

1984-1985 Season Review



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy

THE ROSS basketball team members are, front row, from left to right: Stacy Johnson, Stan Newell, Karl Bury, Gregg Gallagher and Chris Simmons; back row, from l-r: assistant coach

Chuck Lindsey, head coach John Sawyer, Scott Weber, Dave Kovaleski, Greg Bender, Mark Miesle, Pat Hetrick and assistant coach Brian Welch. Missing from photo is Shawn McCarthy.

It will all begin at home for the Ross hoop squad

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

If there is no place like home, then John Sawyer will be smiling early and often as Fremont Ross opens its basketball season Friday.

The Little Giants will play their first four games and eight of the first 10 in the friendly confines of the Ross pillbox. Only eight times this season will the Little Giants tread on foreign courts.

With that intangible advantage, Sawyer feels that he has few more intangibles that will help the Little Giants improve on a 9-14 season of a year ago.

"The attitude and the kids are playing with a lot more intensity and confidence," he said as he described and early season strength of his team. He then clicked off a couple of other areas where he feels his team has made strides forward.

"In defense," he began, "our half-court and our presses have improved. Offensively, we are also passing better and have shown the ability to get the ball inside. We had a lot of trouble doing that last season."

Sawyer, who has a 26-41 record in his three seasons at Ross, also said that unlike last season, he has been keeping a starting five intact both in scrimmages and in practices.

"That seems to be making the kids more comfortable with each other," Sawyer said. "Last season, it seemed like we had 25 different lineups in 20 games."

At the present, Sawyer is staying with this five: Greg Bender and Mark Miesle at the wings, Dave Kovaleski and Tracy Johnson at the low post slots and Karl Bury at the point. Bender and Johnson could flip-flop positions occasionally.

He quickly pointed out that the lineup could change sometime as dictated by injury or the emergence of other players but that he would stick with this five in the early portion of the season.

Bender, a 6-5 two-year letterman and a first-team All-Buckeye Conference performer in the 1984-85 season, quietly became the single season point leader for Ross last season, scoring 458 for better than a 19-point average. He is the main cog in the Ross machine. If there is anything missing from Bender's game, Sawyer said it could be his reluctance to "free lance."

"Sure, I'd like to see him 'shake and bake' or do things on his own more," Sawyer said, "but Greg is very team oriented and he looks for the open man all the time."

Kovaleski, 6-3, and Johnson, 6-2, are juniors

while Miesle, 6-3, is a two-year letterman. Bury is a 5-11 senior.

Backing up that five will be two-year letterman Chris Simmons and 6-8 junior Shawn McCarthy at the low post slots. Simmons has been hampered by an ankle injury while McCarthy has been struggling with a sore big toe. Both were spot starters last season.

Sawyer, while a starter as a sophomore, played well coming off the bench last season. As he works himself back into shape, he may fill that mode again although Sawyer said he could crack the starting lineup sometime during the season. The same goes for McCarthy.

At the wings, juniors Gregg Gallagher and Pat Hetrick are the first subs. Both have played well in scrimmages while Hetrick has been shooting exceptionally well. Hetrick is 6-2 and Gallagher 5-10.

Sophomore John Cahill has been a pleasant surprise for Sawyer. The Ross coach had expected the 6-3 Cahill to be at the junior varsity level at the beginning of the season but he is now pushing Bury for the point guard spot.

"He has looked good at the wing, too, and he can handle the point," Sawyer said about Cahill.

The point man in the Ross offense is the "quarterback," starting most of the plays.

Another junior, Stan Newell, did not play basketball as a sophomore and the lack of experience has shown. Still, Newell's quickness could be a weapon for Sawyer.

"He will probably play a couple of quarters on the JV team," the Ross coach explained, "and we may use him on the varsity level especially on the press."

Defensively, Sawyer said he feels this Ross team has enough quickness to allow him to use the man-to-man defense. In the past couple of years, Ross has been almost exclusively a zone defense team.

As for the Buckeye Conference race, Sawyer rates Elyria as the team to beat, especially since Eric Vickers, an All-Buckeye Conference performer for Findlay last season, has moved to the home of the Pioneers. He also said that Admiral King, as usual, would be in the race.

"After that, I feel it is a wide open race," Sawyer said and then added, "as a team we have as a goal to be the first Ross team to win a Buckeye Conference title but we will have to be ready to play every game. We cannot play three good quarters and then fold in the fourth."

Ross will host Perkins Friday and then take on Port Clinton Saturday. The junior varsity games both nights begin at 6:30 p.m. each night.

Ross rips Pirates 56-33 in season debut



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy
DAVE KOVALESKI of Ross goes up for two of his dozen points.

Script just right to set up clash with Port Clinton

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

John Sawyer could have tried but he probably could not have written a better script for the debut of his Ross High School boys basketball team.

Sawyer, sitting in the director's chair, maneuvered his team around outmanned Port Clinton 56-33 in front of a near standing room only crowd at the Ross High gym.

Perkins entered the game with a spotless record after two games. This evening, Ross will have another shot at knocking off an unbeaten team when Port Clinton, 2-0, visits Fremont Friday.

"I think we accomplished a lot," Sawyer said. "We got to play a lot of people and what I liked is when we started to go to the bench with five minutes to go in the first half, we were up by 10 but by the halftime, we had a 12-point lead."

"The kids came in off the bench wanting to play and they played well," Sawyer said and then added, "I think this year we have kids coming off the bench who want to play."

Ross got 16 points its substitutes with Chris Simmons' six topping that contingent. Perkins' subs did not score.

Ross trailed only once — 2-0 — and after the game had been tied twice, grabbed an 8-6 lead on Karl Bury's soft jumper from the right of the foul line. Mark Miele hit another and Dave Kowaleksi dumped in two buckets for a 14-6 Little Giants advantage.

Perkins got back to a 14-6 deficit but that was as close as the Pirates were to get the remainder of the game.

The biggest lead of the night was the final margin.

The Little Giants had a big height advantage as Sawyer pointed out, "when we got the lead, there was no way that they could come back."

The Ross players hit double figures and eight of the 10 that played, scored. Greg Bender had 16 with Kowaleksi finishing with a dozen and Miele 10.

Bury dished out 10 assists from his point guard slot and 6-4 junior Mike McCarthy grabbed 10 rebounds as Ross had a 37-29 lead in that department. McCarthy came off the bench to add three blocked shots to his rebounding total and the way he played brought a grin and a prediction from Sawyer.

"McCarthy could be the difference again," Port Clinton's coach said. "They match up pretty well against us otherwise but if he plays with the same intensity that he played tonight, it will be a key."

Sawyer was able to rest his squad by shutting players in and out frequently from the second quarter on. Defensively, Sawyer was able to use a man-to-man defense with his first five of Miele, Kowaleksi and Stacy Johnson before reverting to a 2-3 zone when he began subbing.

He said that he would stick with that lineup against Port Clinton.

Kowaleksi muscled in four of five shots in the first quarter to get Ross off to an 8-8 start. To go with his dozen point, the 6-3 junior grabbed eight rebounds.

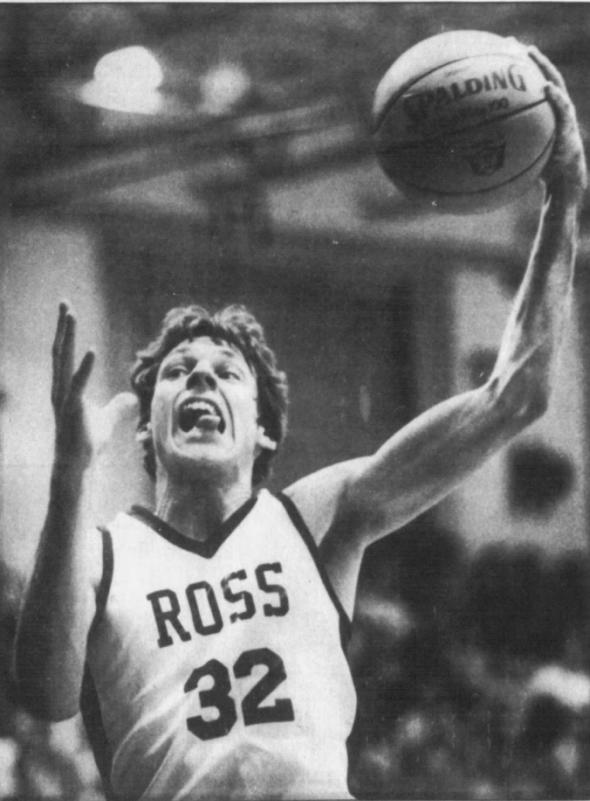
Miele matched that rebounding figure while Bender had six.

Bender, Ross' leading scorer from last season, played approximately 18 of the 32 minutes.

In game statistics, Ross was 25 of 49 from the floor and committed 14 turnovers. The Little Giants' defense limited Perkins to 14 of 54 shots and caused a dozen turnovers.

Thinking back, Sawyer pointed out the way the fans responded to his team. "We have been working to get the fans more involved," he said, "and they did tonight. They stood up and we scored our first point and sort of responded."

It took 10 minutes and 45 seconds for Sawyer the director, when Bender hit two free throws for Ross' first points of the season, it set everything else up to come off right on cue.



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy
GREG BENDER of Fremont Ross uses his left hand to grab a rebound Friday night against Sandusky Perkins at the Ross High School gym. Bender had six rebounds in the opening night win.

Little Giant Greg Bender facing 'year of proving'

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

This is the season where Greg Bender proves his worth.

The 6-3 Ross High School senior began his final basketball season for the Little Giants last night, getting off to a rolling start toward answering that question.

This season he will face...

•Bringing Ross back from a 9-14 season while trying to prove the worth of the team's leader.

•Getting Ross a shot at winning its first Buckeye Conference championship.

•Proving to college recruits how well he can play.

•Being right in deciding not sign a letter-of-intent to play for a particular college during the season.

Bender, a starter since he walked into the Ross High School gym as a 6-4 sophomore, quietly set a single season Ross record with 458 points while averaging nearly 20 points last season. He ranks second in all-time Ross scoring with 758, trailing Jim Davis' 814 set in the early 1960s.

"My main goal this year," Bender began, "is to help Ross win the Buckeye Conference. We have

never done that before and that is my top priority." Bender has no regrets about the possibility of facing a deluge of recruiting calls during the season.

"I felt it would be best to wait," Bender, who carries a 3.2 grade point average, said. "I was not seriously considering signing early. I wanted to wait to make the right decision."

He would not say which schools are actively recruiting him but it is known that several Division I schools are interested. Bender admitted that a good final season would send his stock upwards.

"I really do not know where I am going school," he insisted, "but I will say I like warm weather."

While being recruited by colleges is becoming old news to Bender, recruiting was a word that dropped him into a mild controversy last season. A rumor flying around the northwest Ohio area had Bender on his way to Willard but that was unfounded he said.

"That was a big surprise to me," he explained. "That never happened. I was not approached by anyone to go anywhere. I heard talk like that from other coaches but I was never personally contacted."

"The B/C Camp had more quality players," Bender described. "More than half of those guys will be playing college ball I feel. The Louisville camp had good players but there was not as much talent as the B/C one."

One of the charter members of Ross's Phi Slamma Jamma fraternity, a club created by Ross

"Actually, it was a weird feeling just having people say that. It hit me like a bombshell."

The son of Kermit and Wilma Bender, 3007 W. Hayes Ave., Bender has been playing basketball since the fifth grade but roundball was not his first love.

"Baseball was my sport," he said, "but I started to like basketball when I got into the eighth grade."

"I like basketball because you are always active in it and you can work on it by yourself where in baseball or football, you have to have three or four guys to work at it," Bender said.

He works on his game nearly three hours a day and during the summer, he went to two highly lauded camps: the B/C in Indiana and the Blue Chip Camp in Louisville, Ky. He made the third all-star team in the Hoosier camp and was a first teamer at Louisville.

"The B/C Camp had more quality players," Bender described. "More than half of those guys will be playing college ball I feel. The Louisville camp had good players but there was not as much talent as the B/C one."

"The coach wants me to play defense against a team's best player and I score two points and we win, that is fine with me. I will do whatever it takes for us to win the game."

"If I have to sacrifice scoring for winning, I don't think it will be a problem," he said and then concluded, "I hope that I will have a chance to see it is a problem."

junior varsity Coach Brian Witch for players who can dunk the ball, Bender said he does not intentionally go for the showy two-pointer.

"I look for the dunk if we need a lift," he said.

"The shot does two things — fires up you team and the crowd — but I will not dunk a ball if we are up 20 points or so because I don't want to risk being undercut."

Don't get Bender wrong, he is not a showboat. In fact, one of the chief criticisms that Ross Coach John Sawyer has for him is that he does not "shake and bake (free lance)" enough.

"I probably should free lance more," he said, "and this year I probably can because we have the right chemistry on our team where I can do that. But I don't care how much I score."

"If the coach wants me to play defense against a team's best player and I score two points and we win, that is fine with me. I will do whatever it takes for us to win the game."

"If I have to sacrifice scoring for winning, I don't think it will be a problem," he said and then concluded, "I hope that I will have a chance to see it is a problem."

Basketball

High school

Ross 56, Perkins 33

Score by quarters

Perkins	8	8	9	8-33
Ross	18	10	12	10-56

Scoring

PERKINS — Mark Fry 2-0-4, Bryan Skelton 1-0-2, Gary Castle 5-2-12, Anthony Green 4-2-10, David Darr 2-1-5, totals 14-5-33.

ROSS — Greg Bender 6-4-16, Dave Kovaleski 6-0-12, Mark Miesle 5-0-10, Stacy Johnson 0-0-0, Karl Bury 1-0-2, Shawn McCarthy 1-2-4, Chris Simmons 3-0-6, John Cahill 1-0-2, Pat Hetrick 0-0-0, Gregg Gallagher 0-0-0, Stan Newell 2-0-4, totals 25-6-56.

Season records: Ross 1-0, Perkins 2-1.

Ross JV's 42, Perkins 25

Score by quarters

Perkins	6	8	8	3-25
Ross	6	12	12	12-42

Scoring

PERKINS — Mark Ambos 3-3-9, Jude Manuella 2-2-6, Mike Harvey 2-0-4, Brian Rupp 1-0-2, Dennis Hoffman 1-0-2, Jeff Keys 1-0-2, totals 10-5-25.

ROSS — Stan Newell 2-2-6, Matt Reed 3-0-6, Scott Weber 2-4-8, Kevin Brooks 4-0-8, Manoah Jones 2-0-4, Chris Mosser 1-4-6, John Stierwalt 2-0-4, totals 16-10-42.

Season record: Ross 1-0.

Johnson's defense helps Ross topple PC

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

Greg Bender and Mark Miesle combined for 45 points but the defensive play of Stacy Johnson equalized them both as Ross defeated Port Clinton 56-52 Saturday night in the Purple Pit, better known as the Ross High School gym.

It was the first loss for the Redskins, now 2-1, and the first time in four years that Ross Coach John Sawyer had a team unbeaten after the first two games of the season.

"Stacy Johnson played two good defensive games this weekend," Sawyer said while lauding the 6-2 junior for his efforts against Port Clinton and in the 56-33 Friday night romp over Perkins.

Johnson clamped onto Port Clinton's Paul Colston in the first quarter and held the 6-4 senior scoreless. Colston picked up eight points in the second quarter but the Little Giants did not play the

man-to-man defense much in the second eight minutes.

In the second half, with Ross relying mainly on the man-to-man, Johnson cooled down the Redskins' Randi Lorenzen. The 6-0 Lorenzen hit five of six first-half shots but was held to just one of five and four points in the second as Johnson held him in check.

"We put Johnson on Lorenzen in the second half because we switched Bender to Colston," Sawyer explained. "We did not have Bender on Colston in the first half because we did not want to take any chances of him (Bender) getting into foul trouble.

"When he had only one foul in the first half, we made the switch."

Colston finished with 19 points and Lorenzen 14 but Johnson and Bender checked the Redskins' leading scoring duo when the Little Giants needed it.

Ross trailed 12-10 after one period and 28-27 at the half. Colston popped in a pair of

buckets midway through the second quarter to give the Redskins their biggest lead at 22-16 but Bender hit a trio of buckets and Miesle added two more plus a free throw to cut the Port Clinton lead to one at the rest stop.

