Jones."

Heidelberg has also been showing diversity lately, racking up assists in games against Findlay and Bedford. The senior guard finished with four assists Friday, but his 3-point shooting and drives to the basket helped the Little Giants take a 32-20 lead at half-time.

See ROSS, B3



REGGIE JONES fights through Clay defenders Ben Tobias, 54, and Tony Katschke, 32, in the Little Giants' 80-50 win Friday.

Ross beats Clay 80-50

Continued from B1

While Jones and Heidelberg provided the offense for Ross, Liggins was the man most responsible for handling Ben Tobias, Clay's leading scorer at 19.4 points per game. With Liggins fronting Tobias and a host of Little Giants providing weakside help, Tobias had seven first-half points on just one field goal.

"(I had to) just stay low and be physical with him, because he's a physical player," said Liggins, who led Ross with eight rebounds. "We did all right, he got like 10 (actually 15) or something in the second half."

Said Gedeon: "For us to do the defensive things we want to do, Tyson Liggins has to come up big for us. He did a great job making Tobias work for everything he got. (Tobias) had only one field goal in the first half, and that's all Tyson right there."

With the shot-blocking Jones behind Tobias, who finished with 22 points, Clay guards had a tough time getting the ball into their post man.

"I was supposed to take away the lob," said Jones. "If they knew I was back there, they weren't going to lob it, and then they had to fight around Tyson."

That was, of course, if Clay could fight around the pressure applied by the Ross backcourt. At one point in the third quarter, Clay held the ball for 1:16 before turning the ball over, resulting in

two Jones free throws.

Jones would score 15 of the last 17 Ross points in the third quarter as the Little Giants assumed a commanding 59-34 lead.

"It was outstanding to see," said Gedeon, who estimated that Ross used six different defenses. "In that one stretch our fans started getting into it, our kids are on the floor clapping when they pull it back out. Then we get a steal and a layup out of that — what could be more rewarding?"

Perhaps the greatest reward for Ross is tonight's rematch with Toledo Whitmer. Ross has not lost since losing 77-70 at Whitmer on Dec. 18.

"This is what we've worked for, the opportunity to dictate our own fate, a chance to prove to people how much we've improved since that first meeting, and that we can go out and compete with the big boys," said Gedeon. "(The Panthers are) still champions, in my opinion. I think this team (Ross) is ready to take that step, though."

Whitmer dropped an 83-78 double overtime decision at Sandusky Friday night. Ross travels to Sandusky, which sits atop the GLL at 7-0, on Tuesday.

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Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 80, Clay 50

ROSS — Reggie Jones 12-5-29, Joell Heidelberg 9-0-21, Juan Vela 3-0-7, Tyson Liggins 1-2-4, Steve Dagg 2-0-4, Byan Root 2-0-4, Doug Garvey 1-1-3, Alfonzo Vann 1-0-2, Chris Beard 0-2-2, Greg Garcia 1-0-2, Robb Ritzman 1-0-2. Totals 33-10-80.

CLAY — Ben Tobias 7-7-22, Joe Romano 3-0-7, Eric Huguely 2-0-6, Tony Katschke 2-1-5, Bob Nowacki 2-0-4, Justin Pirrwtz 1-0-3, Gordon Bumpus 1-0-2, Derek Besgrove 0-1-1. Totals 18-9-50.

Clay	14	6	14	16	—	50
Ross	16	16	27	21	—	80

3 PT FGs: Ross 4-12 (Heidelberg 3, Vela 1), Clay 4-13 (Huguely 2, Romano 1, Pirrwtz 1).

REBOUNDS: Ross 32 (Liggins 8), Clay 24 (Tobias 9).

ASSISTS: Ross 15 (Ritzman 5), Clay 9.

TURNOVERS: Ross 8, Clay 23.

Records: Ross 10-1 (6-1), 6-6 (2-5).

Junior varsity

Ross 55, Clay 44

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 7-3-18, Doug Garvey 1-0-3, Mike Ziemke 1-0-2, T.J. Hammer 3-3-9, Jeremy Jones 1-1-3, Alfonzo Vann 2-0-4, Greg Burroughs 1-0-2, Kevin Byers 1-0-2, Chris Beard 4-4-12. Totals 21-11-55.

CLAY — O'Shea 2-0-6, Johnston 0-6-6, Wasserman 0-3-3, Fox 1-0-2, Zakrzewski 3-1-7, Stager 4-4-14, Bumpus 3-0-6. Totals 13-14-44.

Clay	12	11	12	9	—	44
Ross	15	14	6	20	—	55

Record: Ross 10-1

Ross ends Whitmer jinx

Heidelberg,
Vela key win

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

For the last two games, Fremont Ross guard Joell Heidelberg has asked Purple Pit public address announcer Larry Jackson to introduce him as "a 6-foot senior," even though the official roster lists the senior's height as 5-foot-11.

Jackson has told Heidelberg he will continue to stretch the guard's height as long as the Little Giants keep winning.

The way Heidelberg played in Saturday's 69-59 Great Lakes League win over Toledo Whitmer, Heidelberg might be 6-feet tall for the rest of his high school career.

Heidelberg keyed Ross runs in the first and third quarters, as the Little Giants beat Whitmer for the first time in coach Mark Gedeon's four-year career at Ross.

"It feels good, I can't re-



HEIDELBURG

member the last time we beat them," said Heidelberg, who scored 20 points. "It feels real good right about now."

Heidelberg and Juan Vela, who finished with a game-high 24 points, continued their Saturday night offensive success, as Ross improved to 11-1 overall, 6-1 in the GLL. Vela and Heidelberg combined to hit seven 3-pointers, but also mixed it up inside with dunks and offensive putbacks.

"Today was against Whitmer, and in the past I hadn't done well against Whitmer, so I knew I had to step it up," said Vela, who iced the game

Saturday
Ross 69
Whitmer 59

Tuesday
Ross at Sandusky, 6 p.m.

for Ross by going 4-for-4 from the free throw line late in the fourth quarter.

Ross won the game late in the third quarter and early in the fourth quarter. Clinging to a 29-27 lead, Heidelberg started a 25-7 Ross run with a 3-pointer with 3:35 left in the third quarter.

Vela followed with a layup off an offensive rebound, forcing Whitmer coach Bruce Smith to use a time-

out, and after Whitmer forward Cedric Jaynes traveled, Heidelberg hit a jumper.

Reggie Jones and Robb Ritzman scored the final seven points of the period for Ross, Ritzman hitting a 3-pointer with five seconds remaining to give Ross a 43-32 lead, its biggest of the game to that point.

Whitmer, which had lost a double-overtime game to Sandusky the previous night, went long stretches without quality offensive looks, and ended up taking a whopping 30 3-pointers.

See GUARDS, B3

Crimson Streaks top St. Mary's

St. Joseph Central Catholic won its eighth straight game Saturday night, knocking off rival Sandusky St. Mary's 78-66.

St. Mary's played solid first-half defense to stay close for a while, but St. Joe took control in the second half and improved to 9-3.

"It took a little bit to get into it," said forward Nick Haselbach, who led St. Joe with 24 points. "But once we got into the flow, we took it away from them."

See complete game story, B3.

Guards lead Ross boys to big home victory over Toledo Whitmer

Continued from B1

On the other end, Tyson Liggins started the fourth quarter with a layup, and Heidelberg followed with a 3-pointer and a dunk. Vela followed with a 3-pointer of his own, and Heidelberg's free throw gave Ross an insurmountable lead at 54-34.

"We knew they were coming off a double overtime game, so we wanted to press the ball, make them tired, and I think we did that," said Heidelberg. "In the fourth quarter they were tired. Their shots were falling short."

While Smith hesitated to acknowledge the effects of Friday's game — "I'm not going to make excuses," he said — he did admit his players may have tired in the second half.

"We got home at midnight last night after a double overtime heartbreaker, so if I were to say that I wasn't concerned about our energy, I'd be lying," said Smith, whose team lost its fourth straight game to fall to 7-5, 3-3.

Down 20 points, Whitmer did not fold, scoring on 11 of 12 possessions, coming as close as 61-55 on a Frank Veres jumper with 1:05 remaining. But Ross missed several front ends of one-and-one situations, Vela and Liggins clinched the win from the free throw line, com-

bining to go 6-for-6 in the fourth quarter.

The free throw line was key all game long, as it was in Whitmer's 77-70 win over Ross on Dec. 18.

In the teams' first meeting, Whitmer shot 34 free throws, making 22, while Ross was 7-of-12. Saturday, Ross was 17-of-28, while Whitmer was 8-of-10.

"Last game we attacked them and shot 34 free throws, and we didn't attack tonight for whatever reason," Smith said.

Part of the Panthers' stunted attack had to do with the zone defense Ross favored. Instead of relying on pressure man-to-man defense, the Little Giants clogged the driving lanes of Whitmer guards B.J. Barre and Mike Kurdziel.

"The first time, they went to the line 34 times. If they go to the line 34 times this game, we're not going to win this ballgame," Gedeon said.

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"We wanted to make sure they earned their points, and part of it was taking away some of their aggressiveness by playing zone."

Ross executed the zone well, committing three fouls in both the first and second quarters, and just one foul in the third quarter.

"It starts in practice. Coach must have told us 50 times how many times we fouled them in the first game," Vela said.

Said Heidelberg: "I just think we weren't reaching, we weren't getting ticky-tacky fouls. When we did foul them, we fouled them hard."

Ross has now won seven straight games since its lone loss to Whit-

mer, but Sandusky stayed a game ahead of the Little Giants in the GLL with a 72-59 win over Oregon Clay on Saturday. The Little Giants travel to Sandusky on Tuesday for a makeup of a game postponed from Jan. 16, and a win could cap a monumental five-day stretch for Gedeon's program.