Ross raced to its biggest lead of five points on two occasions in the third quarter. After taking a 40-35 lead on Dave Kovaleski's rebound bucket, Ross turned cold and did not score in the final minute of the third quarter and the first two minutes of the second quarter.

By that time, Port Clinton had rolled off eight unanswered points for a 43-40 lead.

"That's where we could have panicked," Sawyer admitted as he thought back to where his team had folded in such situations in prior seasons. "That was the place it would have happened but it's different this year."

Miesle, who hit 10 of 13 shots in the game, got the Little Giants untracked with a jumper from the left side two minutes into the final quarter. The 6-3 senior eventually put Ross ahead for good at 50-49 with another jumper from the 15 feet out with 2:26 remaining to be played.

Karl Bury nudged the Ross lead to 51-49 at the 1:10 mark and Bender's follow-up on his own miss with a minute to go made it 53-49.

Colston hit a free throw to cut Ross's lead to three but Shawn McCarthy hit the back end of a two-shot foul and Ross held a 54-50 lead with 35 seconds left. Colston canned a layup but on the trip downcourt, Colston fouled Bender and the 6-5 Ross senior hit both

free throws to ice the game.

"Down toward the end, Bender asserted himself," Port Clinton Coach Tom Bodager pointed out. "He got that key offensive rebound and put it up and in."

Bodager said he felt the key for his team was a pair of one-and-one free throws late in the game. Lorenzen missed at 3:43 and the Redskins up 47-46 and Colston missed 40 seconds later with the Redskin still ahead 49-48.

The Redskins' coach called the game "well played" by both teams and said he was pleased with his team's play.

"I know the kids are down now but I am pleased with them."

Sawyer pointed out that the win was the first over Port Clinton for this crop of seniors. He pointed out that he felt the game had developed into a good neighborhood rivalry.

He also said the win was crucial, proving that his team could win back-to-back on a double-game weekend.

"I felt if we had lost, we would be right back where we had been last year," Sawyer said but he was interrupted by his assistant coach, Chuck Lindsey.

"But 'last year' are two words that are not in our vocabulary this year," Lindsey smiled.

Bender finished with 24 points, Miesle 21 and Kovaleski six. Ross was 24 of 49 from the floor but just seven of 16 at the line. Ross outrebounded the Redskins 33-28.

Port Clinton was 18 of 41, just six of only 17 second half shots and 16 of 27 at the line. The Redskins had 15 turnovers, one more than Ross.

Coetzee manager protesting bout

SUN CITY, South Africa (AP) — Hal Tucker, manager of dethroned World Boxing Association champion Gerrie Coetzee, said he would protest an eighth-round knockout victory awarded to challenger Greg Page.

Tucker based his complaint on a television replay of Saturday's eighth round, which showed that Page had an extra 48 seconds to finish off Coetzee.

There was a similar occurrence in the sixth round, when the

fighters continued to exchange punches after the bell. Coetzee was knocked down, but Rodriguez disallowed it because the time limit had been exceeded.

He made no such ruling after the extended eighth round.

Tucker, though, appeared more concerned with the loss of the fight than with the added length of the fateful round, and said, "Maybe Gerrie should retire."

The loss was Coetzee's fourth against 29 victories and a draw.

High school

Boys

Ross 56, Port Clinton 52

Score by quarters

Port Clinton	12	16	11	13-52
Ross	10	17	13	16-56

Scoring

PORT CLINTON — Paul Colston 6-7-19, Todd Heslet 3-1-7, Howard Walters 1-6-8, Eric Freimark 2-0-4, Randi Lorenzen 6-2-14, totals 18-16-52.

ROSS — Greg Bender 11-2-24, Dave Kovaleski 2-2-6, Stacy Johnson 1-0-2, Mark Miesle 10-1-21, Karl Bury 0-2-2, Shawn McCarthy 0-1-1, totals 24-8-56.

Season records: Ross 2-0, Port Clinton 2-1.

Ross JVs 44, P. Clinton 30

Score by quarters

Port Clinton	12	5	8	5-30
Ross	10	9	9	16-44

Scoring

PORT CLINTON — Jeff Below 2-1-5, Barry Millinger 3-2-8, Jim Zibert 2-0-4, Keith Ballard 2-0-4, Tom Sheppard 3-1-7, Steve Nissen 0-2-2, totals 12-6-30.

ROSS — Scott Weber 1-2-4, Stan Newell 0-0-0, Kevin Brooks 3-4-10, Manoah Jones 0-1-1, Kevin McDonald 9-0-18, Chris Mosser 2-1-5, John Stierwalt 3-0-6, totals 18-8-44.

Season records: Ross 2-0, Port Clinton 0-3.

Unbeaten Little Giants prepare to take their toughest test so far

By BOB MARKER

News-Messenger Sports Editor

It's an unusual situation at Ross.

The Little Giants boys basketball team is 2-0, the first time in four seasons that a John Sawyer-coached team has been that successful two games into the season.

Saturday, Ross will host Toledo Rogers, a team Sawyer feels will be the stiffest test his team will have met thus far into the young season.

"Rogers is quick, they do a lot of pressing and they are good on the boards," Sawyer said as he briefly described the Running Rams, 1-2 with losses to Toledo Scott and Macomber and a win over St. Francis.

"Fred King (6-4) has already signed to go to the University of Toledo," the Ross coach continued, "and he is a great outside shooter. We feel that he

can hit from 20 to 25 feet out.

"Leonard Braxton is only 5-6 but he plays out on the point and he is not bad. He is quick and he gets the ball to the open guys," Sawyer said.

The key inside man for the Rogers is 6-3 Greg Jordon who is very strong on the boards, according to the Ross coach.

Sawyer, after digesting his team's play in the two weekend victories, said that his team's defense, especially Friday night, impressed him. Ross defeated Perkins 56-33 Friday and came back for a 56-52 win over Port Clinton on Saturday.

"The overall bench play for both games was pretty good," he continued. "Right now I am happy with the starting five. They are working well and with the guys coming off the bench such as McCarthy (Shawn), Simmons (Chris) and Cahill (John), I am pleased.

"I wish that I could have gotten Gallagher (Gregg) and Hetrick (Pat) into the game more on Saturday but it just didn't work out."

Despite that, Sawyer lauded the latter two for their play in practice.

"They, along with the other three, really push the first five. The other night in practice, the second five beat the first five in one quarter and that is encouraging because it helps to have players pushing each other in practice."

Sawyer will start 6-5 Greg Bender, 6-3 Dave Kowaleski, 6-3 Mark Miesle, 6-2 Stacy Johnson and 5-11 Karl Bury. Bender, averaging 20 points after two games, needs just two points to reach the 800-point level and 16 points to tie Jim Davis for the all-time Ross scoring lead. Miesle is carrying a 15.5 average and Kowaleski 9.0.

Ross holds off Rogers 62-57

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

Greg Bender was in the spotlight but the Ross star's supporting cast drew its share of applause Saturday as the Little Giants rolled to their third high school basketball win.

The unbeaten Little Giants put away Toledo Rogers 62-57 in a game in which Ross had easily built up as much as a 13-point lead in the second half.

Bender drew center stage in the third quarter when he scored his 18th point to break the Ross career scoring record of 814 set by Jim Davis and which had stood for 21 years. He finished with 26 points and now has 824 points in his two plus seasons for the Little Giants.

While Bender drew cries of "Bender, Bender, Bender," from the near capacity crowd, Shawn McCarthy and Karl Bury drew rave reviews.

McCarthy, making his first start this season, mystified Rogers Coach Mike Kearney.

"Where was that guy when Ross played Port Clinton?" Kearney asked.

The 6-8 junior was in the starting lineup because a death in the family of regular starter Stacy Johnson forced him to miss the game. McCarthy responded by scoring the first six points of the game and finishing with 18 points while snagging several key rebounds down the stretch.

Bury, along with running mate Mark Miesle, directed Ross's attack when the Little Giants slowed the action down in the final period. The 5-11 senior had only four points but the final two helped stop a Rogers surge that had cut the Little Giants' lead from 42-33 to 42-37 late in the third quarter.

The second Bury bucket followed the record-setting shot by Bender at the 44-second mark of the third period. His shot from the line made it 46-37 with six seconds left in the period.

Bury also drew praise from the Ross coaching staff for his defensive play, and for that, he was named the Little Giants' "defensive player of the week."

Ross's biggest lead was 54-41 three minutes into the final

quarter but Rogers cut that down to 58-55 with 19 seconds remaining in the game before Bender canned four free throws in the final seconds to ice the contest.

"No, we did not slow the game down too early," Ross Coach John Sawyer said. "We wanted to slow it down and go to the foul line but we turned the ball over at a rapid rate there for a while. Still, we got the right people on the but Mark (Miesle) did not hit well at the line tonight but he did well in our four-corners."

While Miesle had his troubles at the line, Bender was perfect in the final quarter, hitting eight of eight in that span and finishing with 12 of 12 for the game.

Matching Bender in near perfection was Rogers' Fred King, who will attend the University of Toledo next fall. King, a 6-4 senior, canned 10 of 15 shots and was five of five at the line to lead the Rams with 25 points. The Rogers scoring leader, however, was held scoreless in the third period.

"Defensively," Sawyer praised, "we did a good job at taking away the baseline. It was our best inside game we have had defensively."

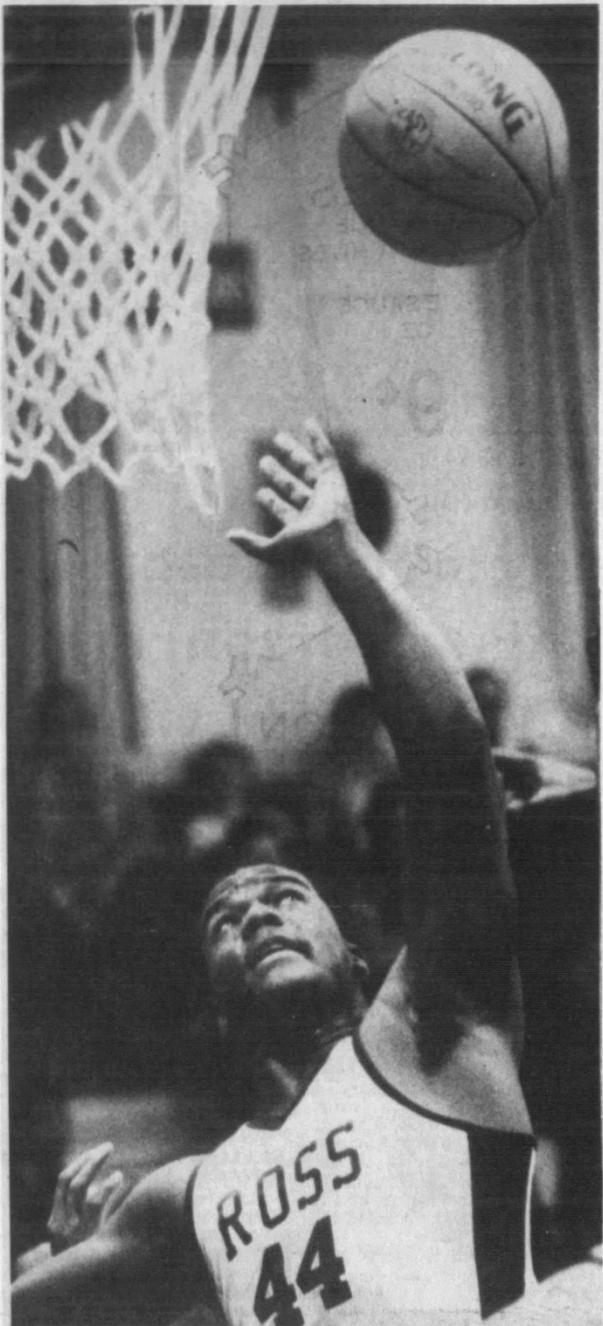
Sawyer said the Rams compared with Buckeye Conference teams.

"They are a pretty good ball club," he began, "they were good shooters, they were quick and they pressed. They are very comparable to teams in the conference."

"But we handled their pressure very well," the Ross coach added.

Bender and McCarthy were the only Little Giants in double figures. Dave Kovaleski got into foul problems early and finished with six points while Miesle finished with five. Leonard Braxton, a 5-6 Rogers senior, was a nemesis for Ross, scoring 16 points on high, arching jumpers from the top of the key but he was the only other Ram to reach double figures.

Ross was 23 off 44 from the floor including 11 of 18 in the second half. Rogers was 23 of 54 with 14 of 26 in the final 16 minutes. Rogers outrebounded Ross 30-28 but had 19 turnover, three more than the Little Giants.



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy
CHRIS SIMMONS has his eyes on the ball as he goes up for a rebound during second quarter action Saturday at Ross High School.

Ross 62, Rogers 57

Score by quarters

Rogers	11	14	12	20-57
Ross	19	13	14	16-62

Scoring

ROGERS — Fred King 10-5-25, John Boyd 0-2-2, Tommie Evans 2-3-7, Leonard Braxton 8-0-16, Greg Jordon 1-1-3, Justin Grant 2-0-4, totals 23-11-57.

ROSS — Greg Bender 7-12-26, Dave Kovaleski 3-0-6, Shawn McCarthy 8-2-18, Mark Miesle 2-1-5, Karl Bury 2-0-4, Chris Simmons 1-1-3, totals 23-16-62.

Season records: Ross 3-0, Rogers 2-3.

Rogers JVs 51, Ross 42

Score by quarters

Rogers	4	13	17	17-51
Ross	10	11	5	16-42

Scoring

ROGERS — Jarrod Maneval 0-2-2, Pat Franklin 1-0-2, David Buford 3-3-9, Bryan Ellis 2-0-4, Jackie Green 3-1-7, Melvin Jordan 6-0-12, Rodney Dew 1-2-4, Richard Rayford 3-0-6, Nashon Badgett 2-1-5, totals 21-9-51.

ROSS — Stan Newell 2-1-5, Matt Reed 2-0-4, Scott Weber 1-0-2, Kevin Brooks 0-1-1, Kevin McDonald 1-0-2, Chris Mosser 5-2-12, John Stierwald 5-5-15, 16-10-42.

Season records: Ross 2-1, Rogers 2-2.

Bender is Ross's new scoring king

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

Jim Davis did not realize until a year later that he had set a record that would stand for 21 Ross High School basketball seasons.

Davis, 40, a Ross graduate in 1963, did not know that he had set the Ross boys basketball career scoring record until a year after he had gotten out of school.

"It surprises me that it lasted this long," Davis said after watching Greg Bender shatter his Ross career scoring record of 814 points.

Bender, a 6-5 senior and a starter since his sophomore year, scored 26 points in Ross's 62-57 win over Toledo Rogers Saturday night at Ross High School. He had entered the game with 798 career points and when his third shot in the third quarter swished through the net, he had tied Davis.

With 44 seconds remaining in the period, Bender laid one in off the glass and Davis' record was history. Bender now has 824 points and is well on his way to breaking the 1,000-point barrier.

Bender was presented with the ball he used to break the record by Davis and Ross Athletic Director Dick Sherman at the break between the third and fourth quarters.

"I would have thought the record would have been broken before this," Davis said. "I thought that John Lewis, Tim Thomas, Mike Reardon or Russ Hagerty would have done it."

Thomas is third in Ross scoring with 753 points while Lewis ranks fifth with 742 and Hagerty sixth with 732. Steve McGilton (1979) is fourth with 747.

Davis, now working in quality control at Whirlpool in Clyde, became aware that Bender was closing in on his record this past



GREG BENDER receives the game ball from former Ross career points lead Jim Davis. In the center is Ross Athletic Director Dick Sherman.

week when he read it in The News-Messenger.

"I had not thought about it being broken before that," Davis pointed out, "but during the game Saturday, I was rooting for him to do it."

Davis disclosed that it was not the first time that he had come in contact with the new Ross scoring champion. He had met him before he presented him with the game ball but he said that Bender may not remember it.

"I was on a city league team for years and we scrimmaged against him when he was a sophomore; it was just a pickup game," Davis said. "I could see then that he was going to be a pretty good ball player."

Bender, while pointing out that not much was said during the brief ceremony between quarters, said that he felt no pressure while closing in on the record.

"I knew that it would come sooner or later," he said, "but I

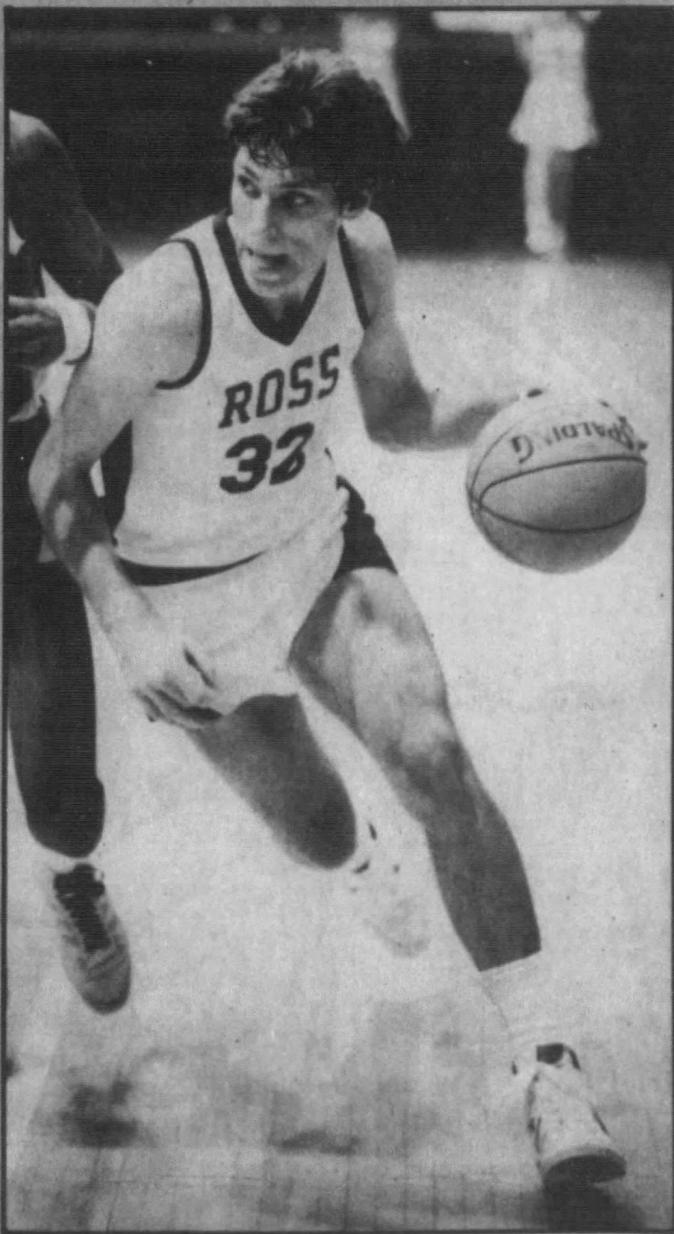
The ceremony took place between the third and fourth quarters of the Saturday game at Ross High School.

am glad that it's over with now."

He added that the stop between quarters bothered him a little.

"I wish that we could have done that after the game but the people deserved to see it and it was great to have that many people here tonight," Bender said.

The next record in sight for Bender is his single season mark of 458 points set last season. The single game scoring mark for Ross is 43 points by John Level set in 1958.



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy

Bender sets Ross record

Greg Bender of Ross dribbles with his left hand as he moves around a Toledo Rogers opponent Saturday in the Ross High School gym. Bender set a Ross career scoring record, scoring 26 points to raise his career total to 824, as Ross defeated Rogers 62-57. The old Ross record was 814 points set 21 years ago by Jim Davis. Related stories on page 13.

Little Giants roll past Presidents 85-59

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

Ross cruised to an easy 85-59 Buckeye Conference basketball victory Friday night at Ross High School and in the process the Little Giants earned a hard time at practice next week.

"They had better be ready for a hard week of practice," Ross Coach John Sawyer warned but he was not angry. Instead, he wants to prevent a bad habit before it gets started.

"We had a bad week of practice last week," Sawyer said, "and we cannot continue to do that. They cannot get the idea that they can have a bad week of practice and expect to play well on Friday and Saturday."

"We have two games next week but that does not mean it will be an easy week of practice."

Ross, 4-0 and off to its best start in nearly two decades, will hit the road for its first away season Friday, taking on the Steelmen at Lorain Senior before returning home Saturday to host Findlay.

The Little Giants followed up the bad week of practice with a great game against the Presidents. Ross dominated every facet of the game, rolling out to a smashing 10-point lead in the second half. In the first three quarters, the Little Giants hit 27 of 41 shots before succumbing to the helter-skelter mop-up action in the final eight minutes.

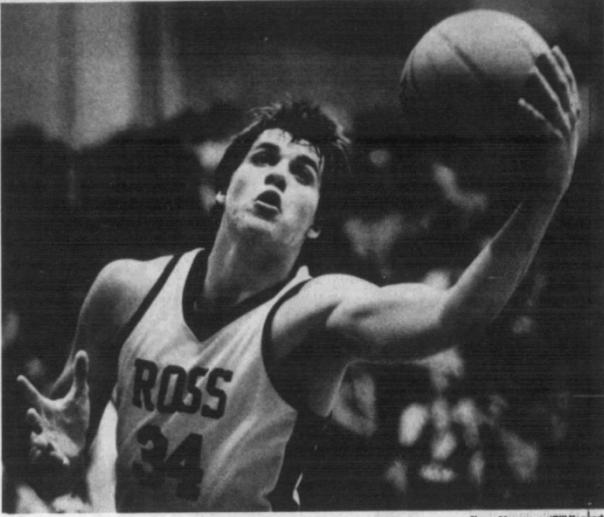
Ross finished with 33 of 64 from the floor, 11 of 31 seconds, 22 more than Harding, and had four players in double figures as every player that Sawyer shuffled into the lineup scored.

Shawn McCarthy hit nine of 11 shots for 18 points, grabbed six rebounds and blocked four shots for the Little Giants. Greg Bender was six of nine while getting 16 points and a game-high 14 rebounds for Ross while Dave Kovaleski dropped in 16 and hauled down eight rebounds while playing a strong defensive game inside.

Kovaleski's defensive effort earned him the "defensive player of the night" honor.

Mark Miers was the fourth Little Giant in double figures with a dozen and hauled down five rebounds.

"The only negative thing," Sawyer said, "is we fouled them



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy

DAVE KOVALESKI goes up for a shot during action Friday night against Marion Harding at Ross.

too much. There was no reason for many of the fouls; we were not moving our feet and we created the fouls."

Sawyer also was not happy with his team's start in the second half. He called a timeout after Harding had closed the first six points of the third quarter, cutting Ross's sizeable lead to 45-29.

"I brought the starting five over and told them there were five other guys on the bench who want to play," he recalled. "After that it got a lot better."

That may have been an understatement. Ross rolled off nine of 11 from the second quarter and eight of 13 in the third. In the second half, the Little Giants took complete control of the backboards, grabbing 32 rebounds to Harding's 15.

The only thing detrimental to

Sawyer wanted to take charge of the game early while preventing Harding from slipping into its ball control, deliberate offense. A McCarthy tip off the opening jump to Bender and eventual Bender's tip-in of a Middle miss took Harding out of its game plan early.

By the time Harding hit its first points, Ross led 6-0 and eased that up to 14-3 while on its way to a 23-10 first quarter lead. There was no need to look back after that.

Ross earned 10 of 14 first quarter points, followed by 19 of 29 of 11 in the second quarter and eight of 13 in the third. In the second half, the Little Giants took complete control of the backboards, grabbing 32 rebounds to Harding's 15.

The only thing detrimental to

the Little Giants was the turnovers and Ross even dominated that category, committing 17, a half dozen more than Harding.

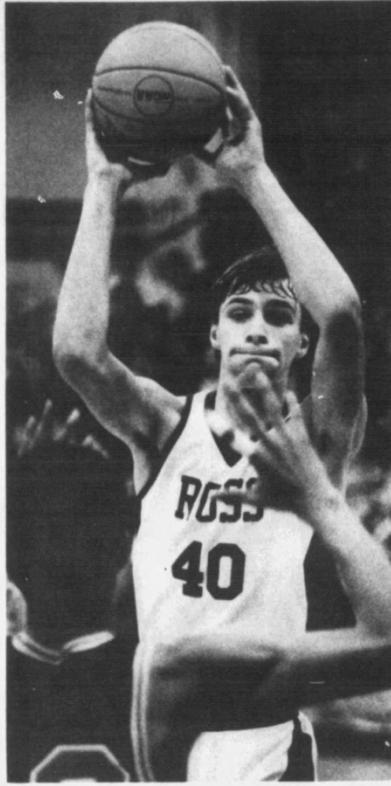
Sawyer said defensively, the game was the worst of the season for his team.

"We wanted to hold them to under 40 points," he admitted. "That was our goal."

"I know if we play defense against Lorain and Findlay like we did tonight, we will have problems."

In the junior varsity game, Ross rallied from a 25-13 halftime deficit for a 52-39 win. The Little Giants scored 15 consecutive points in the third quarter to wipe out the Harding lead.

The Ross JVs, 3-1, were led by John Stierwalt's 20 points.



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy

SHAWN McCARTHY of Ross searches for the open man during first-half play in the Little Giants' lopsided victory over the Marion Harding Presidents Friday night.

High school

Ross 85, Harding 59

Score by quarters

Marion Harding	10	13	19	17-59
Ross	23	22	19	21-85

Scoring

MARION HARDING — Jerry Carter 5-4-14, Fritz Wink 6-3-15, Mario Castaneda 2-2-6, Willie Owens 3-1-7, Skip Calbert 2-3-7, Tim Hord 1-0-2, John Stricklin 2-4-8, totals 20-19-59.

ROSS — Greg Bender 6-4-16, Mark Miesle 4-4-12, Dave Kovaleski 5-6-16, Karl Bury 3-0-6, Shawn McCarthy 9-0-18, Stacy Johnson 1-0-2, Gregg Gallagher 1-0-2, Pat Hetrick 1-2-4, Stan Newell 1-3-5, John Cahill 2-0-4, totals 33-19-85.

Season records: Ross 4-0 (1-0), Marion Harding 1-3 (0-2).

Ross JVs 52, Harding 39

Score by quarters

Marion Harding	6	19	7	7-39
Ross	4	9	22	17-52

Scoring

MARION HARDING — Allen O'Neil 2-1-5, James Brown 1-1-3, Chris Crabtree 1-1-3, Geoff Klepzig 4-0-8, Chris Laird 1-0-2, Craig Owens 1-0-2, William Troutman 1-2-4, totals 17-5-39.

ROSS — Matt Reed 1-2-4, Scott Weber 0-5-5, Kevin Brooks 4-2-10, Manoah Jones 1-0-2, Kevin McDonald 1-2-4, Chris Mosser 3-1-7, John Stierwalt 5-10-20, totals 15-22-52.

Season records: Ross 3-1, Marion Harding 1-3.

Ross pulls away to defeat Lorain 57-44

By BOB MARKER

News-Messenger Sports Editor

LORAIN — It was a sign of things to come.

Lorain was forced to wait before the game got started and late in the game, the Steelmen were forced to wait again. The second time, the wait was fatal as Fremont Ross pulled away for a 57-44 Buckeye Conference basketball victory.

At the very instant the final player in Ross's starting lineup was introduced over the public address in pre-game rituals, the sound system stalled. After a few minutes wait, the Steelmen took the floor, minus the introductions. It was the first of two.

After not being introduced, Lorain, 1-3, took out their frustrations on the 5-0 Little Giants. While Ross trailed only once, 2-0, the Little Giants were never able to get much of a cushion from the pesky Steelmen through the first three quarters.

However, with Dave Kovaleski turning the tide toward Ross, the Little Giants began to get

breathing room in the final quarter. When the lead reached 48-42 with three minutes to play, Lorain was forced to wait again. This time, Ross, not the sound system, was the culprit.

From the three-minute mark of the final period, until 1:27 remained, the Little Giants played keepaway. In the next 22 seconds, Lorain was pressed into foulings, committing three and putting Ross into the bonus situation. Down the stretch, Ross hit eight straight shots from the charity stripe while forcing the Steelmen to stand back and watch.

"Dave Kovaleski played an outstanding game," Ross Coach John Sawyer said. "He shot well and hit the boards well."

Sawyer was also happy with the one rebound that Stacy Johnson hauled down. That clutch grab came off a missed free throw and led to Johnson hitting one of two charity tosses to give Ross a 49-42 lead.

The rebound came at the end of the Ross delay.

"We wanted to get into the four-corners offense

sooner," Sawyer said, "but we could not. When we did get into it, the stall hurt them."

Kovaleski scored nine of his 15 points in the final period, going over the top of Lorain's 6-6 Ken Balmert for many of the points.

Lorain was held scoreless from the 3:10 mark of the final quarter until a harmless jumper by Joel Hartman found the mark with 15 seconds remaining in the game.

Kovaleski's output topped the Little Giants while Greg Bender survived a "box and one" defense on him in the final quarter to score 14.

"The kids had some trouble adapting to that box and one on Bender," Sawyer explained. "Lorain did a good job with it and it took Bender out of our offense. The kids were not used to playing without him."

Ross led 8-6 after the sluggish first quarter but warmed up for a 22-16 halftime lead as Shawn McCarthy scored all six of his points in that period.

A minute into the final quarter, Lorain trimmed Ross's lead to 36-34 before Kovaleski took over. His two free throws gave Ross a four-point lead. Two Kovaleski buckets sandwiched around a Mark Miesle jumper put the Little Giants up 44-36.

Two Miesle free throws and another Kovaleski bucket set up the Ross delay that short-circuited the Steelmen.

Balmert scored 18 to top Lorain. Mike Randle did not score in 12 as Tony Kruman had 10.

"Lorain did a nice job of getting the ball inside to Balmert," Sawyer pointed out. "They also surprised us with how well they boxed out and went to the boards."

Ross held a 33-30 edge on the boards while hitting 22 of 52 shots, 12 of 20 in the second half. Lorain was 20 of 51 from the floor. Ross committed nine turnovers, three less than the Steelmen.

Tonight, Ross will host Findlay, a 74-41 winner over Sandusky Friday.

High school

Ross 57, Lorain 44

Score by quarters

Ross	8	14	14	21-57
Lorain	6	10	14	14-44

Scoring

ROSS — Greg Bender 6-2-14, Dave Kovaleski 6-3-15, Shawn McCarthy 2-2-6, Mark Miesle 3-2-8, Karl Bury 2-0-4, John Cahill 0-2-2, Stacy Johnson 1-2-4, Pat Hetrick 1-0-2, Chris Simmons 1-0-2, totals 22-13-57.

LORAIN — Ken Balmert 9-0-18, Joel Hartman 1-0-2, Cleave Johnson 0-0-0, Tony Kruman 3-4-10, Mike Randle 6-0-12, Carson Coates 1-0-2, total 20-4-44.

Season records: Ross 5-0 (2-0), Lorain 1-5 (1-3).

Ross JV's 51, Lorain 49 (OT)

Score by quarters

Ross	9	13	9	14	6-51
Lorain	8	13	15	9	4-49

Scoring

ROSS — Stan Newell 2-0-4, Matt Reed 0-4-4, Scott Weber 1-2-4, Manoah Jones 2-0-4, Kevin McDonald 1-1-3, Chris Mosser 3-5-11, John Stierwalt 7-7-21, totals 16-19-51.

LORAIN — Joe Charlton 1-0-2, Tony Bummo 1-0-2, Scott Hamrik 2-2-6, Al McDonihe 3-1-7, Tom O'Keefe 1-1-3, Phil Trinter 8-6-22, Art Udovich 0-3-3, Tony Worthy 1-2-4, totals 17-15-49.

Season records: Ross 5-1 (2-0), Lorain 1-5.

A first time for everything

Findlay halts Ross's winning streak at five with controversial 49-45 overtime decision

By BOB MARKER

News-Messenger Sports Editor

Findlay's big weekend saddened Fremont Ross's.