"For us to beat Whitmer for the first time since I've been varsity coach is a major stepping stone for us, it takes some of that stigma away," Gedeon said. "Now, we have a Sandusky team ranked 16th in the state. If we were to be successful against them, hopefully we'd get some notice."

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Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 69, Whitmer 59

ROSS — Juan Vela 8-4-24, Joell Heidelberg 7-3-20, Robb Ritzman 2-4-9, Tyson Liggins 2-3-7, Reggie Jones 2-2-6, Steve Dagg 1-1-3. Totals 22-17-69.

WHITMER — Dave Veres 6-0-16, Cedric Jaynes 5-5-15, B.J. Barre 6-0-13, Mike Kurdziel 3-0-8, Carl Simmons 1-3-5, Frank Veres 1-0-2. Totals 22-8-59.

Whitmer	8	11	12	27	—	59
Ross	11	10	22	26	—	69

3 PT FGs: Ross 8-17 (Vela 4, Heidelberg 3, Ritzman 1), Whitmer 7-30 (D. Veres 4, Kurdziel 2, Barre 1).

REBOUNDS: Ross 29 (Jones 9), Whitmer 27 (Jaynes 13).

ASSISTS: Ross 13 (Heidelberg 4), Whitmer 11 (Kurdziel 5).

TURNOVERS: Ross 14, Whitmer 17.

Records: Ross 11-1 (7-1), Whitmer 7-5 (3-3).

Junior varsity

Ross 58, Whitmer 42

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 2-3-7, Mike Price 3-0-6, Jeremy Scott 0-2-2, Doug Garvey 2-2-6, T.J. Hammer 4-2-10, Jeremy Jones 1-6-8, Alfonzo Vann 2-2-6, Kevin Byers 0-1-1, Chris Beard 6-0-12. Totals 20-18-58.

WHITMER — Fletcher 0-8-8, Armentrout 0-1-1, Mosley 2-1-5, Waite 1-1-3, Wasielewski 1-1-3, Marsh 2-0-4, Alexander 7-0-17, Hill 0-1-1. Totals 13-13-42.

Whitmer	7	16	10	9	—	42
Ross	9	17	11	21	—	58

Record: Ross 11-1

Sandusky stops 7-game Ross run

Alexander's 24 lead Streaks

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

SANDUSKY — Last week, Fremont Ross basketball coach Mark Gedeon said Sandusky was the type of team that can score nine or 10 points in a minute "and not think anything of it."

Tuesday night, the Blue Streaks did just that, blitzing

the visiting Little Giants at the end of the first half to key an 80-69 Great Lakes League win.

The win moved Sandusky to 13-2 overall, 9-0 in the GLL, two games up on Ross with three league games to play. The Little Giants, who had a seven-game winning streak snapped, fell to 11-2, 7-2.

"I feel good," said Sandusky guard Brock Alexander, who led the Blue Streaks with 24 points. "I've been

waiting for this since I was

on jayvee."

Alexander was instrumental in the second-quarter run which put Sandusky in command.

With 1:45 remaining in the half, Reggie Jones threw down a one-handed dunk off an assist from Joell Heidelberg, giving Ross a 28-27 lead. The Blue Streaks responded 30 seconds later with an Anthony Roberto layup, setting the stage for Alexander's fireworks.

After a Ross turnover, Alexander hit a mid-range jump shot and followed with an offensive putback. The killer, though, was Alexander's 3-pointer as time expired, a shot which put Sandusky ahead 38-28.

"I just tried to calm down a little bit, keep my eye on

the basket," said Alexander, who was tightly guarded on the shot.

Alexander's personal run was nothing Sandusky coach Ed Kurt had not seen before.

"I don't know what gets him off. If I ever figure that one out I'll be a millionaire," said Kurt. "There were points this summer where he ran off 14, 16 points in a row without being stopped."

The run left Ross in shock, and the Little Giants did not recover until the middle of

the fourth quarter.

"It took us a long time to recover from that," said Gedeon. "Then we got down by double digits quickly, and it really wasn't until we made that run in the fourth quarter that I thought we started playing the basketball we're capable of playing."

John Farris, Sandusky's leading scorer, quickly put the Streaks ahead by 10 with a jumper to start the third

See ROSS, B3

Ross falls at Sandusky 80-69

Continued from B1

quarter. After Robb Ritzman's 3-pointer cut the deficit to 38-31, Brooks Hampton followed with a basket for Sandusky.

Ross continued to chip away, with Jones and Heidelberg scoring off offensive rebounds. But Sandusky returned the favor, with El DaSheon Nix and Farris getting putbacks.

For the game, Sandusky scored 24 points on offensive rebounds, not including free throws.

"We had a lot of problems with (offensive rebounding) last week," said Kurt. "We were having trouble getting people back, and Heidelberg always runs out, cherry picks, so Monday in practice we worked on having one man back and all four other guys pound the glass. They've got two or three guys that can jump, we've got seven or eight, so there's strength in numbers."

The Little Giants continued to chip away at the lead, but the Blue Streaks answered every time.

Early in the fourth quarter, a Hampton layup and two Alexander free throws gave Sandusky a 60-46

lead. After layups by Heidelberg and Jones cut the deficit back to 10 points, Alexander again answered, this time with a jumper.

"We knew that we were in control, we just had to calm down, because they had to catch up to us, they had to come get us," said Alexander. "I just wanted to get a shot to show everybody I can play, play against Heidelberg."

Said Gedeon: "He's done that time and time again this year. He's one of the top scorers in the GLL. Some of it was just him making some good, under control shots, and us not recognizing what people were on the floor at certain times."

A manic full court press helped Ross cut the Sandusky lead in the fourth quarter. With Sandusky's regular starting point guard Darone Graves ineligible, Farris and Dean Swain took turns handling the Ross pressure, with varied degrees of success.

"Dean did a great job," said Kurt. "We had some turnovers against the press, but after a couple timeouts we really plugged that, did a good job of getting out and attacking the basket."

Ross came within five points twice, on baskets by Jones and Tyson Liggins. But Sandusky was clutch from the line late, hitting nine straight free throws, finishing at 20-for-24 for the game.

Individually, Farris was 8-for-8 from the free throw line, and Alexander was 7-for-8.

"You can't foul Farris. He's at 84 (percent) coming in, and he'll end up at 90," said Kurt.

Ross had one last chance when Jones' three-point play with 27.6 seconds left cut the gap to six. But free throws from Hampton and Farris put the game away.

"We just did not do a good job of attacking, especially early," said Gedeon. "We did not get as many post touches as we would like. Even in the second half, a lot of our shots were quick shots. We were trying to rely on 17 feet and out as opposed to making that reversal, forcing them to play defense."

Jones led all scorers with 25 points and led Ross with eight rebounds. Heidelberg had 13 points and seven rebounds and Juan Vela added 12 points.

Farris added 19 points for San-

dusky, and Nix pulled down a game-high 12 rebounds.

Ross, which travels to Fostoria on Friday, hosts Sandusky on Feb. 26. With the Blue Streaks holding a two-game lead with three league games to play, winning a GLL title seems unlikely for Ross.

"We just have to get our kids focused in terms of what we need to be successful this year," Gedeon said. "We play this team again in a couple weeks, and I expect to play them again in the sectionals, depending on how the draw goes."

TO
TRU
Fe

Basketball

High School Boys

Sandusky 80, Ross 69

ROSS — Reggie Jones 11-3-25, Joell Heidelberg 5-2-13, Juan Vela 5-1-12, Robb Ritzman 2-1-6, Bryan Root 3-0-6, Steve Dagg 2-0-4, Tyson Liggins 1-1-3. Totals 29-8-69.

SANDUSKY — Brock Alexander 8-7-24, Jahn Farris 5-8-19, Brooks Hampton 4-2-10, Chante Smith 4-1-9, Anthony Roberts 2-0-4, Brandon Pettis 2-0-4, Chad Cotton 2-0-4, El DaSheon Nix 1-1-3, Dean Swain 1-1-3. Totals 28-19-80.

Ross	14	14	18	23	—	69
Sandusky	11	25	20	24	—	80

3 PT FGs: Ross 3-17 (Vela, Heidelberg, Ritzman), Sandusky 2-11 (Farris, Alexander).

REBOUNDS: Ross 36 (Jones 8, Heidelberg 7), Sandusky 45 (Nix 12, Alexander 9).

ASSISTS: Ross 16 (Heidelberg 6), Sandusky 10 (Nix 5).

TURNOVERS: Ross 16, Sandusky 18.

Records: Ross 11-2 (7-2), Sandusky 13-2 (9-0).

Junior varsity

Sandusky 44, Ross 43

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 2-0-4, Mike Price 2-2-6, Doug Harvey 4-0-9, T.J. Hammer 4-0-8, Jeremy Jones 1-0-2, Alfonzo Vann 2-0-4, Kevin Byers 1-0-2, Chris Beard 4-0-8. Totals 20-2-43.

SANDUSKY — Appell 5-0-15, Felter 2-0-4, Stockett 2-0-5, Kirby 1-0-2, Bryant 0-2-2, Russell 4-4-12, Moore 2-0-4. Totals 16-6-44.

Records: Ross 11-2 (7-2)

Quick start pushes Ross to win

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

FOSTORIA — Coming off a tough loss to Great Lakes League rival Sandusky on Tuesday, Fremont Ross might have been expected to have a less-than-stellar performance Friday night in Fostoria.