The Trojans, fresh from a 74-41 lacing of previously unbeaten Sandusky Friday night, knocked Ross from the unbeaten ranks with a controversial 49-45 overtime victory Saturday.

The Buckeye Conference clash was not a work of art; it was a work of unmentionable descriptions of the officiating.

Both coaches were extremely disappointed with officials Sam Ciralsky and Terry Good but neither cited it as a reason for the win or loss.

"We had our chance to put them away early as well as toward the end of the game," John Sawyer, Ross coach, said quietly after the contest that dropped Ross to 5-1 and 2-1 in the conference. Findlay is 4-4 and 2-2.

"Some of those calls were unbelievable," Findlay Coach Roger Renz said.

While officiating was raked over the coals, Sawyer agreed that it should not have been a factor had Ross taken advantage of its chances. Findlay made only one of its first 21 shots and two of its first 23 but Ross had only a 23-19 halftime lead.

"We had our chances," Sawyer reaffirmed, "but our offense was

terrible. We had so many opportunities to put them away and did not do it."

The most glaring failure to put the Trojans away sadly fell on the shoulders of junior Stacy Johnson. With less than 15 seconds remaining in regulation and the game deadlocked at 43-43, Johnson got his hand on a Findlay pass, batted it across the midcourt line, picked it up, dribbled to the basket but while going up with the ball, lost control and was called for traveling.

That was just one mistake of many that Sawyer pointed out, again indicating that Ross should not have been in the position if the Little Giants had taken advantage of the earlier opportunities.

Ross grabbed as much as a nine-point lead in the second quarter but with Chris DeGennaro coming off the bench to spark a Findlay surge, the Trojans climbed back into the game at the half.

In the third quarter, Findlay, with DeGennaro dropping in six points, kept plugging away until DeGennaro's two free throws caught Ross at 29-29 with 4½ minutes remaining in the third quarter. Findlay took the lead at 31-29 on buckets by Jim Steffen and Chad McClellan. When the Trojans got the lead, Renz immediately had his team slow

the pace down while attempting to pull Ross out of a zone defense.

"Ross plays zone defense very well and we wanted to get them out of it, so we held it to pull them out," Renz said.

Ross never led again, tying the Trojans twice at 41 and 43, the score at the end of regulation.

In the extra three minutes, Jon Irish hit one of two free throws 24 seconds into the session to give Findlay a 44-43 lead. The Trojans' advantage climbed to three on McClellan's jumper from the foul line at the 1:08 mark.

With Ross misfiring offensively, the Trojans began to nail the coffin lid down tightly. McClellan hit one of two from the line and Chris Weaver sealed it with two more charity tosses with six second remaining.

Like Sawyer, Renz agreed that his team had the opportunity to win the game, not earlier but at the end if it had made its free throws.

Findlay was just 17 of 31 at the line while hitting 16 of 49 shots.

Ross was 18 of 48 from the field and nine of 13 from the line. Findlay, much to Renz's pleasant surprise, stuck with Ross on the boards while trailing 35-31 in that department.

Ross committed 21 turnovers against the pressure Findlay defense, 11 more than the Trojans.

Boys

Findlay 49, Ross 45 (OT)

Score by quarters

Findlay	8	11	16	8	6-49
Ross	11	12	9	11	2-45

Scoring

FINDLAY — Jon Irish 2-4-8, Mark Ritzler 2-3-7, Rich Baerwaldt 1-0-2, Chris Weaver 4-2-10, Chad McClellan 4-1-9, Jim Steffen 1-0-2, Chris DeGennaro 3-5-11, totals 16-17-49.

ROSS — Greg Bender 9-7-25, Dave Kovaleski 2-2-6, Shawn McCarthy 5-0-10, Mark Miesle 2-0-4, Karl Bury 0-0-0, totals 18-9-45.

Season records: Ross 5-1 (2-1), Findlay 4-4 (2-2).

Findlay JVs 52, Ross 47

Score by quarters

Findlay	12	8	14	18	52
Ross	8	9	12	18	47

Scoring

FINDLAY — Jim Givens 6-1-13, Rick Hoffman 1-2-4, Jeff Denman 1-0-2, Barry Pry 4-4-12, Doug Hosey 3-1-7, Mark Roynan 4-4-12, totals 20-12-52

ROSS — Brooks 2-0-4, McGee 0-1-1, Manoah Jones 3-2-8, Scott Weber 1-2-4, Stierwalt 3-3-9, McDonald 1-0-2, Mosser 2-1-5, Reed 3-4-10, Stan Newell 2-0-4, totals 17-13-47.

Season records: Ross 4-2, Findlay 5-3.



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy

GREG BENDER (32) of Fremont Ross is surrounded in the third quarter by Sandusky defenders Brian Cooper (44) and Bill Carr (rear) and an unidentified Blue Streak.



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy

KARL BURY of Ross gets a good look at Chris Williams of Sandusky.

Little Giants win No. 6

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

Ross added a new chapter to the old Cleveland Browns philosophy of the rubber band defense. Enough but don't break.

Ross did bend but did not break defense. The band was stretched a decidedly new bend to its offense while finishing just strong enough to hold off Sandusky 58-53 Friday in a Buckeye Conference basketball game at Ross High School.

Greg Bender, the leading scorer in the conference was off offense but he did defend well, blocking a layup attempt by David Belle with 32 seconds to play that would have cut Ross's lead to 56-55. The blocked shot ended up in the hands of Little Giant Mark Miesle who was fouled by Todd Croome.

Miesle calmly sank both shots to give Ross the final five-point bulge.

The Little Giants are 6-1 and 3-1 in the conference while Sandusky dropped its third straight, while falling to 4-5 and 2-3 in the BC.

Miesle was the star of the Little Giants offense. He had been there all along, calmly averaging a quiet 10 points per game, second highest on the Little Giants.

Against Sandusky, Miesle hit his first shot, missed his second

and then rammed home seven in a row while finishing with a game high 20 points. Bender, averaging a shade over 20 per contest, did not score in the first quarter, came on in the second and fourth quarters and two in the third to register 14. Dave Kovaleski was the third Little Giant in double figures with 10.

Bender was credited with three blocked shots in the contest while pulling down a big chunk of the Little Giants' 28 rebounds.

"Offensively, we did pretty good I thought," Ross Coach John Sawyer said. "Down toward the end, Sandusky took a couple of tough shots that went in and they put the pressure on us."

"Offensively," Sawyer continued, "we made too many long passes and we tried to force the ball inside too much and that let them back into the game."

Little Giants built a 14-point lead twice — once in the second quarter and again early in the final eight minutes.

Shawn McCarthy's stuff shot after a wild scramble beneath the Ross basket gave Ross a 46-38

lead at the end of three and seemingly turned the momentum to Ross. John Cahill's bucket 10 seconds into the final quarter put the Little Giants up by 14.

That's when Sawyer felt his

team became lax offensively. "I think we got up that much and the kids became lax thinking that Sandusky would fold," Sawyer said.

Belle pumped in nine of his 14 points in the final quarter, bringing the Blue Streaks back into contention. Sandusky chipped away until with 2:30 to play, Luis Guevara's jumper from the left side brought Sandusky to within three, 56-53.

At that point, Sawyer put the ball in a semi-frigid deep freeze. Sandusky was able to force a Ross turnover that led to Bender's rejection of Belle's shot. That ended the Blue Streaks' three.

"Belle was off in his shooting tonight," the Ross coach described, "but Miesle was on. That speaks a little for the team: it can play well even when Bender is not scoring. We had 36 points at the half."

Local people say that we are a one-man team but I don't believe they can say that now."

Ross hit 23 of 45 from the floor and canned a torrid 12 of 14 free throws. Sandusky was 21 of 54 from the floor and 10 of 16 from the free throw line. Ross had a 33-27 edge in rebounding over the much smaller Blue Streaks. The Little Giants committed 23 turnovers, nine more than Sandusky.

Ross 58, Sandusky 53

Score by quarters

Sandusky	12	16	6	19-53
Ross	14	22	10	12-58

Scoring

SANDUSKY — Brian Watson 6-1-13, David Belle 5-4-14, Brian Cooper 0-4-4, Bill Carr 2-2-6, Todd Croom 6-0-12, Luis Guerara 1-0-2, Chris Williams 1-0-2, totals 21-11-53.

ROSS — Greg Bender 5-4-14, Dave Kovaleski 4-2-10, Shawn McCarthy 2-0-4, Mark Miesle 9-2-20, John Cahill 3-2-8, Stacy Johnson 0-0-0, Karl Bury 0-0-0, Gregg Gallagher 0-2-2, Chris Simmons 0-0-0, totals 23-12-58.

Season records: Ross 6-1 (3-1), Sandusky 4-4 (2-3).

Ross JV's 46, Sandusky 40

Score by quarters

Sandusky	9	11	12	8-40
Ross	13	9	9	15-46

Scoring

SANDUSKY — Derrick Keys 1-0-2, Eric Jordan 7-2-16, LaMar Brown 3-0-6, Paul Smoot 2-0-4, Vince Phillips 5-2-12, totals 18-4-40.

ROSS — Stan Newell 2-0-4, Matt Reed 5-2-12, Scott Weber 0-2-2, Manoah Jones 3-0-6, Kevin McDonald 2-0-4, Chris Mosser 4-2-10, John Stierwalt 2-4-8, totals 18-10-46.

Season records: Ross 5-2, Sandusky 5-3.

Ross cage teams on road again

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

The Ross girls will get back to the hardware first after the holidays, traveling to Clyde tonight to take on the once-beaten Lady Fliers.

Friday, the Ross boys will hit the road for a Buckeye Conference clash against Elyria.

"We have to stop Collins (Lois) on the inside," Ross girls Coach Sue Wolf said about her team's opponent. "Clyde plays a '1-3-1' with Collins down low. She is especially good on the offensive boards," Wolf continued. "She's good at getting the ball and putting it back up."

Wolf said she is also impressed with Lady Fliers Joely Andrews and Stacy Berlekamp.

As for her own team, Wolf said the Lady Giants, 4-5, must get more consistent scoring.

"We have been having players, lately, scoring in streaks; we have not had anyone scoring consistently in all the quarters."

The Ross coach is pleased with the fact that she does have a healthy team.

"It is the first time in a long time that we have had all our players at practice at one time," she pointed out.

The junior varsity game begins at 6 p.m.

Coach John Sawyer is taking his 5-1 Little Giants into the home of the Pioneers hoping that he does not catch Elyria napping.

"Smith (Henry) is a sleeper," the Ross coach said while meaning the opposite. "He has scored 17, 11 and 14 in the last three games and he seems to be

making things happen around him."

The Pioneers are 4-3 for the season but have scored 80 and 88 points in their last two wins — 80-49 over Sandusky and 88-46 over Marion Harding.

"From what I have read, the coaches feel that Elyria is playing very well right now," Sawyer said.

"They will run a lot and try to press defensively," the Ross coach continued. "They have been scoring a lot off their inside game which has been working extremely well for them."

Elyria will start Brian Rogers and Jared Wilbanks, both seniors, outside, with Smith, Ed Uszynski and Michael Martin down low. Martin is the tallest Pioneer starter at 6-3.

The Pioneers bring a Cannon (Mark) off the bench and the 6-4 sophomore has been gunning down opponents regularly. In his last outing, he scored 16 points to go with 10 rebounds and three blocked shots, all while coming off the bench.

The top scorer for the Pioneers is Wilbanks with a 14-point norm and Martin with 13 per game.

Sawyer is expected to start conference leading scorer (20.1) Greg Bender with Mark Miesle, Shawn McCarthy, John Cahill and Dave Kovaleski. McCarthy at 6-8, Bender at 6-5 and Kovaleski at 6-3 give the Little Giants a decided height advantage.

In other Ross notes, Sawyer and assistant Coach Chuck Lindsey named Bender as the team's defensive player of the week for his work against Sandusky.

Elyria dumps Ross

ELYRIA — Mark Cannon blew Ross apart in the final quarter Friday in a 63-51 win over the Little Giants in a Buckeye Conference basketball game.

Cannon, 6-4 sophomore, grabbed a pair of rebounds and converted them for baskets during a seven-point run that netted the Pioneers a 50-45 lead midway through the fourth quarter.

"They hurt us on the boards," Ross Coach John Sawyer said after his team absorbed its second loss in eight games and had its conference mark leveled at 2-2. "They got a couple of rebounds off missed free throws that really hurt."

The second Cannon bucket came off a missed free throw. Ross jumped out to a 28-21 lead at the half as Elyria managed to keep in the game despite making just six of 21 shots from the floor. In the third quarter, the Pioneers caught fire.

Eight of the first 10 shots in the third eight minutes hit nothing but net as the Pioneers outscored the Little Giants 19-9 to take a 40-37 lead. Elyria slapped a press on the Little Giants and Ross had trouble handling it.

"They trapped us," Sawyer described, "we had guys open but did not see them."

"But we had our chances, a lot of them," the Ross coach said, "but we did not take advantage of them."

Ross came back to take the lead in the fourth quarter 45-43 on Dave Kovaleski's basket but Elyria brought in its Cannon at that point to shoot the Little Giants down.

Greg Bender topped Ross scoring with 22 points but he had only two points in the final quarter. Mark Miesle added 10 for the Little Giants.

Elyria, up 52-47 with 1:45 remaining in the game, ran out the string with 11 free throws, part of a 13 for 17 charity stripe show in that quarter.

Brian Rogers paced Elyria with 16 points. Jared Wilbanks added 12 and Michael Martin dropped in 11, also for Elyria.

"Our kids did not give up," Sawyer said, "and the worked hard but in that press, we were just not able to hit the open man."

Ross was 20 of 52 from the floor and 11 of 14 at the line but on the boards, the Little Giants were beaten 37-20. Elyria was 20 of 45 and 23 of 32 at the foul line. The Pioneers survived 26 turnovers which included a streak of eight straight giveaways in the first half. Ross had 20 turnovers.

Ross will be back in action Friday, hosting undefeated Admiral King.

High school

Elyria 63, Ross 51

Score by quarters

Ross	13	15	9	14-51
Elyria	10	11	19	23-63

Scoring

ROSS — Gregg Bender 9-4-22, Dave Kovaleski 4-8, Stacy Johnson 0-5-5, Mark Miesle 5-0-10, John Cahill 0-2-2, Karl Bury 1-0-2, Gregg Gallagher 1-0-2, totals 20-11-51.

ELYRIA — Jared Wilbanks 4-4-12, Michael Martin 3-5-11, Mark Cannon 4-1-9, Henry Smith 2-6, Brian Rogers 5-6-16, Ed Uszinski 2-5-9, totals 20-23-63.

Season records: Ross 6-2 (3-2), Elyria 5-3 (4-1).

Ross girls begin BC season; boys face state-ranked AK

By BOB MARKER

News-Messenger Sports Editor

The Ross girls will open the Buckeye Conference basketball slate this evening while the boys team will see double duty this weekend.

The Lady Giants, 4-6, hosts Marion Harding at Ross High School. The junior varsity game begins at 6 p.m. while the varsity game gets under way at approximately 7:15 p.m.

"Marion is a young team," Ross Coach Sue Wolf said. "They had problems early but are now playing better from what I have heard."

The Lady Giants have lost their last two games.

Friday, the Ross boys will host Admiral King, ranked third in the Class AAA Associated Press high school poll. The Admirals are 9-0 and 5-0 in the Buckeye Conference. Ross is 6-2 and 3-2 in conference play.

"It's a thrill to play a team like that," Ross Coach John Sawyer said about Admiral King. "The kids should be looking forward to it; I know I am."

Sawyer admitted that his team has been looking toward the game for some time, maybe too much so.

"The kids have been talking about this game since they were 4-0," Sawyer explained, "but I don't

think that is why we have played badly lately but this game was a big thing until we lost to Findlay."

Sawyer added that he expects his team to be ready for the unbeaten Admirals but he warned that Admiral King could be fired up more so than usual.

"They could come in here with fire in their eyes," he said, "because they may have anticipated being ranked number one."

Sawyer said that Admiral King will be pressing the Little Giants, a defense that did not bother the Little Giants much early in the season but which has caused problems the past two games.

"They will give us a lot of defensive looks and in the second half of most of their games this season, their defense has usually been dominate," Sawyer said. "They seem to have a little trouble in the first half but have really been playing well in the second half. They will press our guards while disguising the pressing defenses they will play."

"We have to control the tempo of the game and play well against those presses."

Saturday, Ross will host Tiffin Columbian in a non-conference clash.

BUCKEYE STATS: Admiral King is the top offensive and defensive team, averaging nearly

70 points per game while yielding 50. Ross is second in defense with 51 and fourth offensively with 58 per game.

Individually, Greg Bender leads the conference in scoring at 19.6 and free throw percentage with 92.8 on 39 of 42. The 6-5 senior ranks fifth in rebounding with nearly 10 per game and is 12th in field goal percentage on 59 of 113 shots.

Mark Miesle is 12th in BC scoring with an 11.2 average and is ninth in rebounding with six per game.

Dave Kovaleski is 11th in field goal percentage with 52.4 and is 15th in rebounding at five per game. Shawn McCarthy is fourth in field goal shooting with 56.2 and 13th in rebounding with a little over five per contest.

Karl Bury is the conference leader in assists with five per game.

For Admiral King, 6-4 Tim Moore ranks fifth in scoring with 15-point average. Three other Admirals — Adrian Harris, Milton Cook and David Bansek — average between 11 and 10 points per contest.

Moore is second in rebounding with a dozen a contest while Mitch Gillam, son of Admiral King Coach Mitch Gillam Sr., is second in assists with 4.9 per game.

Ross falls short in upset bid of Admirals

King stays unbeaten with slowdown tactic in the final 5 minutes

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

Lorain Admiral King got just enough of a cushion to deny Ross's upset bid while chalking up its 10th win against no losses in high school basketball action at Ross High School Friday.

The Admirals' 50-44 win over the Little Giants raised their Buckeye Conference mark to 6-0 while Ross slipped to 6-3 and 3-3 in the conference chase.

To hold off the pesky Little Giants, the Admirals had to resort to an uncharacteristic delay game in the final five minutes of the contest.

That slowdown and a deft passing game kept Ross scoreless for the final four minutes and 38 seconds.

"If we could have gotten up by three points, we would have done the same thing," Ross Coach John Sawyer said after he had watched his plans carried out by the wrong team.

Shawn McCarthy's two free throws with 4:38 remaining put Ross up 44-43, but that was the

last time the Little Giants moved the ball.

Forty seconds later, Mitch Gillam, son of Admiral King Coach Mitch Gillam, knocked in two free throws to set the stage for the slow-down.

The Admirals forced a Little Giants' turnover on the trip down the court that sent the Lorain team into a holding pattern. Not until 62 seconds remained in the game did the stall end, that for a Ross foul. Gillam, the son, went to the line and calmly hit two more shots.

In the final 45 seconds, Ross committed 10 fouls, and Coach Gillam had dodged another bullet in the Ross "Purple Pit."

"I have been coming over here for 14 years," Gillam said while heaving a sigh of relief, "and I have not had an easy game here yet."

Greg Bender, the Buckeye Conference's leading scorer, plus Bury and McCarthy, who both came off the bench, were thorns in Gillam's side. Gillam admitted that he was not surprised by the performance of McCarthy, a 6-8 junior.

"It did not surprise me that he went in there and played well," he said. "I did not expect him to go out there and pout."

McCarthy finished with eight points, second high behind Bender's 12. Bury was added into the lineup early when Ross' Mark Miesler was saddled with his second foul 40 seconds into the game. Bury scored six points and helped Ross beat the vaunted Admiral King pressure.

"We handled the pressure well," Sawyer said. "We generally passed well but the few poor passes that we did throw killed us."

"I may have psyched myself out," Gillam admitted. "I think we could have had more pressure on them but they (the Little Giants) shoot 70 percent from the line and I did not want to put them on the line."

"It's also a case where they have been facing a lot of pressure so they have to get better at it."

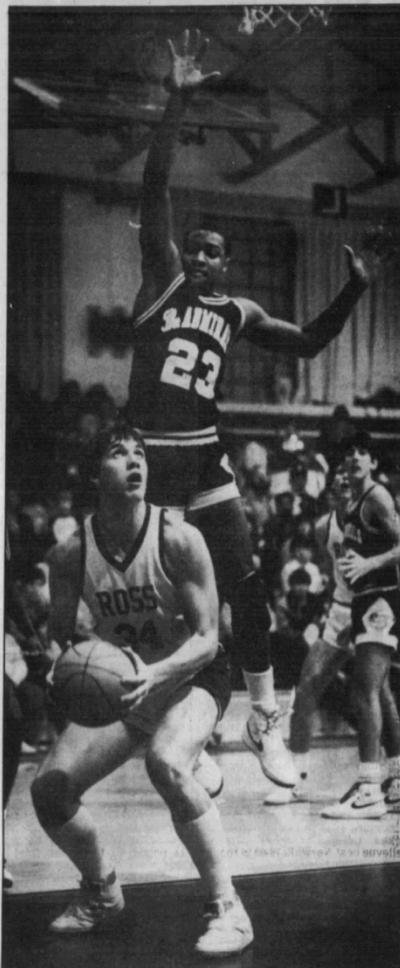
The Admirals' coach also pointed out that his team, had it made free throws, "could have won by 15 points."

"We got good games from the kids coming off the bench," Sawyer said while clicking off the names of Bury, McCarthy and Chris Simmons.

"Sure, this game puts another 'L' in the loss column," Sawyer said, "but these kids don't have to be sad or ashamed. They played well and we get to go at them again down the line."

The Admirals' biggest lead of the game was six points on several occasions. Ross had single-point leads three different times in the final 12 minutes.

Bender's effort topped all scorers while Gillam's 16 led the



DAVE KOVALESKI (34) of Ross eyes the basket as Admiral King's Tim Moore goes high to try to stop him.



ROSS COACH John Sawyer ponders things during the Little Giants' game with Admiral King Friday night in Fremont.



ROSS'S GREG BENDER (32) drives around Admiral King's Lebron Gladden.

Admirals. David Bansek added 10 and Adrian Harris had nine for the Admirals.

Three of Ross's five starters did not score in the contest. Miesler, the Little Giants' leading scoring, with an 11-plus average, was saddled with foul trouble throughout the contest and was held scoreless. That was much the same fate suffered by the Admirals' Tim Moore who had entered the contest with a 15-point average. Moore had one point in

the contest while being a spectator the majority of the night.

Ross was 15 of 33 from the field and Admiral King 17 of 42. The Admirals hit 16 of 21 free throws and Ross 10 of 15. In the rebounding department, Ross led 27-22. The Little Giants committed 16 turnovers, double that of Admiral King.

Tonight, the Little Giants will host Tiffin Columbian in a non-conference game.

High school

Boys

Admiral King 50, Ross 44

Score by quarters

Admiral King	13	15	10	12—50
Ross	10	14	11	9—44

Scoring

ADMIRAL KING — Tim Moore 0-1-1, David Bansek 3-4-10, Adrian Harris 4-1-9, Milton Cook 3-2-8, Mitch Gillam 6-4-16, Lebron Gladden 0-4-4, Joe Rowser 1-0-2, totals 17-16-50.

ROSS — Greg Bender 7-9-23, Mark Miesle 0-0-0, Shawn McCarthy 3-2-8, Dave Kovaleski 3-1-7, Karl Bury 2-2-6, Stacy Johnson 0-0-0, John Cahill 0-0-0, totals 15-14-44.

Season records: Admiral King 10-0 (6-0), Ross 6-3 (3-3).

Ad. King JVs 48, Ross 38

Score by quarters

Admiral King	10	16	12	10—48
Ross	9	7	12	10—38

Scoring

ADMIRAL KING — Jose Ortiz 4-0-8, Mike Carrico 4-2-10, Kelvin Harvey 2-1-5, George McCall 1-0-2, Derrick Thomas 4-1-9, Andre Campbell 1-0-2, Doug Navalinsky 3-0-6, Randy Cato 3-0-6, totals 22-4-48.

ROSS — Scott Weber 2-0-4, Kevin Brooks 4-6-14, Manoah Jones 3-0-6, Kevin McDonald 1-2-4, Chris Mosser 0-2-2, John Stiewalt 3-1-7, totals 13-12-38.

Season records: Admiral King 10-0 (6-0), Ross 6-3 (4-2).

Ross holds off Columbian

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

John Sawyer refused to call it methodical but he admitted that Saturday's 59-49 Ross victory over Tiffin Columbian was predictable.

"It went the way we expected," he explained. "We expected that we would be down after the emotional game Friday night (a 50-44 loss to Lorain Admiral King).

"And we expected them to be up after the Willard (a 71-46 loss) game," Sawyer continued. "I give them lots of credit for not giving up, especially after the way they shot in the first half."

The Tornadoes, 4-7, canned only three of 15 first-half shots but trailed by only 28-18, relying on free-throw shooting to keep in the game. Ross was 11 of 26 in the same time span and six of seven at the line while Columbian canned 12 of 15 free throws.

In the third quarter, Columbian, led by Mark Cunningham and Doug White, both 6-6, hit eight of 16 shots but was able to chip only a point off the Ross lead, 44-35. Ross got six points apiece from Greg Bender, Stacy Johnson and Mark Miesle in the period while seeming to bend a little, but never coming close to breaking.

"We just did not have the killer instinct tonight," Sawyer said while explaining that he felt his team could have put more space between it and the Tornadoes.

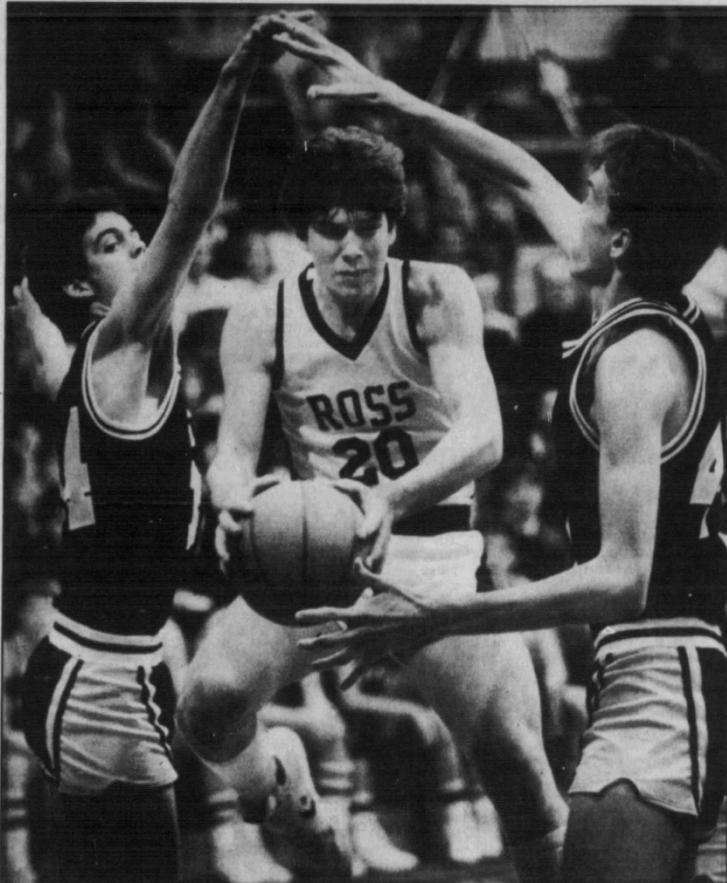
Columbian cut Ross's lead to five, 46-41, three minutes into the final quarter before Sawyer called timeout to cool off the suddenly hot Tornadoes.

Columbian was never able to get any closer although with 1:20 remaining, the Tornadoes still trailed by only five, 52-47. The Tornadoes were forced to foul the remainder of the game and Ross canned six of nine from the line to preserve the win. The final Ross bucket, a 22-footer by Miesle, fell through as the buzzer reverberated off the walls of The Purple Pit.

Sawyer used all 10 of his players in the game and he was pleased with the performance that his subs produced.

"Bury (Karl), McCarthy (Shawn) and Simmons (Chris) played well coming in," he praised, "and that is what I am looking for."

Ross, 7-3, was led by Bender's 16 points and McCarthy's 12 to go along with a pair of blocked shots.



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy

KARL BURY (20) of Fremont is surrounded by 6-6 Columbian players Mark Cunningham, left, and

Doug White. The 5-11 Bury was able to pass the ball off to a teammate on the play.

Miesle, troubled by fouls and held scoreless in the Admiral King game, again had early foul trouble but finished with 10 points for the Little Giants. Simmons had eight.

Cunningham, a senior, finished with a game-high 20 points while

White, a sophomore, popped in a dozen for Columbian. Another Columbian sophomore, Tony Speaker hit four of five fourth-quarter shots for all eight of his points.

Ross had 28 rebounds, two more than Columbian, and committed

14 turnovers. The Tornadoes had 17 giveaways.

The Little Giants were 24 of 51 from the floor and Columbian 18 of 42.

Ross is idle until Saturday when it travels to Toledo to play the Whitmer Panthers.



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy

THERE IT GOES! Four players are on the floor and it appears as though another one is headed that way during a play in the first half of the Tiffin Columbian-Ross game Saturday. Ross's Mark Miesle, right, eventually came up with the ball. From left to right

are, Stacy Johnson of Ross, Mark Cunningham of Columbian, Greg Bender of Ross, Brian Daniel of Columbian and Miesle. David Kin (15) of Columbian and Dave Kovaleski (34) of Ross watch the wild scramble.

High school

Ross 59, Columbian 49

Score by quarters

Columbian	5	13	17	14	—49
Ross	11	17	16	15	—59

Scoring

COLUMBIAN — David Kin 1-0-2, Tony Speaker 4-0-8, Rod Kagy 2-0-4, Brian Daniel 0-2-2, Mark Cunningham 7-6-20, Brian Briggs 0-1-1, Doug White 4-4-12, totals 18-13-49.

ROSS — Karl Bury 1-3-5, Mark Miesle 4-2-10, Greg Bender 6-4-16, Tracy Johnson 2-0-4, Shawn McCarthy 6-0-12, Chris Simmons 3-2-8, Dave Kovaleski 1-0-2, John Cahill 1-0-2, totals 24-11-59.

Season records: Ross 7-3, Columbian 4-7.

Col. JV's 43, Ross 38 (OT)

Score by quarters

Columbian	4	8	9	14	8—43
Ross	11	8	10	6	3—38

Scoring

COLUMBIAN — Chris Cook 1-2-4, Chris Payne 3-0-6, Mike McDonald 1-5-7, John Shook 1-0-2, Bill Wise 1-0-2, Keith Reinbolt 4-6-14, Doug Paul 2-4-8, totals 13-17-43.

ROSS — Matt Reed 3-2-8, Scott Weber 0-1-1, Kevin Brooks 2-0-4, Manoah Jones 2-0-4, Kevin McDonald 4-0-8, totals 17-4-38.

Season records: Columbian 5-6, Ross 6-4.

Ross loses in double OT...

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

TOLEDO — Whitmer led only once, but when it got that lead, the Panthers never surrendered it in a double overtime, 60-48 high school basketball win over Fremont Ross Saturday.

The game, a non-league test for each school, was marred by a final seconds argument which ended with Ross Coach John Sawyer and assistant Coach Chuck Lindsey banished from the game.

Ironically the last seconds blowups would never have happened, had it not been for a fateful roll of the basketball at the end of regulation.

After David Ice had tied the game, 44-44, with seven seconds remaining on a driving layup, Ross's Mark Miesle's shot off the backboard bounced off the rim but was grabbed by the Little Giants' Shawn McCarthy.

The 6-8 junior put the ball back up off the board but the ball after spinning partially in, fell back out as the buzzer sounded.

Miesle gave Ross a 46-44 lead 14 seconds into the first overtime but a pair of free throws by Scott Grant at the 1:56 mark tied it for the Panthers. Whitmer had the final shot of the first overtime but a desperation shot by Jeff Keifer was well off the mark.

Steve Rutkowski, a 6-4 senior, put Whitmer ahead for good 62 seconds into the second extra session, canning a shot from the right baseline. That was it; Whitmer got the advantage when Ross's John Cahill was called for traveling 15 seconds later.