The Little Giants had no such problems early against the Redmen, jumping out to a 7-0 lead early, and although a post-Sandusky hangover did set in during the middle part of the game, Ross fought through it to claim a 72-59 GLL win.

"I knew the potential existed for a letdown," Gedeon

Friday

Ross	72
Fostoria	59

Tuesday

Ross at Toledo St. John's, 6 p.m.

said. "When you put so much energy into one goal like the one we had against Sandusky, I think the natural thing would be to have a letdown.

"It was nice to see the kids come out with the energy they came out with in the first four minutes."

As he has done often this season, senior guard Joell Heidelberg got Ross off to a quick start, with a layup five

Inside: Gibsonburg blows past Northwood. **Page B3**

seconds after Reggie Jones won the opening tip. Heidelberg, who finished with 15 points followed with a 3-pointer, and Tyson Liggins' layup 1 minute, 35 seconds into the game gave Ross a 7-0 lead.

"It's always good to get off to a quick start, you can get a team down, thinking they can't play with you," said Ross point guard Robb Ritzman, who assisted on two of the first three baskets.

See ROSS, B3

Ross jumps to early lead, holds on for win at Fostoria

Continued from B1

After a Max Mendoza basket, Heidelberg followed with another 3-pointer, and Juan Vela hit three consecutive 3-pointers to give Ross a 19-6 lead.

"I think it was important to our psyche, to show that we could go out and execute the way we were capable of executing, and put up big numbers, especially after we struggled shooting the ball against Sandusky," said Gedeon, whose team improved to 12-2 overall, 8-2 in the GLL.

But unlike the teams' first meeting, which Ross won 77-38, Fostoria hung with the Little Giants. The Ross lead would grow as large as 19 points, but the Redmen were never out of reach.

Part of the reason for Fostoria's competitiveness was the presence of three players who missed the first game: post players Mendoza and Cory Echelberry, as well as 5-foot-2 point guard Micheaux Robinson. Echelberry and Mendoza scored 22 of Fostoria's 30 first half points, and the pair ended with 16 and 14 points, respectively.

Fostoria (4-11, 0-9) also picked up its perimeter defense, limiting Ross to just two 3-pointers in the last three quarters.

"We called a lot of timeouts and kept saying, 'Hang in there, hang in there, they can't shoot like this forever,'" said Fostoria coach Jim Rutter.

Ross used a Heidelberg jumper and an offensive putback by Jones to take a 42-30 lead at halftime.

After a back-and-forth third quarter, Fostoria made a run early in the fourth quarter. A Mendoza basket cut the Ross lead to 58-46, and Ryan Gerritsen's layup made it 58-48 with 6:13 to play.

But on Gerritsen's layup, Mendoza was given a technical foul for hanging on the rim, a call Rutter said was both incorrect and a crucial turning point.

"He was hanging on the rim, but he was going to get undercut if he didn't," Rutter said. "I know we're not supposed to criticize officials, but ...

"Fremont could have taken it and run away from that point on, but that was really a momentum-breaker. We just scored on a fast break, and you give them two shots and the ball, and take our crowd out of the game. The other official was trying to get him to change his mind, and he wouldn't change his mind."

Jones, who finished with a game-high 26 points, sank the ensuing free throws, and gave Ross a 62-49 lead with an emphatic two-handed dunk. Ritzman then assisted baskets by Vela and Jones, putting the game away.

Ritzman did not score, but had 10 assists.

"That's one of the things we expect out of Robb Ritzman, to run the show," said Gedeon, who said his point guard had a 77-to-23 as-

Diller, Gerritsen to be honored

Friday's Fremont Ross-Fostoria basketball game featured two football players who will be honored for their work on the field and in the classroom.

Ross guard/linebacker Andrew Diller and Fostoria guard/quarterback Ryan Gerritsen are two of 27 Toledo area high school football players who will be honored at the 37th Annual Toledo National Football Foundation Scholar-Athlete Dinner on March 8.

Other Great Lakes League players to be honored include Fostoria's Cory Freshour and Findlay's Ryan Hite.

While Gerritsen outscored Diller 13-7 Friday night, Diller gave Ross momentum with two baskets at the beginning of the second quarter, and his layup capped his team's scoring in the fourth.

sist-to-turnover ratio entering the game. "Even though Robb didn't score, his 10 assists equate into 20 points."

Ross travels to play No. 4 Toledo St. John's in a non-conference game Tuesday. The Titans knocked off No. 1 Toledo Central Catholic 52-48 Friday at Savage Hall in Toledo.

In other GLL action Friday night, Sandusky beat Findlay 68-65 to clinch a tie for the league championship.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 72, Fostoria 59

ROSS — Reggie Jones 9-8-26, Joell Heidelberg 5-2-15, Juan Vela 4-0-11, Andrew Diller 3-1-7, Steve Dagg 2-0-5, Tyson Liggins 2-0-4, Bryan Root 1-0-2, Greg Garcia 1-0-2, Robb Ritzman 0-0-0, Kelly Lytle 0-0-0. Totals 27-11-72.

FOSTORIA — Cory Echelberry 7-2-16, Max Mendoza 6-2-14, Ryan Gerritsen 5-1-13, Greg Fleming 3-1-7, Micheaux Robinson 1-2-4, Jameson Botimer 1-0-2, Andy Burley 0-2-2. Totals 23-10-59.

Ross	24	18	13	17	—	72
Fostoria	14	16	11	18	—	59

3 PT FGs: Ross 7-17 (Heidelberg 3, Vela 3, Dagg 1), Fostoria 3-13 (Gerritsen 2, Botimer 1).

REBOUNDS: Ross 36 (Jones 15), Fostoria 24 (Echelberry 7).

ASSISTS: Ross 22 (Ritzman 10), Fostoria 10.

TURNOVERS: Ross 14, Fostoria 14.

Records: Ross 12-2 (8-2), Fostoria 4-11 (0-9).

Junior varsity

Ross 65, Fostoria 52

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 1-2-4, Mike Price 4-5-13, Mike Ziemke 1-0-2, Doug Garvey 3-0-6, T.J. Hammer 0-2-2, Kyle Myers 1-1-3, Jeremy Jones 2-0-4, Alfonzo Vann 7-0-14, Greg Burroughs 4-5-13, Chris Beard 2-0-4. Totals 25-15-65.

FOSTORIA — Moore 2-2-6, Delarosa 3-2-8, McBeth 5-5-18, Downing 3-1-7, Rivera 3-0-7. Totals 16-10-52.

Ross	8	18	15	24	—	65
Fostoria	11	10	16	15	—	52

Records: Ross 12-2

Ross no match for St. John's in loss

Titans use second-quarter run in win

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

TOLEDO — Toledo St. John's is ranked No. 2 in the Ohio Associated Press poll, and the Titans reside in such a lofty spot for a reason: Not one of the five players coach Ed Heintschel puts on the court at any given time shows any weaknesses.

Tuesday night, every time Fremont Ross showed even the slightest weakness, the Titans took advantage to the fullest, exploding to an 80-54 win.

"Each and every possession, we got three or four people doing what they need to do, and it seems like teams just exploit that person who's having that let-down," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon, whose team fell to 12-3 overall. "That's very, very frustrating, because we are capable of that much more."

St. John's, which jumped from No. 4 to No. 2 in the latest AP poll after beating previous No. 1 Toledo Central Catholic, used a 21-4 second-quarter run to put away the Little Giants. Heintschel said his team treated the non-league game as it would a tournament game.

"We had a tough game Fri-

Tuesday

St. John's	80
Ross	54

Saturday

Ross at Mansfield Madison, 6 p.m.

day, but we told the guys in a tournament atmosphere, you have to play a tough team one night, and a couple nights later be ready to play another tough team," said Heintschel, whose team improved to 15-1.

Ross proved to be a worthy opponent early, trailing the Titans just 19-14 after one quarter. Reggie Jones, Juan Vela and Tyson Liggins each scored four points, with Vela moving inside for several offensive rebounds.

A Jones layup pulled the Little Giants within 19-17 with 32 seconds elapsed in the second quarter, but from there the Titans went on a tear in which they made five straight 3-point shots.

First, Jason Repp drilled a pair of 3-pointers, and Nate Zechman followed with a layup. Ryan Carder's 3-pointer at 5:19 gave St. John's its first double digit lead, and Repp followed with a pair of free throws.

See ROSS, B3

Ross boys fall to No. 2 St. John's 80-54

Continued from B1

Jones, who finished with a game-high 18 points, hit a 3-pointer to momentarily stop the bleeding, but St. John's point guard Adam Galat and Carder followed with 3-pointers, making the score 40-21 with two minutes remaining in the half.

"Sometimes teams feel it, and I think we felt it right there," said Carder, who led St. John's with 17 points. "Everybody was shooting on target, shooting real well, but it starts on the defensive end."

Jones was the lone Ross player to score in the last 7:28 of the half.

Meanwhile, the Titans closed the half with two layups and a free throw by Mike Dissett.

"We knew the inside would be a strength for them, but if you look at the first half, most of the damage was done by the 3-pointer," said Gedeon. "If they can catch and square their feet and shoot, they're going to hit those shots. A lot of times we got ourselves screened, we didn't communicate,

and that resulted in some easy looks."

Leading 45-23 at halftime, St. John's came out firing in the second half, with Repp hitting the Titans' final 3-pointer 15 seconds into the third quarter. The teams went back and forth in the second half, but Ross never cut the St. John's lead under 19 points.

The Titans' superior depth wore the Little Giants down in the second half. St. John's bench players outscored the Ross bench 25-15, even with regular starter Joell Heidelberg coming off the bench to score eight points for Ross.

"I think there were times on the floor where we had people with their heads down, that weren't going to rise to the challenge of trying to fight to win that next possession," Gedeon said. "You can't

control what's already happened, but you can control what will happen.

"For some of our players, I was very disappointed to see that they took their intensity level down a couple notches. One of the focuses in practice is to see who wants to compete time in and time out, who wants to follow the rules, who wants to do the things we need to do to be a successful basketball team."

Ross, which has lost two of its last three games, travels to Mansfield Madison for another non-league game Saturday.

"For us to regroup here, we've got to look at ourselves and say, 'What can I do better?'" Gedeon said. "Are they going to rise to the challenge, or are they going to accept this?"

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Ross wins tight game

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

MANSFIELD — It seems odd that the Fremont Ross boys basketball team would go through 75 percent of its regular season schedule without playing a close game. But it's been that sort of season for the Little Giants, who entering Saturday's game with Mansfield Madison had won 12 games by an average of **Saturday** 19.9 points, Ross 67 and lost three games by an average of **Tuesday** 14 points.

But playing a scrappy Rams team, Ross (13-3) got a valuable 67-61 non-league win in a game the Little Giants led by just three points with under two minutes to play.

"It's good, because once we get to the tournament we're going to have a game like that, so it's good to know what we're doing in a pressure situation," said Ross guard Juan Vela, who had 11 points.

After taking an 11-point lead into the second half, Ross saw its lead slowly whittled into single digits. A 3-pointer by Madison point guard Ryan Pore cut the Little Giant lead to 62-59 with 2:41 to play, and Madison coach Dennis Bartlett called timeout.

After a minute-long possession, Ross turned it over. But after a 20-second timeout, Reggie Jones preserved the Ross lead by blocking Josh Kentosh's shot, and Phil Messer's 3-point attempt was off the mark.

Ross point guard Robb Ritzman pushed the ball up the court, worked it into Jones in the post, and the junior hit a turnaround jump shot from the baseline to push the lead to 64-59.

"It came down to execution, we had to go down and execute in the last minute, make sure we scored," said Jones, who had a team-high 19 points.

Two more Madison trips came up empty, and Ritzman and Andrew Diller iced the game for Ross, making 3-of-4 free throws in the closing seconds.

"There's definitely advantages to a close game," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon. "The fact that we had to go through and execute some things — with about 1:20 left we run a special for Reggie, and we get a nice little five-foot turnaround out of that — I think it's good for this team to get in this type of situation."

"Then, for us to go through and execute a couple one-and-ones, Andrew Diller hit his two, Robb hit the front end of one, that's the first time it happened that way, and that's why it is a good experience."

No one in attendance would have predicted such a tight finish after a frantic first quarter ended with Ross leading 29-20. The Little

Giants shot a white-hot 12-for-14 (85.7 percent) from the field, 8-of-9 from two-point range and 4-of-5 from behind the arc.

"Obviously we jumped out with a lot of energy in that first quarter," Gedeon said. "It would have been nice to see how long we could sustain that, but sustaining something like that's not going to happen too often."

Ritzman was a catalyst early, scoring nine first quarter points on his way to 12 for the game.

But while Ross could do little wrong on the offensive end, Kentosh was just as unstoppable on the other end. The senior forward had 18 of his game-high 27 points in the game's first 10 minutes, hitting on a variety of mid-range jump shots, putbacks and 3-pointers.

Ross switched to a zone, which slowed Kentosh, but also slowed the tempo considerably.

"When they go zone, obviously it's tougher to free your big man up inside, but I think that also helped us because the tempo of the game slowed a little bit closer to the way we wanted to play," said Bartlett, whose team fell to 8-9. "(Gedeon) was in a catch-22: Kentosh was severely hurting them, but by going zone it slowed down the tempo."

Slowly, Madison crept back in, hurting Ross with eight 3-pointers in 31 attempts. But the Rams could not find the right combination down the stretch.

"I think our kids showed a lot of resolve out there," Bartlett said. "We had two or three possessions where we could have tied it up. Unfortunately, we couldn't get it done in the last few minutes."

Ross played with a full, if not fully healthy, roster.

Jones played with bone chips in his left wrist, and the junior received a shot of cortisone to relieve the pain. Jones said the injury did not affect his play, and two thunderous dunks proved him right.

Joell Heidelberg, Steve Dagg and Greg Garcia were sick at various times at the end of the week, hampering Ross's depth, but sophomores Alfonzo Vann and Kelly Lytle filled in well in their second quarter appearances.

Ross travels to Toledo Rogers for another non-league game Tuesday.

Ross matched with Columbian

WILLARD — Ross will play Tiffin Columbian in the first round of the sectional tournament, on March 2 in Willard.

With Mansfield Senior and Sandusky grabbing the first and second seeds, respectively, the Little Giants play the Tornadoes, who they beat 75-54 in January. Should Ross beat Columbian, a second round game with Sandusky awaits, which would be the third meeting between the teams this season.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 67, Madison 61

ROSS — Reggie Jones 8-3-19, Robb Ritzman 4-2-12, Juan Vela 5-0-11, Bryan Root 2-2-6, Joell Heidelberg 2-0-5, Andrew Diller 1-2-4, Tyson Liggins 2-0-4, Steve Dagg 2-0-4, Alfonzo Vann 1-0-2. Totals 27-9-67.

MADISON — Josh Kentosh 11-3-27, Phil Messer 4-0-9, Brandon O'Brien 4-0-8, Ryan Pore 2-0-6, Nate Lautzenhiser 2-0-6, Tim Mergel 2-0-5. Totals 25-3-61.

Ross 29 18 11 9 — 67
Madison 20 16 12 13 — 61

3 PT FGs: Ross 4-11 (Ritzman 2, Vela 1, Heidelberg 1), Madison 8-31 (Pore 2, Kentosh 2, Lautzenhiser 2, Messer 1, O'Brien 1).

REBOUNDS: Ross 32 (Jones 9), Madison 28 (Kentosh 8).

ASSISTS: Ross 16 (Ritzman 7), Madison 18.

TURNOVERS: Ross 12, Madison 14.

Records: Ross 13-3, Madison 8-9.

JV score: Ross 56, Madison 47

Ross falls on road to Rogers

By SCOTT TAPPA

Sports editor

TOLEDO — All season, Fremont Ross has set the tone for its wins in the opening moments of the first quarter, hitting opponents with quick bursts of offensive and defense right off the opening tap.

Tuesday night, Toledo Rogers stole the Little Giants' routine, setting an aggressive tone early, and riding that style of play to a 78-63 non-league win.

After Reggie Jones won the opening tip for Ross (13-4), Noland Flowers came up with a steal for Rogers, and after being fouled made 1-of-2 free throws. Flowers got another steal on the next Ross possession, and while the Rams' lead was just 3-0, the sequences were a sign of things to come.

"It was a must-win situation for us, it was Senior Night, and we knew we had to come out and execute," said Rogers senior Justin Chapman, who finished with a game-high 24 points.

The early success provided a boost for Rogers, which en-

Tuesday

Rogers	78
Ross	63

Friday

Ross at Bedford, 6 p.m.

tered the game with a 3-11 record.

"From an execution standpoint, we came out misfiring from the beginning," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon. "We had a couple turnovers, didn't recognize the 3-point shooters.

"I was definitely disappointed with our focus before the game. Any time you go on the road, especially against a City League team, you've got to be ready to play from the beginning, and if you give them some life, boy, they're just going to take off. Sure enough, they took off."

But the Rams' full take off came gradually. With Flowers hitting from the outside for 14 first quarter points, Rogers took a 22-17 lead after one quarter, with point guard Robb Ritzman keeping Ross close with six points.

See ROSS, B3

Ross struggles from line in road loss

Continued from B1

Ross shut down the Rams' attack in the second quarter, allowing just seven points, but the Little Giants were just as inefficient, scoring just eight points. Much of Ross's inability to score came from a woeful performance from the free throw line: the team made just 6-of-12 free throws in the quarter, and didn't record its first field goal until Juan Vela's jumper with 33 seconds left.

Time after time, the Rogers defense did not allow easy Ross finishes, as the Little Giants converted just four layups in the game.

"We had four quarters of defensive intensity," said Rogers coach Charles Gibson. "In our last game

we gave up 84 points, so we pressed team defense."

Trailing by four at halftime, Ross inched ahead, 38-37, on a Jones free throw with 3:50 remaining in the third quarter.

But the lead was Ross's last, as the Little Giants continued to misfire from the free throw line. Ross was 8-for-16 in the third quarter, and 26-for-45 for the game.

Gedeon said the effects of the free throw struggle compounded with each miss.

"No question, you saw it in the kids' eyes, kids started missing strings of them," he said. "When you work hard to get what you want and can't cash in at the foul line, of course it takes it away."

On the other end, Chapman hit a

3-pointer at the buzzer to give Rogers a 48-40 lead after three quarters. The Rams' lead never dipped below six points the rest of the way.

"It's a situation where our kids were challenged, and they backed down," said Gedeon. "It's very frustrating to see that, because I expect my kids to go out and compete, and do what's expected of them."

Ritzman led Ross with 17 points, Jones had 15 points and 12 rebounds, Vela had 13 points and Joell Heidelberg had 10. Flowers finished with 16 points for Rogers, David Short had 12 and Miguel Rogers had 10.

Ross plays at Bedford on Friday in a Great Lakes League game.