A parade to the foul line and the fireworks started after that as the game heated up to a degree that rivaled the cold temperatures outside the Whitmer gym.

Todd Baumgartner, who came off the Whitmer bench to score 17 points, cannoned a pair of free throws at the 1:34 mark. Keifer followed with two more charity tosses at the 1:21 mark before Greg Bender tipped in a Ross shot for the Little Giants' only points of the second overtime.

After that, it was Panther free throws and arguments.

After a pair of technical fouls on Sawyer called by official Al Mocek and a stuff on a breakaway by Baumgartner, the game was all over except for the final melee.

That occurred with 18 seconds to play when Keifer put in the final two technicals to make it 60-48.

Ross finished with five players on the floor after Sawyer had sent the player on his bench into the locker room after fans from the

Whitmer side of the court began to stream onto the floor. Ross did not contest the inbounds Whitmer pass at midcourt. The Panthers simply held the ball the final seconds.

In regulation, Ross led 43-39 after a pair of Dave Kovaleski free throws with 41 seconds to play. Ross had gone into a delay game after going up 41-37 with 3:02 remaining.

Rutkowski clicked on a three-point play with 25 seconds remaining but McCarthy hit one of two free throws to put the Little Giants up 44-42 with 20 seconds to play.

After calling timeout, Whitmer got the tying points on Ice's drive.

"We were up two and they had the ball," Sawyer recalled. "We had two fouls to waste. I told the kids not to let them have a decent shot but he penetrated and that killed us."

"I don't think the kids played well mentally," Sawyer said. "I think I would rather see us play the top 10 teams in the state; we seem to play better against very good teams."

Keifer and Baumgartner paced the Panthers' attack with 17 points apiece. Rutkowski added a dozen. Bender had 18, Kovaleski 12 and Miesle 10 for the Little Giants.

...in temper-marred game

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

TOLEDO — It was an explosive ending to a mediocre high school basketball game.

Tempers soared to the point where punches appeared to be just an angry word away in Whitmer's 60-48 double overtime victory over Fremont Ross.

The ending was marked by the ejections of Fremont Ross head Coach John Sawyer and his assistant Chuck Lindsey and the angry tirade of Whitmer Athletic Director Frank Erme.

Tempers flared 18 seconds from the end of the second overtime after being kindled in the latter stage of regulation.

Sawyer was assessed two technicals by game official Al Mocek while arguing with Mocek's partner, Sam Cirlasky. Sawyer was ejected after receiving his second technical following the ejection of Lindsey.

The spark that ignited the fiery outburst began with a Whitmer player who, according to several Ross players, spat toward the Ross bench with 18 seconds remaining in the second overtime.

Lindsey, seeing a possible confrontation, stepped between Ross and Whitmer players. That led to his ejection by Mocek.

The ejection caught Lindsey by surprise.

"I got between them and he threw me out," Lindsey said after cooler heads prevailed. "I did not touch either one. I did say to him (Mocek) that it was getting out of hand. That's when he said, 'That's it...you're out!'

"Then he came back later," Lindsey continued, "and said I went after one of the kids."

Lindsey was not assessed a technical foul.

"I went up to him (Mocek) after that and asked who had been thrown out," Sawyer explained. "He said, 'The black guy (Lindsey is black) and you for what you just said.'"

Prior to that, Sawyer had questioned several calls in the latter stages of the game. He also said that he told Mocek that he was writing a letter concerning his officiating to the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA).

He explained, "He (Mocek) was calling two-shot (deliberate) fouls on us which I felt were wrong and then when we did make a foul that should have been a two-shot one, he called it a 'one and on' and I felt that was just throwing it back in our faces."

The officials left the building shortly after the game and were unavailable for comment.

While this war of words, technical fouls and ejections was going on, fans on the Whitmer side of the stands were streaming onto the floor. That prompted Sawyer to remove his players on the bench to the locker room. That action brought an angry Erme, Ross Assistant Principal Jim Wright and assistant Ross High School athletic director Gary Nossaman into the fray.

Sawyer did not send all of the Ross players to the locker room, instead leaving four on the floor. A fifth player, then came back to the playing area.

"I removed the players because I wanted to protect them," Sawyer said while noting he had seen the fans coming onto the floor. "I wanted to leave only five on the floor to finish out the game."

"I went to John (Sawyer) to tell him he had to have five on the floor," Nossaman said. "He had

only four on the floor at that time. When I told him that, John Cahill came back out of the locker room to the floor."

The removal of the Ross players to the locker room apparently angered Erme.

"I came down and tried to go into the locker room to see John (Sawyer)," Wright explained. "I wanted to tell John that he could not pull the team off the floor, but this guy (later Wright found out it was Erme) would not let me go in. He got upset with me."

Sawyer said that Erme kept yelling at him that he could not take his team to the locker room. "I kept trying to explain it to him," the Ross coach said, "and I tried to explain to Nossaman what I was doing but that guy (Erme) kept interfering with me."

"All I was trying to do was diffuse the situation and protect my kids."

Nossaman pointed out that he did not get involved until Erme came on the scene and he witnessed the Whitmer AD's outburst. Then, he said, his concern was keeping the Ross students in the stands.

"The situation (on the floor) did get out of hand," Nossaman said, "but we had taken a busload of students to the game and I wanted to keep them in stands."

Nossaman was successful with that.

After the floor had been cleared and Sawyer and Lindsey were in the locker room with the players, play was resumed with 18 seconds remaining. Brian Wilch, the Ross junior varsity coach, was the acting varsity coach.

"I just did not want anything else to happen," Wilch explained his maneuvering in those final seconds, "so I got the five on the floor, told them to stay close to the bench and when time was off the clock, to get out of there." Whitmer inbounded the ball uncontested but just held the ball the remaining seconds.



High school

Whitmer 60, Ross 48 (2 OT)

Score by quarters

Ross	14	7	16	7	2	2-48
Whitmer	7	12	12	13	2	14-60

Scoring

ROSS — Greg Bender 7-4-18, Dave Kovaleski 5-4-14, Stacy Johnson 0-0-0, Mark Miesle 5-0-10, John Cahill 1-0-2, Shawn McCarthy 0-2-2, Gregg Gallagher 1-0-2, totals 19-10-48.

WHITMER — David Ice 3-2-8, Scott Grant 5-2-12, Jeff Keifer 4-9-17, Steve Rutkowski 4-4-12, Todd Baumgartner 7-3-17, totals 20-20-60.

Season records: Whitmer 9-4, Ross 7-4.

Whitmer JVs 47, Ross 33

Score by quarters

Ross	4	8	12	9-33
Whitmer	14	14	6	13-47

Scoring

ROSS — Matt Reed 2-0-4, Stan Newell 3-0-6, Kevin Brooks 2-1-5, Kevin McDonald 1-1-3, Tracy McGee 0-1-1, Chris Mosser 3-3-9, John Stierwalt 2-1-5, totals 13-7-33.

WHITMER — Mark Eberflus 4-0-8, Tom Hood 2-1-5, John Dzikowski 7-6-20, Dave Digby 4-0-8, Steve Bailey 1-0-2, Kevin Kopfman 2-0-4, totals 20-7-47.

Season records: Whitmer 10-3, Ross 6-5.

Ross boys hang on to beat Marion

Fremont Ross bent, but did not break while slipping past Marion Harding 56-53 in a Buckeye Conference boys basketball game at Marion Tuesday night.

The Little Giants, up 45-31 heading into the final minutes, had to get a bucket from Karl Bury with 25 seconds remaining to break a 53-53 deadlock.

Harding, getting three long-range buckets from Fritz Wink and two more by Willie Owens, had run off 10 straight points to tie the game with 1:10 remaining to play.

In other games involving Fremont area teams, Lakota defeated Elmwood 73-58 and Old Fort topped Arcadia 77-52.

"They started to hit from the outside and got hot at the foul line," Ross Coach John Sawyer said about Harding's 10-point run. "It was one of those things where there was nothing that we could do because the kids were doing what we wanted but Harding was hitting the shots and the free throws and getting the steals."

The tying bucket was scored by Owens on a layup off a steal.

Bury brought Harding's point run to an end with his shot from the corner. Greg Bender iced the game by hitting the front end of a one-and-one with seven seconds remaining in the game.

Bender finished with 11 points, the only Little Giant in double figures, and now

needs 17 points to hit the 1,000-point mark for his career. He should accomplish that this weekend when Ross entertains Lorain Senior Friday and Toledo Libbey Saturday.

Dave Kovaleski, Shawn McCarthy and sophomore John Stierwalt, who was moved up from the junior varsity squad, had eight points apiece for Ross. Eleven Little Giants saw action in the contest.

Wink had 15 points for Harding and Jerry Carter finished with 11.

Lakota 73

Elmwood 58

The Raiders, behind Mike Zipfel and Mike Miller, rallied from a four-point halftime deficit to thwart the Royals' upset bid in Bloomdale.

Elmwood led 35-31 at the half, but Lakota came back to take a 50-44 lead at the end of three quarters. Zipfel fired in 15 of his game-high 28 points in the third quarter.

The Raiders then put a lid on the win by outscoring the Royals 23-14 in the final period. Miller had all 11 of his points in that quarter.

"Elmwood hit 14 of 20 shots in the first half. That's 70 percent," pointed out Lakota Coach Paul Gnepper. "We put more pressure on them in the second half and that

helped give us more opportunities for our fastbreak."

With the come-from-behind victory, the Raiders take a half-game lead over Genoa for the top spot in the Suburban Lakes League. Lakota is 6-1 and Genoa 5-1. Overall, the Raiders are 9-2. Elmwood slips to 3-8 overall and 2-5 in the league.

Dave Carlo also scored in double figures for the winners with 10 points. Zipfel and Kurt Brewer led Lakota in rebounding with 10 and nine, respectively.

Elmwood, which ended up making 21 of 37 shots (57 percent), was paced by Andy Sheline's 20 points.

Old Fort 77

Arcadia 52

Matt Hiestand continued his strong play this season with a 23-point, 15-rebound effort to lead the Stockaders to the easy victory over the Redskins in Arcadia.

Eleven players dented the scoring column for the Stockaders, as they moved to leads of 20-10 after one quarter, 36-18 at halftime and 53-27 after three periods.

Also scoring in twin figures for the winners besides Hiestand were Bart Shaull and Jeff Abbott, with 13 points each, and Tim Omlor with 12.

Old Fort is now 9-2 while Arcadia is 7-8.

Boys

Ross 56, Marion 53

Score by quarters

Ross	15	17	13	11—56
Marion Harding	7	14	10	22—53

Scoring

ROSS — Greg Bender 4-3-11, Dave Kovaleski 4-0-8, Stacy Johnson 1-2-4, Mark Miesle 1-1-3, Shawn McCarthy 4-0-8, Kary Bury 3-0-6, Gregg Gallagher 0-1-1, Chris Simmons 2-3-7, John Stierwalt 3-2-8, totals 22-12-56.

MARION HARDING — Fritz Wink 6-3-15, Jerry Carter 4-3-11, Skip Colbert 0-1-1, Mario Castaneda 2-2-6, Willie Owens 2-4-8, James Brown 1-3-5, Greg Hanville 2-3-7, totals 17-19-53.

Season records: Ross 8-4 (4-3), Marion Harding 1-11 (0-7).

JV game: Ross 39-31.

Bender guns for 1,000th point while Ross girls go for 8th win

By BOB MARKER

News-Messenger Sports Editor

Greg Bender will be shooting for 1,000, but first the Ross girls will be gunning for No. 8, as the basketball skirmishes continue at Ross today and this weekend.

"We have never gotten over the hill this season," Ross girls Coach Sue Wolf said as she got her team ready to host Sandusky this evening in a key Buckeye Conference clash. "We have been even but never above .500."

The Lady Giants, 7-7 after defeating Bellevue 49-40 Tuesday, have floated even or one to two games below the .500 level all season. In conference play, however, the Lady Giants are 2-1 and still in contention for the title.

"Sandusky is very quick and use a good pressure defense," Wolf said. "They love to press and they try to force you out of your offense with that press."

The game will feature the conference's two leading scorers: Sue Gahn of Ross and Monica Pearson of Sandusky. Gahn is averaging 20.7 per game and is coming off a 32-point night against Bellevue while Pearson has been producing points at nearly an 18-point rate.

Expected to draw Wolf's starting assignments

along with Gahn are Denise Wilkins, Chris Yeager, Michele Blue and Aimee LeJeune. Sandusky will counter with Mary Sue Anglin, 5-6 senior, Pearson, 5-8 senior, 5-7 senior Beth Kidwell, 5-7 sophomore Katie Millott and 5-10 junior Renee Burns.

Friday, the Ross boys will host Lorain Senior in the first of three games in five days. Saturday, Toledo Libbey is in Fremont while Tuesday, Toledo Bowsher will be at Ross in a makeup of the Jan. 26 postponed game.

Bender, a 6-5 senior and a starter since he walked onto the Ross gym floor three years ago, has scored 983 points in that span and will be the first Ross player to reach the 1,000-point plateau.

If he hits his average of nearly 19 per game against the Steelmen Friday, the barrier will be crossed. Earlier this season, Bender set the Ross career scoring record, wiping out Pete Davis' record of 814 that had stood for 21 years.

The first time Ross played Lorain, the Little Giants methodically handed the Steelmen a 57-44 setback. It was only the sixth time in the last 39 meetings that Ross had defeated Lorain.

Ross is 8-4 after a 56-53 win over Marion Harding Tuesday and will put its 4-3 Buckeye Conference record up against the Steelmen's 2-6 mark. Lorain is 2-13 overall.



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy

Bender reaches 1,000-point mark

The sign said it and Greg Bender did it Friday night during the Buckeye Conference basketball against Lorain Senior at Ross High School. Bender, a senior, needed 17 points going into the game to become the first Ross player to reach the 1,000-point

level. He did it easily, scoring 22 in Ross's 49-37 victory. The sign in the Ross student section came into view with 7:30 remaining in the game when Bender hit a short shot from the right side for points numbers 17 and 18. (Story and more photos on Page 8.)

Bender's big moment highlights Ross's win

By BOB MARKER

News-Messenger Sports Editor

The beauty of Ross's 49-37 Buckeye Conference boys basketball win over Lorain Friday in the Ross High School gym was in the eyes of the beholder.

Ross Coach John Sawyer and his assistant Chuck Lindsey may have been the only ones to see the beauty in a game that seemed to drag.

It was spiced up only when Greg Bender hit a bucket 30 seconds into the final period for career points 1,000 and 1,001 to become the first Ross player to cross that barrier.

"I'm glad that is over," Bender, a 6-3 senior, said after the game about his race to 1,000. Earlier in the season he had broken the Ross career mark of 824 held by Pete Davis for the past 21 years.

After Bender had scored the momentous basket, followed after a noisy celebration of calls of "Bender, Bender, Bender" and standing ovations, Lorain quietly sneaked back into the ball game.

"If we could only shoot," Lorain Coach Dale Reichert moaned, "but we just don't have anyone who can."

"I don't know what happened in the fourth quarter," Sawyer said. "Up to that time, I felt we had run our offense very well and we were playing excellent defense. I felt we were taking some pretty good shots and really, I thought we were scoring more points."

"I thought we had 50 at one time but I looked up and saw we only had 32," the Ross coach laughed.

Lindsey agreed with Sawyer about the offense and defense but neither could figure out what happened after Bender's fourth quarter history-maker.



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy

SHAWN McCARTHY of Ross gets off a shot over Tony Kruman of Lorain.

"It seemed that after the celebration, offensively, we felt the game was over," Sawyer said. "but someone forgot to tell Lorain that. It was a good thing we hit the free throws down the stretch."

Ross climbed to a 36-18 lead late in the third quarter and held a 36-20 advantage after the third period.

After Carson Coates hit a pair of free throws four seconds into the final period, Bender hit the bucket that turned on the celebration but turned off the Ross offensive works. Four and one-half minutes later, Lorain trailed 40-33 before Sawyer was able to call timeout to reassemble his troops.

When player resumed, sophomore John Stierwalt took over, hitting a pair of free throws and a basket to go with a pair of charity tosses by Bender and a single free throw by Karl Bury. Bender's two final points of the night made it 45-33 with 1:20 left in the game.