Basketball

High School Boys

Rogers 78, Ross 63

ROSS — Robb Ritzman 5-3-17, Reggie Jones 4-7-15, Juan Vela 4-2-13, Joell Heidelberg 1-8-10, Tyson Liggins 1-2-4, Andrew Diller 0-2-2, Kelly Lytle 0-2-2. Totals 15-26-63.

ROGERS — Justin Chapman 10-3-24, Noland Flowers 5-3-16, David Short 4-4-12, Miguel Rogers 5-0-10, Jonathan Armstead 1-3-5, Tyran Boyd 1-3-5, James Campbell 1-0-2, Eric Campbell 1-0-2. Totals 29-16-78.

Ross	17	8	15	23	—	63
Rogers	22	7	19	30	—	78

3 PT FGs: Ross 7-14 (Ritzman 4, Vela 3), Rogers 4-11 (Flowers 3, Chapman 1).

REBOUNDS: Ross 34 (Jones 12), Rogers 32 (Chapman 14).

ASSISTS: Ross 10 (Liggins 5), Rogers 10.

TURNOVERS: Ross 20, Rogers 19.
Records: Ross 13-4, Rogers 4-11.

Junior varsity

Ross 84, Rogers 68

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 2-7-11, Kyle Myers 0-2-2, Jeremy Scott 1-2-4, Mike Ziemke 2-2-6, T.J. Hammer 4-6-14, Jeremy Jones 6-1-13, Alfonzo Vann 3-2-8, Chris Tullis 0-3-3, Kevin Byers 2-1-5, Chris Beard 9-0-18. Totals 29-26-84.

ROGERS — Crutchfield 1-0-2, Earl 3-1-7, Baucom 4-2-12, Wade 1-0-2, Chears 4-1-10, Manning 1-0-2, Cook 3-2-9, Jones 5-2-12. Totals 22-8-68.

Ross	15	25	15	29	—	84
Rogers	14	18	19	17	—	68

Boys District 6 all-stars

The District VI All-Star teams with player, height, grade and scoring average.

DIVISION I

First Team

Marquis Sykes, Mansfield Sr., 6-0, 12, 18.9; Jahn Farris, Sandusky, 5-10, 11, 10.7; Reggie Jones, Ross, 6-4, 11, 16.9; Jason Hess, Ashland, 6-6, 11, 14.3; Joell Heidelberg, Ross, 5-11, 12, 12.9.

Second Team

Elda'Sheon Nix, Sandusky, 6-4, 11, 10.6; Tim Mergel, Mansfield Madison, 6-2, 12, 15.2; Craig Hill, Tiffin Columbian 6-5, 12, 13.5; Matthew Hess, Ashland, 6-2, 10, 13.8; Juan Vela, Ross, 5-11, 11, 11.8; Ali Thompson, Mansfield Sr., 6-3, 12, 10.

Area Honorable Mention

Rob Ritzman, Ross

Player of the Year: Marquis Sykes, Mansfield Sr.

Co-Coaches of the Year: Chris Stokes, Ashland; Greg Collins, Mansfield Sr.

DIVISION II

Ross wins battle with Bedford

Little Giants pull away late

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

BEDFORD, Mich. — Ask 10 Great Lakes League boys basketball players which league team is the most physical, and nine will name the Bedford (Mich.) Kicking Mules.

The 10th is probably in the hospital with a concussion and a broken hand.

Fremont Ross paid the Kicking Mules a visit Friday night, and, though battered

and bruised, emerged with a 69-58 victory.

"Bedford is known to be physical — look at their wrestling teams," Ross guard Juan Vela said of Bedford, a perennial wrestling powerhouse. "We knew when we came out here they were going to be physical, and all we had to do was fight back and not back down."

In a game that featured 46 fouls, Ross built a comfortable first half lead, fought off a fourth quarter challenge, and held on for its ninth GLL win.

"It's expected, it's what

	Friday
Ross	69
Bedford	58

Tonight
Port Clinton at Ross, 6 p.m.

Bedford is known for," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon, whose team won the tail end of a six-game road swing to improve to 14-4, 9-2. "That's the mentality of their players, and we knew coming up here it was going to be a very physical game. I thought our kids did a very good job of rising to that challenge.

"Our kids didn't back

down, they kept their composure, and when it came down to crunch time in the fourth quarter, the way they played defense and executed, I was very, very pleased with that."

Bedford started off strong, grabbing a 7-2 lead on an Andy Francis 3-pointer. But Ross answered with

eight straight points, six from Reggie Jones, two from Steve Dagg — all on assists from Robb Ritzman.

Ritzman racked up 11 first

"Robb was spectacular in the first half," said Gedeon. "That's one of the things we talked about at halftime, how well Robb was creating for our post players, as well as a couple kickouts for some 3-point opportunities. There was no question that Robb really made us go in that first half."

Said Ritzman: "In the first half, everything just seemed to be wide open. In the second half, it seemed like they closed up the middle a little bit more, we couldn't get as many passes in there."

See ROSS, B3

Ross returns home tonight against PC

Ross hosts Port Clinton tonight in the first of two home games to close out the regular season. Ross guard Juan Vela said Friday's win over Bedford gives the Little Giants momentum after losing three of five games.

"It feels good, we're starting to come back to where we started from," Vela said. "I think those losses woke us up."

Port Clinton (3-15) matched Huron shot-for-shot over the first 2½ quarters of the teams' Sandusky Bay Conference game Friday night, but a 10-0 run propelled the Tigers to a 71-62 victory.

Ross wins last game of road trip

Continued from B1

Bedford closed down the lane in the second half, forcing the Little Giants outside. Vela took the opportunity to hit his only 3-pointer, giving Ross a 47-34 lead, its largest of the game.

From there, the Kicking Mules went on a 15-3 run, closing the gap to 50-49 at the end of the third quarter on Tony Peake's 3-pointer at the buzzer. Francis hit three 3-pointers during the run, on his way to a team-high 18 points.

Francis led all players with five 3-pointers. Francis also fouled Jones hard 1 minute, 31 seconds into the fourth quarter, as tensions heightened.

"You can't let them get in your

head, you have to just keep playing your game, not get into the cheap shots, not play to their level," said Ritzman.

After Bedford took a 51-50 lead on Peake's layup early in the fourth quarter, Ritzman answered with a 3-pointer. Tim McKibben tied the score at 53-53, but Jones' layup gave Ross a lead it would not relinquish.

"It shows that we can go out and execute down the stretch when we have to get it done," Ritzman said.

The Kicking Mules (5-12, 3-9) did not execute down the stretch, missing 7-of-8 free throw attempts and committing turnovers on several key possessions.

"We were 1-of-8 from the free

throw line, took some silly fouls, had a couple turnovers, so we hurt ourselves as much as they hurt us," said Bedford coach Frank Scheuer. "I think we beat ourselves."

A key to the fourth quarter for Ross was the pairing of Ritzman with sophomore point guard Kelly Lytle. In addition to playing solid defense, Lytle relieved Ritzman of ball-handling responsibilities, freeing Ritzman for shots.

"It gives us some versatility as to where we can put Robb," said Gedeon. "Kelly can take the ball-handling responsibilities, and Robb's shooting the basketball very well right now, so it frees him up for some possibilities. He's been the guy who's been

"You can't let them get in your head, you have to keep playing your game."

— Robb Ritzman
on Bedford's physical play

creating for others, and now we're going to have Kelly creating for him."

Ritzman and Vela both finished with 11 points, behind Jones' game-high 19. Tyson Liggins and Steve Dagg both added eight points, and Joell Heidelberg had six.

McKibben scored 12 points for Bedford, and Peake chipped in 11 points and 13 rebounds.

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 69, Bedford 58

ROSS — Reggie Jones 8-3-19, Robb Ritzman 2-5-11, Juan Vela 4-2-11, Tyson Liggins 3-2-8, Steve Dagg 4-0-8, Joell Heidelburg 1-3-6, Bryan Root 1-1-3, Kelly Lytle 1-1-3. Totals 24-17-69.

BEDFORD — Andy Francis 6-1-18, Tim McKibben 5-2-12, Tony Peake 5-0-11, Chad Funk 3-2-9, Chris Morris 1-2-4, Aaron Wiens 1-0-2, Nick Roberts 1-0-2. Totals 22-7-58.

Ross	18	19	13	19	—	69
Bedford	13	15	21	9	—	58

3 PT FGs: Ross 4-12 (Ritzman 2, Heidelburg 1, Vela 1), Bedford 7-18 (Francis 5, Funk 1, Peake 1).

REBOUNDS: Ross 29 (Jones 13), Bedford 35 (Peake 13).

ASSISTS: Ross 21 (Ritzman 15), Bedford 15.

TURNOVERS: Ross 12, Bedford 23.

Records: Ross 14-4 (9-2), Bedford 5-12 (3-9).

Junior varsity

Ross 42, Bedford 33

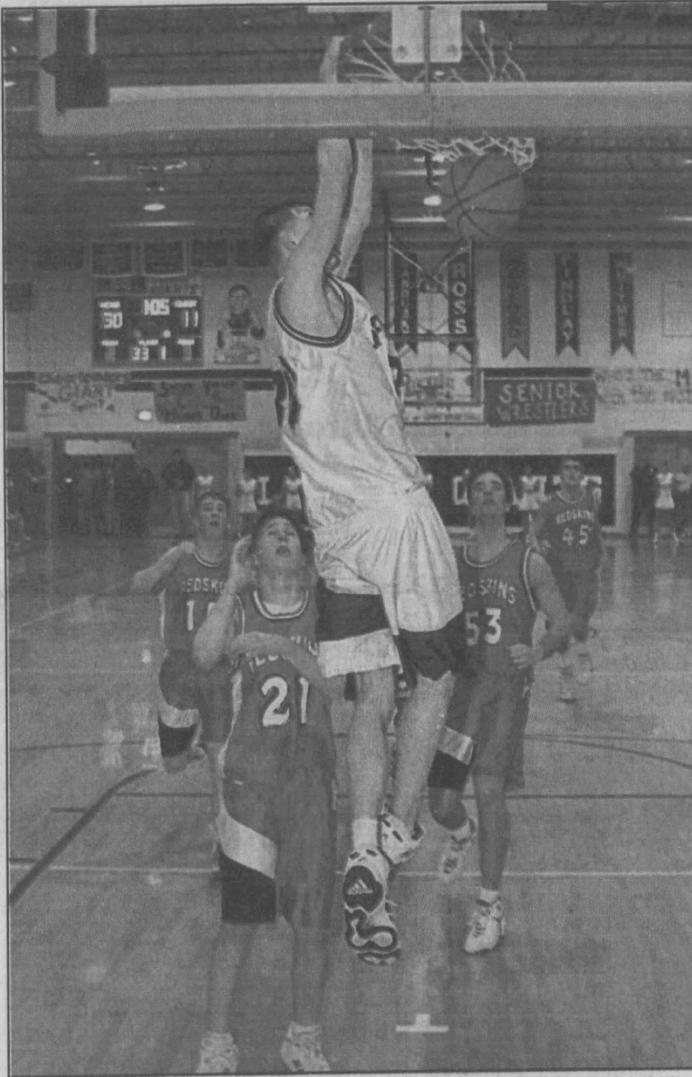
ROSS — Kelly Lytle 2-1-5, Jeremy Scott 0-1-1, Doug Garvey 2-0-4, Mike Ziemke 2-0-4, T.J. Hammer 1-0-2, Jeremy Jones 2-0-5, Alfonzo Vann 4-2-10, Chris Tullis 1-1-3, Greg Burroughs 2-0-4, Chris Beard 2-0-4. Totals 18-5-42.

BEDFORD — Decker 3-0-8, Brillhart 0-2-2, Segura 1-0-2, Peake 2-2-7, Grove 1-0-2, Pelhunk 2-1-5, Tippin 1-0-2, Dashner 2-0-5. Totals 12-5-33.

Ross	7	7	12	16	—	42
Bedford	9	6	9	9	—	33

Records: Ross 15-3.

Ross blasts PC



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

STEVE DAGG throws down an alley-oop dunk in Ross's 93-50 win Saturday.

Five Little Giants hit double digits

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Entering his team's game at Fremont Ross Saturday night, Port Clinton coach Gregg Hedden thought the Little Giants might be ripe for a letdown.

"I was wrong," said Hedden with a smile after Ross handed the Redskins a 93-50 loss.

Powered by a 34-point first quarter — the largest single-quarter scoring output in coach Mark Gedeon's tenure — Ross

Saturday

Ross 93

Port Clinton 50

Friday

Sandusky at Ross, 6 p.m.

recorded its highest point total of the season, and improved to 15-4 overall.

The run-and-gun tempo was a needed tonic for Ross, which was coming off a 10-round slugfest Friday night at Great Lakes League rival Bedford.

"We knew what we had to

do, to come out and compete, and I think everybody did a pretty good job," said Ross guard Joell Heidelberg, who snapped out of a scoring slump by scoring 15 points, 13 in the first half. "I think everybody's pretty tired from Bedford."

Ross didn't look tired. Reggie Jones opened the scoring 10 seconds into the game on a layup, and after Kevin Belden's basket, Ross scored the next 10 points.

See ROSS, B3

Ross crushes Redskins

continued from B1

Everything Ross tried worked. Offensive putbacks by Jones. Mid-range jumpers by Heidelberg, Juan Vela and Andrew Diller. Long 3-pointers by Heidelberg and Robb Ritzman.

And don't forget alley-oop dunks by Steve Dagg and Heidelberg, both off lobs from Ritzman. The latter, which gave Ross a 10-2 lead early, prompted a timeout from Hedden, and served as notice that Heidelberg was back.

"We were talking on the bus last night on the way home, how could we get him going?" said Gedeon. "He struggled from the field in the last two games. Obviously the flu which he had last week affected him for the Madison game, but even the Rogers game he didn't have his shooting touch.

"We were even joking around in practice on Thursday that that was the most healthy he's been in two whole months.

"When he got that backdoor lob, the way he threw that one down, you knew that he was finally healthy again, and ready to perform at a level that we're used to."

The first quarter numbers were staggering for Ross, which returned to the Purple Pit for the first time since a Jan. 30 win over Toledo Whitmer.

The Little Giants scored on 16-of-19 possessions in the quarter, and hit 16-of-19 field goal attempts in the quarter. Heidelberg scored 11 points in the quarter, Jones and Vela had six apiece, Dagg and Diller had four apiece, and Ritzman had eight assists.

Most impressive, though, was the number of turnovers Ross committed in the first half: zero.

"When that snowball starts, it's a pretty big snowball," said Hedden, whose team fell to 3-16. "They came out, played hard and created a mess for us, and there was no stopping the train."

Kevin Belden did his part to slow things down, hitting for eight points in the first quarter on his way to 10 for the game, but 16 first half turnovers kept the Redskins running in a track meet they weren't going to win.

"I thought our kids didn't control tempo like they needed to early, we have to control tempo," said Hedden, a 1980 Ross graduate.

The up-tempo pace was just fine for Ross, which had played primarily slow-down, physical games over the last three weeks.

"It feels nice to just be able to get out and run," said Dagg, who added a nice reverse dunk in the second half on his way to a game-high 17 points. "It would feel a lot nicer to be able to do that against the Sandusky and other teams like that, but it's nice to get running up and down the court. Everybody can dunk, and everybody can have fun.

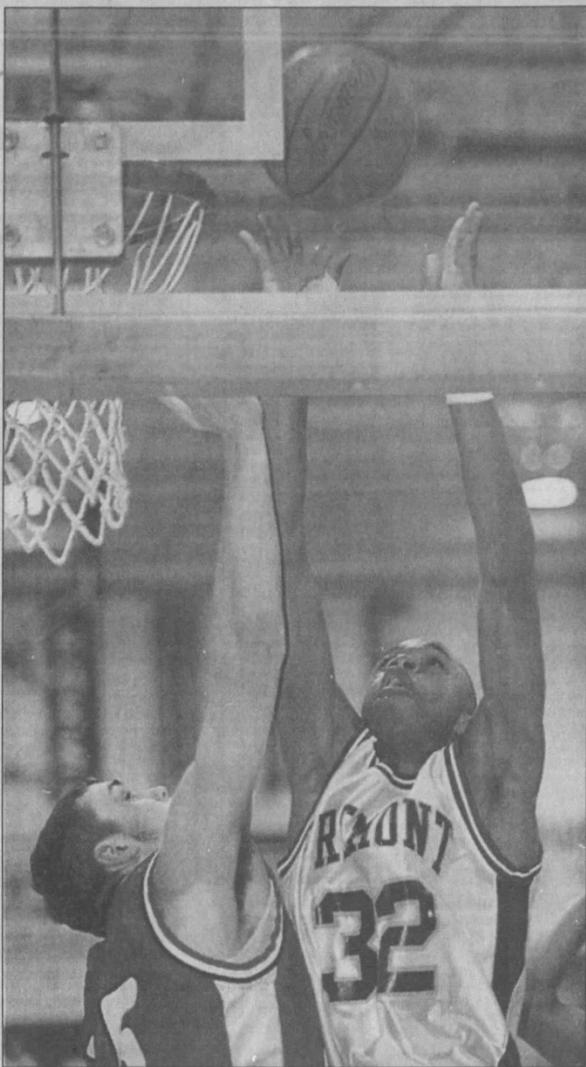
"No matter what, we're always looking to run, and when we get our transition game going, we usually get a couple dunks. They came early, and I think that put (Port Clinton) down a little bit. We had energy, and they didn't have a lot of energy."

The second quarter went much like the first, and with 5:25 to play in the quarter, Jones hit a layup to make the score 43-13. The lead never got below 23 points the rest of the way.

"It feels good, because the games we've been playing have been a slow-down tempo," said Heidelberg. "It felt good being home, having the crowd behind us, supporting us."

Jones finished with 14 points, Vela had 12 and Tyson Liggins added 11. Ritzman recorded 10 assists, and Kelly Lytle — whose 3-pointer at the buzzer provided the final scoring — had seven assists in his second straight night of extended playing time.

Ross hosts Sandusky in its final regular season game Friday night



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

REGGIE JONES puts up a shot over Port Clinton's Mark Rusincovitch in the first half of Ross's 93-50 win Saturday night.

with a chance to close out its home schedule undefeated. It also provides the Little Giants an opportunity to avenge an 80-69 loss Feb. 2 at Sandusky.

"I'm thinking about it right

now, I can't stop thinking about it," said Dagg after Saturday's game. "They beat us, I mean they *really* beat us at their place, and we can't have a letdown like that."

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 93, Port Clinton 50

ROSS — Steve Dagg 8-1-17, Joell Heidelberg 6-2-15, Reggie Jones 6-2-14, Juan Vela 5-0-12, Tyson Liggins 4-3-11, Andrew Diller 3-0-6, Robb Ritzman 2-1-6, Bryan Root 2-1-5, Kelly Lytle 1-2-5, T.J. Hammer 0-2-2, Alfonzo Vann 0-0-0, Chris Beard 0-0-0. Totals 37-14-93.