That, for all intents and purposes, was the Ross's defense picked the sagging offense and the Little Giants walked off with their ninth win in 13 games.

"I have to hand it to my kids," Reichert said, "they never gave up but we just could not shoot. They (Ross) would pack that zone in tight and that was it; we could not shoot over it."

"We got a good effort from the kids," said Sawyer said and pointed out he was able to play everyone. "The first half of play was excellent offensively and defensively."

Bender agreed with his coach.

"I think we played an excellent first half," he said. "It was great defense."

Bender, however, was his worst critic.

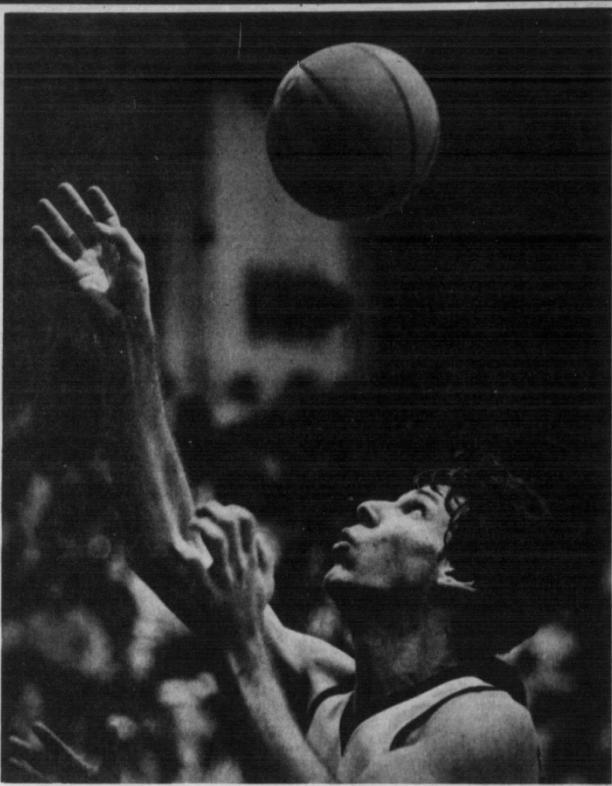
"I shot poorly," he said. "It was a bad shooting night."

But it was good enough for 1,000 and good enough to take the weight of the burden off his shoulders.

After the only Little Giant in double figures but eight Ross players scored, Ken Balmieri was the only Lorain player to hit double figures with 10.

Lorain was 16 of 62 from the floor while Ross was 19 of 49. The Steelmen had 40 rebounds, 19 offensively, while Ross had 36. Bender had 14 rebounds.

Tonight, Ross will host Toledo Lioey 12-4. The junior varsity game begins at 6:15 p.m., 15 minutes earlier than usual.



News-Messenger/Bill Kennedy

GREG BENDER watches the ball bounce back and away from him after a Ross teammate's shot missed in the third quarter of the game against Lorain at Ross High School Friday.

Scoreboard

High school

Ross 49, Lorain Sr. 37

Score by quarters

Lorain Senior	2	8	10	17-37
Ross	13	9	14	13-49

Scoring

LORAIN SENIOR — Ken Balmert 5-0-10, Mike Randle 3-1-7, Jason Williams 1-1-3, Joel Hartman 2-0-4, Carson Coates 1-3-5, Chris Matos 2-0-4, Jack Rosso 1-0-2, Andy Strauser 1-0-2, totals 16-5-37.

ROSS — Greg Bender 8-6-22, Dave Kovaleski 1-0-2, Shawn McCarthy 3-0-6, Mark Miesle 2-0-4, John Cahill 2-0-4, Karl Bury 1-1-3, John Stierwalt 1-4-6, Stacy Johnson 1-0-2, totals 19-11-49.

Season records: Ross 9-4 (5-3), Lorain 2-14 (2-7).

Ros. JVs 64, Lor. 61 (4 OT)

Score by quarters

Lorain Senior	14	7	14	12	4	0	4	6-61
Ross	6	15	12	14	4	0	4	9-65

Scoring

LORAIN SENIOR — Tony Gummo 2-0-4, Scott Hamrlik 5-4-14, Al McConihe 3-4-10, Bill Nowlin 5-0-10, Tom O'Keefe 2-1-5, Art Udovich 1-0-2, Al Scott 7-2-16, totals 25-11-61.

ROSS — Stan Newell 6-0-12, Scott Weber 4-2-10, Kevin Brooks 6-1-13, Manoah Jones 1-2-4, Chris Mosser 2-3-7, Nick Hall 1-4-6, totals 25-14-64.

Little Giants corral Cowboys for satisfying 49-42 triumph

By ROB BOUKISSEN
News-Messenger Sports Writer

John Sawyer had that certain look in his eyes, the one that says, "See, I told you so."

The Ross basketball coach looked that way because his Little Giants had just pulled off what some people apparently thought they couldn't do Saturday night.

The Little Giants beat the Toledo Libbey Cowboys 49-42, and they did it in a very methodical and intelligent fashion. Instead of getting involved in a running game with the quick Cowboys, the Little Giants played patiently and with extreme care for the basketball.

"This was a big one for us, especially when a lot of people said we couldn't beat them," beamed Sawyer, whose team moves to 10-4 on the season while dropping the Cowboys to 10-6. "We beat a good team tonight.

"We ran the offense well and we took good shots. The last two nights (Ross beat Lorain Senior 49-37 the night before) we've taken better shots.

"And tonight, the five guys on the floor played like a team and not like five individuals. That was nice. It was a total team effort. We didn't play as many guys as we normally do, but we felt that the ones who did play were doing the job."

Sawyer stuck mostly with starters Greg Bender, Mark Miesle, Dave Kovaleski, Shawn McCarthy and John Cahill. The only other Ross player to play a good portion of the game was John Stierwalt.

Each one of those players performed admirably.

Bender overcame some early outside shooting problems to score 14 points, including four big buckets in the second half.

Miesle ran the Ross offense very well and also tied Bender for team scoring honors with 14, including a clutch six-of-six performance from the foul line in the final quarter.

Kovaleski and McCarthy shored up the Little Giants' inside game with eight and seven points, respectively. McCarthy also had a solid rebounding game with nine caroms and a strong defensive game with several blocked shots and intimidations.

And Cahill and Stierwalt provided dependable support to

Ross announcer calls last game

After 21 years of service, Jack Chapin announced his last basketball game for Ross High School Saturday night.

The Little Giants' public address announcer has decided to move to North Carolina after he recovers from surgery this month at Flower Hospital in Toledo.

The Ross athletic department honored Chapin before Saturday's game with Toledo Libbey by giving him a Ross Athletic Staff jacket.

The new announcer for Ross games will be Larry Jackson.

Miesle in the ball-control category as the Little Giants committed just 13 turnovers.

One reason for Ross's ability to control the ball so well might have been Libbey's decision not to use its full-court press the whole game, a decision which surprised Sawyer.

"I thought they (the Cowboys) would use their full-court press from the start," said Sawyer. "But when they did press us, I thought we did a good job against it."

The only time the Little Giants really got rattled by Libbey's press came in the second period. Before that quarter, Ross had built a 14-7 lead on the strength of a no-turnover first quarter.

But the Cowboys quickened things up a bit, plus got some uncanny outside shooting from James Parker, to outscore Ross 20-8 in the second period to take a 27-22 halftime lead.

Parker, who had a game-high 17 points, hit 10 of them in the second stanza on five shots from no closer than 20 feet.

"Our scouting report said they (the Cowboys) couldn't shoot from the outside," said Sawyer. "But that guy (Parker) was hitting them like a wild man. I was hoping he couldn't keep that up."

Sawyer's wish came true in the second half, as Parker and his Libbey teammates turned cold while Ross heated up.

Running a deliberate offense and taking only those good shots Sawyer spoke of earlier, the Little Giants made an impressive 10 of 13 shots in the

second half. Meanwhile, Libbey connected on just six of 22 field goals.

Ross made two big spurts in the second half to key the victory.

The Little Giants' first spurt came during the early stages of the third quarter when they outscored Libbey 11-2 to take a 33-29 lead. Bender made two crowd-pleasing baskets, one off a steal and the other while falling to the floor, during that run.

After Libbey had rallied back to tie the game 35-35 early in the final period, the Little Giants came up with their second spurt.

Again keyed by two Bender baskets, Ross outscored Libbey 8-3 to go up 43-38 with 3:44 left in the game.

After Libbey's James Ulis cut it to 43-40 with 3:30 left, Ross really began to slow things down, forcing the Cowboys to foul. They did just that, but they fouled the wrong guy, Miesle, three times. The Little Giants' 6-3 senior co-captain made the Cowboys pay by hitting all six of his chances to seal the victory.

Sawyer gave a couple reasons for his team's slowdown tactics, which they employed during the last three minutes of the third quarter and most of the fourth quarter.

"We have pretty good foul shooters, and we thought they (the Cowboys) had to start to foul," said Sawyer. "Besides, we were getting pretty tired. We went into the delay game, but we were looking to shoot."

Ross finished the night making 19 of 36 shots from the field and 11 of 16 from the line. Libbey was 19 of 49 from the field and four of four from the line.

The Cowboys outrebounded the Little Giants 28-24 and both teams had 13 turnovers.

The only bad note for the Little Giants Saturday night was an ankle injury suffered by their ace Bender in the early portion of the final quarter. The 6-5 senior was able to finish the game, however, and will also be able to play in Ross's makeup game Tuesday night at home against another Toledo team, Woodward High School, Sawyer said. The JV game tomorrow night starts at 6 p.m., as does the Ross girls game tonight at home against Toledo DeVilbiss.

Basketball

Boys

Ross 49, Libbey 42

Score by quarters

Toledo Libbey	7	20	6	9—42
Ross	14	8	13	14—49

Scoring

LIBBEY — Mark White 4-1-9, Jim Brown 1-0-2, James Parker 8-1-17, James Ulis 3-2-8, Larry Jones 2-0-4, Juan Allen 1-0-2, totals 19-4-42.

ROSS — Greg Bender 7-0-14, Mark Miesle 3-8-14, Dave Kovaleski 3-2-8, Shawn McCarthy 3-1-7, John Cahill 2-0-4, John Stierwalt 1-0-2, totals 19-11-49.

Season records: Libbey 10-6, Ross 10-4.

Libbey JVs 48, Ross 36

Score by quarters

Toledo Libbey	8	12	14	14—48
Ross	4	7	8	17—36

Scoring

LIBBEY — James Galloway 6-1-13, Leon Frost 2-0-4, Leyton Hill 2-0-4, Jeff Townsend 2-4-8, Pat Davis 1-0-2, Marvin Houston 3-3-9, Eric Neal 0-2-2, Wayne Oliver 2-2-6, totals 18-12-48.

ROSS — Mike Wolfe 2-0-4, Stan Newell 3-1-7, Matt Reed 0-1-1, Kevin Brooks 3-2-8, Manoah Jones 2-0-4, Kevin McDonald 2-3-7, Chris Mosser 1-0-2, Nick Hall 0-3-3, totals 13-10-36.

Dreaded Sandusky next stop on Ross's BC basketball trail

By BOB MARKER

News-Messenger Sports Editor

John Sawyer cringed when he was reminded where his Ross High School boys basketball team was to play Friday.

"The last two years when we have gone there, they have always gotten big leads on us," Sawyer said while talking about his team's visits to the home of the Blue Streaks, Sandusky High School.

"But," he added as his sour look changed to a smile, "we have come back each time."

Last year, five days before Christmas, the Little Giants, limping along with a 2-4 record and still searching for their first win after three games in Buckeye Conference play, fell behind Sandusky 14-2 in the first quarter. That was a game of streaks, however, as Ross ran off 12 straight and tied the game at the end of the quarter.

By halftime, though, Sandusky had a 33-24 lead, but Ross opened the third quarter by scoring the first 13 points to take a lead that it surrendered just twice more in a 70-58 comeback win. Ross broke it open with 11 straight points in the final quarter for a 64-52 lead.

That was last year, Sawyer pointed out, and this is the

second game between the teams this season. The records are different...this not a game matching conference doormat teams as it was last season.

Ross is 10-4 and carries a 5-3 conference record while Sandusky is 6-8 and 4-5 in BC play. The Blue Streaks have won two of their last three games, including a 63-61 upset of Findlay two games ago.

"They are playing more zone defenses," Sawyer said about Sandusky, "and they have cut down on turnovers which had hurt them a lot the first half of the season.

"Sandusky also has been getting more balanced scoring," the Ross coach added.

Brian Watson, ranked second behind Ross's Greg Bender in conference scoring stats, leads the Blue Streaks with an 18.4 average. David Belle is producing points at nearly 13 per game and in the last few games, that duo plus Brian Cooper has been consistently in double figures.

In the first meeting of the teams this season, Ross won 58-53. The Friday junior varsity game begins at 6:30 p.m.

Ross also plays Saturday night in a makeup game with Toledo Woodward in the Ross gym.

BUCKEYE STATS: Bender leads the conference scoring with 18.6 per game and is also fifth in rebounding with 9.1 per contest. Watson ranks first in the latter department with 13 per game. Bender is the top free throw shooter, hitting 90 per cent on 65 of 73 and he ranks sixth in field goal shooting with 98 of 190 for nearly 52 per cent.

Bender is the only Ross player averaging in double figures.

Shawn McCarthy is seventh in field goal shooting on 46 of 90 for 51 per cent. He also ranks 12th in rebounding with 5½ per game.

Dave Kowaleski is 12th in free throw shooting with 22 of 33 for 67 per cent.

Karl Bury ranks second in assists with four a game. Mark Miesle is 10th in this department with three per contest.

In team stats, Ross ranks second in team defense, allowing 51 per game. Offensively, Ross is fifth with 55 points per contest. The Little Giants are first in free throw shooting, hitting nearly 70 per cent and are third in field goal shooting with 45 per cent. Ross is holding opponents to 36 per cent in field goal shooting which is also first in the conference.

Ross eases past Sandusky

By BOB MARKER

News-Messenger Sports Editor

SANDUSKY — Maybe Ross is making it look easy for Coach John Sawyer's comfort.

He flinched when he was told this team made it look that way in a 56-35 waltz past Sandusky Friday night in a Buckeye Conference basketball clash.

"I wouldn't say that," Sawyer said about the team's 10-game winning streak during which the smaller Blue Streaks, "I don't think the kids are beginning to play together as a team. They are realizing that as long as they play within 'their game,' they will do all right."

By that, Sawyer explained that his team was not attempting to use the fast break when it was not apparent and the shot selections were better and that passes were not being forced.

Ross used that style to notch win number 11 in 15 games and the sixth against three BC losses. Sandusky slipped to 6-9 and 4-6 in conference play.

Sandusky was in the game for 14 minutes before Greg Bender went on a scoring tear with two minutes remaining in the first half. The Little Giants led 24-17 at that point but the 6-5 Ross senior sank two free throws, hit a short jumper from the middle of the lane, slam-dunked a ball off a steal and canned two more free throws to put Ross up 31-17.

That spurt took the air out of Sandusky's spinners. It was calm water and easy sailing for the Little Giants in the second half.

The scoring battle between Bender, the conference leader with nearly a 19-point average, and Sandusky's Brian Watson, just two-tenths of a point behind Bender in the scoring race, lasted as long as it took Ross to beat the Blue Streaks.

When Bender went on his scoring spree, it seemed Watson was shaken. After scoring 10 first-half shots, eight fewer than Bender, the 5-7 Sandusky jumping jack took only two second-half shots and hit just one of two free throws while he was virtually out of the Sandusky offensive patterns in the same time span.

Ross's biggest lead was the final point spread.

Bender finished with 20 points but sat out most of the second half. Dave Kowaleski added 10 points, as 10 of the 11 Little Giants who played got into the scorebook. While Sawyer was pleased with that detail, he was surprised at Ross defensive effort.

"We played an excellent defense," he praised, "and we rebounded well, especially on the back side."

Ross's "2-3" zone defense kept the Blue Streaks outside. Most of Sandusky's 54 shots were from 15 feet on out. Sandusky made just 14 of those shots while Ross's patient

offense connected on 19 of 39 shots.