PORT CLINTON — Jared Rhode 6-0-15, Kevin Belden 4-0-10, Jason Hunter 3-0-7, Jamaine Smith 2-1-5, Mark Rusin-covitch 1-3-5, Joe Webster 1-1-3, Scott Holmes 1-1-3, Ryan Heise 1-0-2. Totals 19-6-50.

Port Clinton	11	13	8	18	—	50
Ross	34	17	18	24	—	93

3 PT FGs: Ross 5-17 (Vela 2, Ritzman 1, Heidelberg 1, Lytle 1), Port Clinton 6-14 (Rhode 3, Belden 2, Hunter 1).

REBOUNDS: Ross 32 (Dagg 6), Port Clinton 24 (Rhode 5, Hunter 5, Webster 5).

ASSISTS: Ross 22 (Ritzman 10, Lytle 7), Port Clinton 8 (Belden 3).

TURNOVERS: Ross 3, Port Clinton 23.

Records: Ross 15-4, Port Clinton 3-16.

Junior varsity

Ross 49, Port Clinton 20

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 1-0-2, Mike Price 0-2-2, Kyle Myers 1-0-3, Jeremy Scott 0-4-4, Doug Garvey 2-0-6, Mike Ziemke 3-0-6, Alfonzo Vann 4-0-8, Chris Tullis 2-0-5, Greg Burroughs 0-2-2, Kevin Byers 0-1-1, Chris Beard 4-2-10. Totals 17-11-49.

PORT CLINTON — Wahlers 4-0-9, Geoffrey Dartt 0-2-2, Ryan Heise 2-0-4, Tyler Turner 1-2-4, Jay Edwards 0-1-1. Totals 7-5-20.

Port Clinton	6	2	7	5	—	20
Ross	17	9	6	17	—	49

Record: Ross 16-3

Ross boys set for rematch with Sandusky

Giants look for momentum

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Momentum is of utmost importance for high school basketball teams, with state tournament action lingering right around the corner. With most league and conference championships already decided, players and coaches are looking to enter the tournament on a positive note.

Fremont Ross is no exception.

"We want to go into the

tournament on a streak," said Ross wing Steve Dagg.

Yet to enter tournament play on a winning streak, the Little Giants will have to beat the Blue Streaks, Great Lakes League champion Sandusky, Friday at the Purple Pit. Coach Ed Kurt's team has already clinched the GLL title outright, but that means little to players on both sides.

"We've been thinking about Sandusky ever since they beat us," said senior guard Joell Heidelberg, who will be playing his last game at the Purple Pit. "I just hope we're ready to play."

The Little Giants were ready

to play the first time the teams met, Feb. 2 in Sandusky, and the Blue Streaks still won 80-69. Sandusky outrebounded Ross 45-36, scored 24 points on offensive putbacks, and was generally quicker to the ball than its guests.

The first game, rescheduled from a Jan. 16 snow-out, also came right on the heels of double weekends in which both teams hosted and swept Oregon Clay and Toledo Whitmer. This time, both coaching staffs have had an entire week to prepare their teams.

"We've got a whole week to dedicate to Sandusky, where last time we had one practice

off a double weekend, so I think both teams will be very well prepared for each other," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon.

Still, the basic game plan for Ross should come as no surprise.

"We need to defensively contain their scorers, box out, and gather those rebounds, not allow them the second chance opportunities, make sure they do not get to the foul line and score 20 points from the foul line like they did last time," said Gedeon.

A quick glance at the box score indicates that Ross failed to do all three things the

first time around. Explosive guard Brock Alexander led Sandusky with 24 points, and John Farris added 19; El Dasheon Nix had 12 rebounds to lead Sandusky's advantage on the boards; and the Blue Streaks hit 20-of-24 free throw attempts, with Farris going 8-for-8 and Alexander 7-for-8.

On his own bench, Gedeon needs solid performances from every player he puts on the court.

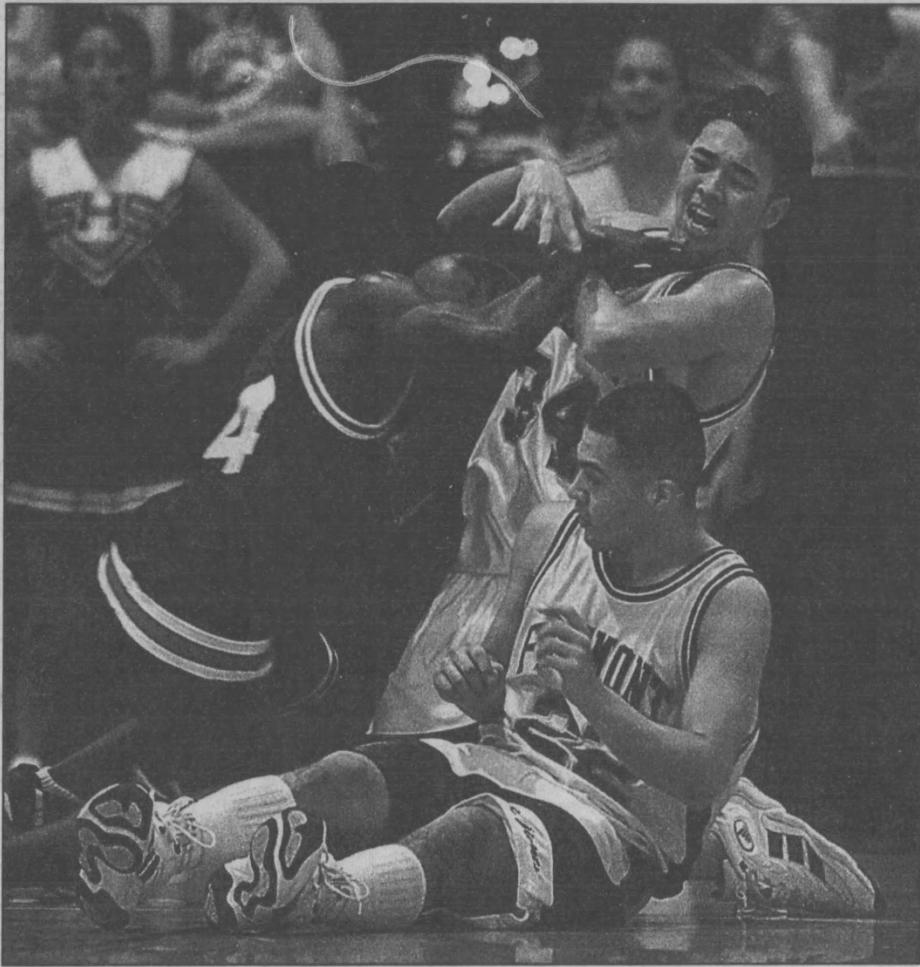
"We'd be kidding ourselves if we said Heidelberg didn't need to have a good game, or Reggie (Jones), or for that matter go down the whole list," he said. "We can't afford

to have somebody have a bad game if we're going to win."

The game is expected to be a sellout, and preparations have been made to accommodate an overflow crowd, with a closed-circuit television broadcast to be held in the cafeteria. Dagg said a win in this big game would go a long way toward determining the Little Giants' postseason fate.

"We've got them once, maybe twice more if we can get past (Tiffin) Columbian, so it'll be a good test for us," he said. "If we can do it, then the possibilities are unlimited."

Ross grabs a win



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

GREG GARCIA, 34, is fouled by Sandusky's El Dasheon Nix while going for a ball with Juan Vela in Ross's 88-63 win.

Little Giants set victory record

By KYLE TIMMINS
News-Messenger correspondent

Four Fremont Ross seniors entered their final home game at the Purple Pit Friday night with one thing on their mind — a win against Great Lakes League champion and 11th-ranked Sandusky, which defeated the Little Giants 80-69 on Feb. 2.

The Ross seniors got their wish by dropping the Blue Streaks 88-63, finishing 16-4 and 10-2 in the GLL, capping the best regular season record in school history.

Leading the Ross seniors in their final home

Friday
Ross 88
Sandusky 63

Tuesday
Ross vs. Columbian,
Second game at Willard

appearance was Joell Heidelberg, who led all scorers with 27 points.

"I came out with a lot of intensity," Heidelberg said. "I was hyped up for this game. I went out there and did what I had to do."

After Ross took a 16-14 lead halfway through the first quarter, Andrew Diller fed the ball into

Reggie Jones, who finished with a two-handed dunk. Jones finished with 15 points and Diller added eight.

The Little Giants finished the quarter with a 12-4 run, opening a 30-17 lead.

"I thought Fremont came out of the gate great," said Sandusky coach Ed Kurt. "The pace of the game was theirs from the beginning and they made some great plays and pulled away from us."

The second quarter was

Seniors finish home careers with win

Fremont Ross's 88-63 Great Lakes League win over Sandusky was undoubtedly savored by countless people in attendance at the Purple Pit, but four white-jerseyed guys stood out: seniors Andrew Diller, Tyson Liggins, Robb Ritzman and Joell Heidelberg, who won the final home game of their careers.

The win capped a 10-0 regular season home record.

"They got us the first time so we were really geared up for this game," Diller said. "Sandusky and Fremont is always a big rivalry and plus being our last game, it adds a little more to it."

See ROSS, B3

Ross pummels Sandusky

Continued from B1

pretty much the same for Ross as the Little Giants outscored Sandusky 20-10 in the quarter.

Playing big for the Little Giants in the quarter was Greg Garcia, filling in for Jones, who had two fouls, by scoring five points and grabbing four rebounds.

"Greg definitely had his best game of the year," said Ross coach Gedeon. "We were talking with Reggie, telling him we were going to put him in with about five minutes left in the quarter and at that point we had worked our way up to a 14-point lead.

"Tyson (Liggins) was a lot of the reason we were able to keep Reggie on the bench, as well as Greg."

Garcia finished with 10 points. Liggins also chipped in 16 points and pulled down eight rebounds for the Little Giants.

"I wanted to do something good for senior night," said Liggins. "We wanted to show our crowd that we could play with them."

Gedeon said he was pleased with Liggins' play.

"Tyson Liggins was simply outstanding tonight," he said. "Whether it was rebounding, defense, attacking off the dribble or offensive rebounding."

After trailing by as many as 29 points, the Blue Streaks (17-3, 11-1) narrowed their deficit to 63-40 in the third quarter, but the Little Giants responded with buckets from Jones and Garcia.

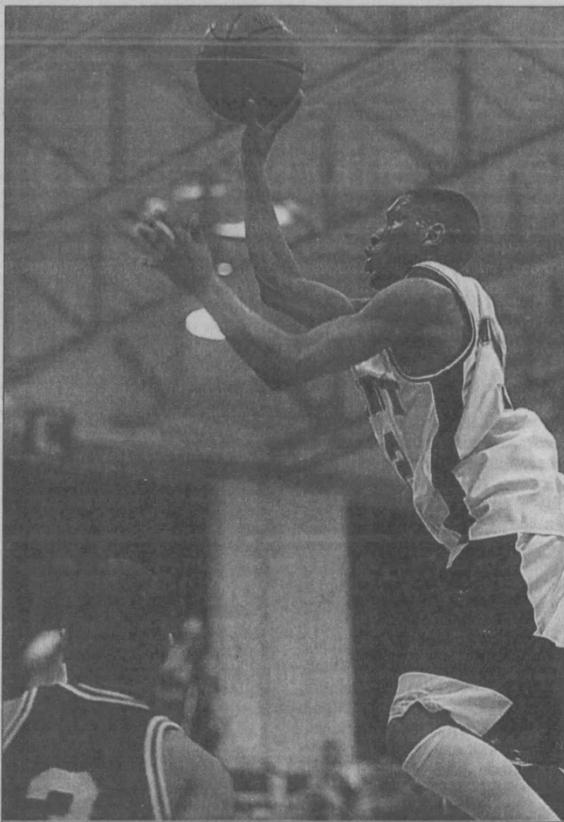
"We did have some lapses where we had a couple of turnovers," said Gedeon. "We had a chance to increase (the lead) a little bit but we gave them a little bit of life back."

Ross, which turned the ball over just three times last Saturday against Port Clinton, committed 10 turnovers.

Sandusky inched as close as 18 points in the fourth quarter as Brock Alexander scored the first three baskets for the Streaks in the quarter. But again Ross responded with an 8-0 run, with baskets from Garcia, Juan Vela, Liggins and Heidelberg.

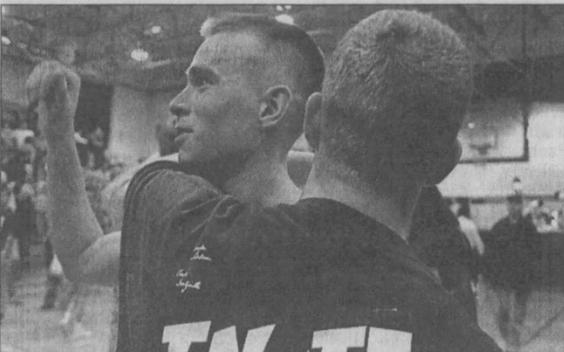
Liggins' basket was assisted by Robb Ritzman, who unofficially tied a Ross record for assists in a career.

"We came out and executed well and it showed on the score-



News-Messenger photos/Andrew Morrison

JOELL HEIDELBURG, above, puts up a shot in the first half of Ross's 88-63 win Friday. Heidelberg led all scorers with 27 points. Robb Ritzman, below, gets a hug from a fan after the game. Ritzman unofficially tied the school record for assists in the win over Sandusky, dishing out five.



board," Ritzman said. "To come in with a big win like this, it's a great memory."

Jones also added another two-handed slam midway through the fourth quarter on a pass from Heidelberg.

"They have Reggie Jones and (Heidelberg)," Kurt added. "They are both great athletes and when their both clicking like they were tonight, they're tough to beat."

Heidelberg said the win felt great.

"It feels pretty good to come

out with this win," said Heidelberg. "We didn't come out and execute the first game and today we came out and executed. That's what made the difference in the game."

The two teams could end up meeting again next Friday at the Willard sectional, but Gedeon said his team must first turn its attention to Tuesday's sectional game against Tiffin Columbian.

"We need to play our best game possible," said Gedeon. "If not it could be one and done. Each possession means a lot."

Basketball

High School Boys

Ross 88, Sandusky 63

ROSS — Joell Heidelberg 12-1-27, Andrew Diller 4-0-8, Juan Vela 3-0-6, Reggie Jones 7-1-15, Greg Garcia 4-1-10, Tyson Liggins 7-2-16, Bryan Root 3-0-6. Totals 36-5-88.

SANDUSKY — Anthony Roberts 1-3-5, El Da'Sheon Nix 3-4-11, Jahn Farris 4-6-14, Chad Cotton 2-0-4, Brooks Hampton 2-0-4, Brock Alexander 9-4-23, Brandon Pettis 1-0-2. Totals 22-17-63.

Ross	30	20	18	20	—	88
Sandusky	17	10	17	19	—	63

3 PT FGs: Ross 3 (Heidelberg 2, Garcia), Sandusky 2 (Nix, Alexander).

REBOUNDS: Ross 25 (Liggins 8), Sandusky 27 (Farris 6, Alexander 6)

TURNOVERS: Ross 10, Sandusky 11

Records: Ross 16-4 (10-2), Sandusky 17-3 (11-1).

Junior varsity

Ross 60, Sandusky 45

ROSS — Kelly Lytle 1-0-2, Mike Price 3-1-7, Doug Garvey 3-0-8, T.J. Hammer 3-2-8, Alfonzo Vann 4-2-10, Chris Tullis 1-2-4, Kevin Byers 1-0-2, Chris Beard 9-1-19. Totals 25-8-60.

SANDUSKY — Ben Appell 4-0-9, Jason Jones 0-1-1, Antoine Stockett 3-9-15, Troy Bryant 1-2-4, John Kirksey 2-1-5, Alan Russell 1-6-8, Jamar Pearson 1-0-2, Orlando Pressley 0-1-1. Totals 12-20-45.

Ross	17	20	10	13	—	60
Sandusky	1	14	14	16	—	45

3 PT FGs: Ross 2 (Garvey), Sandusky 1 (Appell).

Records: Ross 17-3.

Ross's Jones, Watson named first team all-GLL

News-Messenger reports

Reggie Jones and Natasha Watson were both named first team All-Great Lakes League selections Thursday.

Jones, who averaged 18.1 points per game as the Little Giants won a sectional title, was named on the boys team. Joell Heidelburg (12.6 ppg.) and Juan Vela (11.5 pp.g) were named second-teamers and Tyson Liggins and Robb Ritzman were honorable mention for the Little Giants.

Sandusky's Jahn Farris was named Player of the Year. The rest of the first

team included: Clay's Ben Tobias, Findlay's Doug Barnes, Sandusky's El DaSheon Nix and Whitmer's Mike Kurdziel.

Watson, who tossed in 15.2 ppg. was named to the girls team.

Alison Decker was named a second-teamer and Sashay Price was honorable mention.

Findlay's Wendy Stalder was named girls Player of the Year. The rest of the first team consisted of: Findlay's Samantha Williams, Fostoria's Lyndsey Robinson, Clay's Megan Beshalske and Whitmer's Courtney Urquhart.

Gedeon, Ross set for Classic

News-Messenger reports

HURON — Joell Heidelberg and Robb Ritzman of Fremont Ross will lead the area boys basketball all-stars against the stars of the Sandusky Bay Conference on Wednesday in the Wendy's-WLEC All-Star Classic at Huron High School.

Ross coach Mark Gedeon will coach the area team, while T.J. James of SBC champion Perkins will coach the SBC stars. Bellevue's Jerry Gonzales will also play of the area team,

Basketball

and

Tyson

Liggins of Ross is an alternate.

Clyde's Lucas Messer and Sepp Newsom, Margaretta's Nick Kane and Oak Harbor's Nathan Gaines and Chris Rygalski will lead the SBC.

Ross's Natasha Watson and Bellevue's Lyndsay Beamer, Kristy Baptista and Chelley Velloney are on the area girls.

The SBC team features Theresa Gierhart of Clyde, Danielle Meyer, Brandy Cody, Karen Hoffman and Sarah Pooch of Margaretta and Ashley Spangler of Oak Harbor.

Tim Tucker of Margaretta will coach the SBC girls team. Danbury's Joe Fetzer will coach the area team.

The Wendy's-WLEC Classic is for seniors only. The girls game begins at 6 p.m., followed by the boys game.

The SBC girls broke a Wendy's-WLEC Classic scoring record last year when they whipped the area team 110-60. Perkins' Amanda Sheppard, who had 21 points, was named the game's most valuable player. The area boys team, meanwhile, handed the SBC squad a 123-108 loss. Jamarcus Hampton of Sandusky was the MVP of the boys game.

Lakota will have three players on both the boys and girls teams in the Wood County Cage Classic at Perrysburg High School.

Jim Ganues, Michael Scherger and Brian Stroud, Lakota will play for the south team and Renee Brickner, Gretchen Creeger and Wendy Fraley will play in the girls game. Lakota's Dick Heller will coach the south team.

The girls game begins at 6:30 p.m., with the boys to follow.