Sawyer praised just about every player he inserted into the lineup but he was especially complimentary of the 6-6 sophomore Mark Miesle, who scored only one point but according to the Ross coach more than made up for it by running the Little Giants' offense.

"Miesle played great," he succinctly summed up the 6-3 senior's play. "Since we moved him out to the point, he has not gotten that many shots but he is doing a great job."

Sawyer also singled out the efforts of Gregg Gallagher and Chris Simmons, both of whom came off the bench, and the rebounding of Shawn McCarthy and Kowaleski.

"Hey, I have to say it," Sawyer smiled as he got ready to roll a patented coaches' cliché off his tongue, "but this was a great team effort tonight (Friday)."

On a bad note, Ross may have lost the services of backup guard Karl Bury, who severely injured his right ankle in the second quarter.

Tonight, will be another test of Ross's quickly developing team cohesiveness, as Toledo Woodward rolls into Fremont to play a game that has been postponed twice. The junior varsity game will begin at 6 p.m., a half-hour earlier than normal.



Gregg Gallagher of Fremont Ross is surrounded by Sandusky players during Friday night's game at Sandusky High School. Terence Newell (22) and Bill Carr (20) of Sandusky close in on the Ross player.

Boys

Ross 56, Sandusky 35

Score by quarters

Ross	12	19	10	15—56
Sandusky	9	10	5	11—35

Scoring

ROSS— Greg Bender 7-6-20, Dave Kovaleski 4-2-10, Shawn McCarthy 3-0-6, Mark Miesle 0-1-1, John Cahill 1-0-2, Karl Bury 0-0-0, John Stierwalt 1-4-6, Gregg Gallagher 1-0-2, Chris Simmons 1-3-5, Manoah Jones 1-0-2, Pat Hetrick 0-2-2, totals 19-18-56.

SANDUSKY — Brian Watson 4-3-11, Brian Cooper 1-2-4, David Belle 1-1-3, Chris Williams 2-0-4, Terrence Newell 1-0-2, Eric Jordan 1-0-2, totals 14-7-35.

Season records: Ross 11-4 (6-3), Sandusky 6-9 (4-6).

Sandusky JVs 63, Ross 48

Score by quarters

Ross	10	1-	7	21—48
Sandusky	14	15	17	17—63

Scoring

ROSS— Stan Newell 1-2-4, Matt Reed 4-1-9, Kevin Brooks 3-1-7, Manoah Jones 1-2-4, Kevin McDonald 0-2-2, Chris Mosser 4-4-12, John Stierwalt 5-0-10, totals 19-10-48.

SANDUSKY — Luis Guerara 1-0-2, LaMar Brown 4-1-9, Bobby Garrett 3-6-12, Tim Collins 2-0-4, Fritz Taylor 1-0-2, Shayne Fischer 5-2-12, Paul Smoot 0-1-1, Vince Phillips 7-2-16, Eric Jordan 2-1-5, totals 25-13-63.

Season records: Ross 8-7 (5-4), Sandusky 8-8 (6-4).

Ross now 12-4

after solid win

By BOB MARKER

News-Messenger Sports Editor

Call it another chapter in the Ross progress report.

"We have played well defensively all year," Ross High School basketball Coach John Sawyer said, "and now offensively, we are beginning to get the better shots and passing a lot better, especially inside."

Sawyer's team panned another successful episode into the report Saturday night, writing off Toledo Woodward 71-57.

The win, number 12 in 16 games for the Little Giants, was marked by the play of Greg Bender and Mark Miesle, the rebounding of Bender, Shawn McCarthy and Dave Kovaleski plus solid performances from the Little Giants' substitutes.

Bender had 27 points to lead the most balanced scoring effort of the Little Giants this season. McCarthy had a dozen and Miesle and Kovaleski finished with 10 apiece.

Bender scored his points almost nonchalantly, putting in 10 of 14 shots and seven of 10, a sub-par performance compared to his usual standards, from the foul line. He also grabbed his share of Ross's 34 rebounds.

McCarthy's effort had Sawyer on a high.

"He was giving us second, third and fourth efforts out there," the Ross coach praised McCarthy, his 6-8 junior center. "That was an outstanding effort by him. In the past, he had been going hard for maybe three to four minutes but now he has been giving us good hard performances for much longer periods."

Miesle, repeating his description of the 6-3 senior's effort in the win over Sandusky, Sawyer said, continued to direct

the Ross offensive attack very well from the point guard slot.

Offense was Sawyer's focus Saturday.

"We are just not taking bad shots now," he said, "and we have been cutting our turnovers down. The turnovers we had tonight, many of them I felt, were because we just got into too big of a hurry. We had people open but just rushed the pass."

Ross had 21 giveaways but was not hurt by many of them.

The Ross subs, mainly John Stierwalt and Chris Simmons on Saturday, contributed 10 points and the other two, Gregg Gallagher and Pat Hetrick, played well in the situations they were inserted into, Sawyer said.

Ross canned 25 of 41 shots and 21 of 30 free throws against Woodward. The Polar Bears were a respectable 24 of 59, which included two hot streaks — one in each half — which prevented Ross from blowing them out of the game.

The Little Giants trailed six times in the first quarter but took the lead at 15-14 on Bender's bucket with 39 seconds remaining in the opening stanza. It ended 17-14 and Woodward was to get no closer.

Despite hitting only three of 15 shots in the second quarter, Woodward trailed only by a 37-37 count at the half. Bender finished with 17 first-half points.

After three quarter, Ross still had that 10-point lead at 53-43. In the final quarter, Ross held a 14-point lead three times, including the final score.

Chris Caldwell's 16 points topped Woodward with teammates Kevin Rushing and Michael Williams adding a dozen apiece.

Little Giants charge to 60-49 win over Elyria

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

Mark Miesle could not have played his role any better had Brian Rogers been named Master Card.

Miesle accepted a charge from a runaway Elyria express in the form of a foul and the resulting collision keyed Ross's 60-49 win over the Pioneers at Ross High School Tuesday.

Ross was tumbling from the heights of a 19-point lead when Miesle accepted Rogers' charge, which turned off the Elyria motor and switched on Ross's free throw machine that sealed the win.

"That was a key play," Elyria Coach Keith Sooy agreed. "We were down by six and it could have been four but as it was, Ross stuck two back and it was over. Then he hit the free throw down the stretch."

Ross Coach John Sawyer agreed with Sooy about Rogers' charge into Miesle at mid-court 3½ minutes into the final quarter.

"I was worried about us getting the ball back and starting some offense," Sawyer said. "and then Miesle took that charge call."

Ross, after leading by 19 points in the third quarter, watched it dwindle away to 47-41 when the



turning play took place. After that, the Little Giants went on a 9-2 scoring binge and the Pioneers were circling the wagons.

Sophomore John Stierwalt sank seven of eight free throws. Greg Bender three of four and Miesle two of three as the Little Giants rebuffed Elyria.

Ross was 15 of 18 from the foul line in the final quarter and 20 of 23 in the game. Little Giants took only four shots, made two, one by Bender and the other by John Cahill, in the final eight minutes.

The Little Giants played nearly flawlessly in the first half, committing just two turnovers, hitting 14 of 26 shots and taking a 29-18 lead into the locker room. Bender had 12 in the half.

Ross opened the second half on a hot streak, outscoring Elyria 10-2 in four minutes for a 39-20 lead. With that comfortable lead, Sawyer began to shift the subs in and out.

"I was worried about the kids getting tired," he explained his move to a spread offense. "and in the last two or three years, we have only lost once when we had the lead and went into the spread. So I went with the percentages and hoped we would get the free throws."

Sawyer's move seemed to work against him as Elyria caught fire and the chief antagonist was Jared Wilbanks, who fired 10 shots from near the baseline and it seemed. The 5-11 Elyria senior keyed a five-point Elyria run in the final 25 seconds of the third quarter that cut Ross's lead to 41-29.

Sawyer explained that he felt his team was tired after having had two practices in the past 10 days. Prior to a school board meeting Monday night, the Little Giants were not allowed to practice when inclement weather closed school.

Sawyer was happy with another strong defensive effort by his team.

"We took away their inside game," he pointed out, "and we rebounded very well."

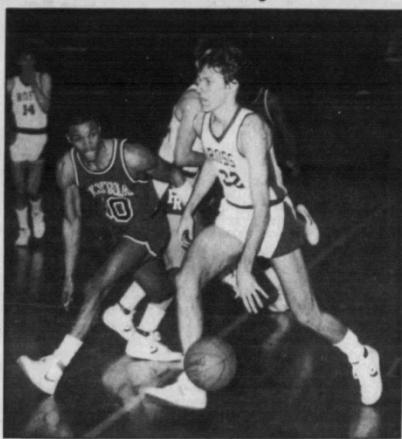
Junior Shawn McCarthy and Doug Dillenbeck rebounded up the middle for the Little Giants. McCarthy had four blocked shots and Kovaleski one.

Bender finished with 21 points to top Ross while McCarthy added 11. Miesle had nine, Cahill eight and Stierwalt 11, seven on free throws in the final quarter.

With the Little Giants holding the game on the beach, finished with a game-high 26 points.

Ross was 20 of 40 from the floor to go with the hot free throw shooting. Elyria was 20 of 49 and nine of 13 at the line. Ross had a 27-25 lead in rebounding while both teams had 15 turnovers.

The win was the seventh in 10 Buckeye conference games for the Little Giants while Elyria, 12-6, is 8-3 in the BC.



News-Messenger/Fred Fehhaber
GREG BENDER (right) of Ross tries to dribble past Elyria's Brian Rogers during action Tuesday night at Ross High School.

High school

Boys

Ross 60, Elyria 49

Score by quarters

Elyria	10	18	11	20	—49
Ross	15	14	12	19	—60

Scoring

ELYRIA — Brian Rogers 2-0-4, Michael Martin 5-3-13, Mark Cannon 2-2-6, Jared Wilbanks 11-4-26, totals 20-9-49.

ROSS — Greg Bender 8-5-21, Dave Kovaleski 0-0-0, Shawn McCarthy 4-3-11, Mark Miesle 3-3-9, John Cahill 3-2-8, John Stierwalt 2-7-11, totals 20-20-60.

Season records: Ross 13-4 (7-3), Elyria 12-6 (8-3).

N

Elyria JVs 43, Ross 38

Score by quarters

Elyria	6	8	16	13	—43
Ross	11	10	4	13	—38

Scoring

ELYRIA — Kent Jones 4-0-8, Barry Porter 3-0-4, Corey Williams 6-6-18, Glenn Arbaugh 1-1-3, Eric Bush 2-6-10, totals 15-13-43.

ROSS — Nick Hall 2-0-4, Stan Newell 1-0-2, Matt Reed 2-3-7, Scott Weber 2-0-4, Kevin Brooks 2-2-6, Manoah Jones 2-0-4, Chris Mosser 4-3-11, totals 15-8-38.

Season records: Elyria 11-7, Ross 8-9.

Admirals use tough defense to down Ross

Special to The News-Messenger

LORAIN — John Sawyer knew what happened to his team Friday night.

"They beat us," he said logically after his Ross High School basketball team absorbed a 47-40 setback at the hands of Lorain Admiral King.

"We played hard and we played a good game but their defense got going in the second and third periods and took us out of our offense."

Admiral King, 19-1 and the Buckeye Conference champion with an 11-1 record, started poorly, trailing 16-7 after one quarter and 18-9 with 6:43 remaining in the first half.

That's when Admirals Coach Mitch Gillam shifted his team into the pressure defense, which shut Ross out the remainder of the first half.

When the Admirals walked into the locker room, Ross trailed 20-18. Ross attempted only seven shots in the middle two quarters while King was outscoring the Little Giants 12-2 and 15-10.

"They put a lot of pressure on the guards and we just did not get too many shots," the Ross coach pointed out.

The Little Giants were 17 of 32 from the floor but were hurt in an area that has normally been a game-saver for them this season: the foul line.

Ross hit only six of 13 at the charity stripe and missed the front end of three crucial one-and-one free throw situations down the stretch.

"It was a very physical

game," Sawyer said. "There was a lot of hand checking and reaching allowed but it was still a good game."

Greg Bender topped Ross with 15 points with Mark Miesle getting 13.

Tim Moore with 13, Adrian Harris with 12 and Milton Cook with 10 topped Admiral King.

The Admirals built up a 40-29 lead with 2:09 remaining in the game, but while ready to put the game away, Ross was allowed to sneak back in the sidedoor.

"We were playing their game — run and gun — and we were getting down before they had the defense set up," Sawyer said about Ross's late run.

Miesle's shot with 38 seconds remaining pulled Ross to within four, 44-40, before Ross got caught in the crusher.

Harris went to the foul line with 16 seconds remaining. He missed the front end of a one-and-one, but David Bansek got between two Little Giants and tapped the ball in for a 46-40 Admiral King lead.

While Sawyer was saddened by the loss, which dropped Ross to 13-5 overall and 7-4 in the BC, he was especially thrilled to see the big turnout of fans from Fremont.

"Those people who came over here meant a lot to me and to the kids. They feel bad about losing the game and they are a little let down, but they played hard and that big following was appreciated by them," Sawyer said.

Tonight, Ross will travel to Fostoria. The junior varsity game begins at 6:30 p.m.

Boys

Admiral King 47, Ross 40

Score by quarters

Ross	16	2	5	17-40
Admiral King	7	13	10	17-47

Scoring

ROSS — Greg Bender 6-3-15, Dave Kovaleski 1-2-4, Shawn McCarthy 2-0-4, Mark Miesle 6-1-13, John Cahill 2-1-5, totals 17-6-40.

ADMIRAL KING — Tim Moore 6-1-13, David Bansek 2-0-4, Adrian Harris 5-2-12, Milton Cook 3-4-10, Mitch Gilliam 2-1-5, Tim Gerek 0-1-1, totals 18-11-47.

Season records: Admiral King 19-1 (11-1), Ross 13-5 (7-4).

JV game: Admiral King 67-56.

Little Giants blitz Redmen

By BOB MARKER

News-Messenger Sports Editor

FOSTORIA — It was the right medicine for the ailment.

"I think the kids had begun to think that the only kind of game they could play, was the slow brand," Ross basketball Coach John Sawyer said.

"That is our best style of play," he insisted, "but we needed this type of half."

That "type of half" was a 50-point blitz that bulled over outmanned Fostoria 74-49 Saturday at Fostoria High School. The second half was nearly the opposite of the first half, a half that brought back bad memories to Sawyer.

"I told the kids they were getting embarrassed," Sawyer explained about his halftime talk. "I reminded them they played great against Admiral King Friday (a 47-40 loss to the state's sixth-ranked Class AAA team). I knew they were not afraid of Admiral King but they were playing like they were afraid of Fostoria.

"The way they played in the first half reminded me of the way we played against good teams in past years."

Usually, that type of play ended in Ross losses.

Sawyer admitted that the Ross explosion did not come against a team that was beating everyone else — Fostoria is now 2-17 — but he was nevertheless happy about it.

Ross held only a 24-18 lead at the half while taking just 21 shots and making eight. Greg Bender, who led all scorers with 17 points, gave Ross, 14-5, that edge with a pair of free throws late in the half.

Bender ended the half with a dozen points while Dave Kovaleski, despite getting into early foul trouble, had eight.

But as lethargic as the Little Giants played in the first half, the intensity was just as strong in the second half.

Clamping a stifling full court

press on the Redmen, Ross doubled Fostoria's third quarter output with 26 points. Four minutes into the third quarter, Ross held a 41-24 edge.

Mark Miesle was five of five from the floor in the period with Bender adding five points, Kovaleski four, Shawn McCarthy four and John Steirwalt three in the getaway period.

"The press broke it open," Sawyer agreed. "It got the tempo going. We had wanted to force the tempo but we did not do it the first half."

Ross hit 21 of 31 shots in the second half

Chris Simmons hit all four his shots, including a tip-in that was nearly eight-feet away, in the final quarter.

McCarthy, Gregg Gallagher and Pat Hetrick had four points apiece to go with Simmons' production in the final period.

"It was a good game for us because we got the good effort from the bench and everyone scored," the Ross coach added.

Miesle finished with 14 points and Kovaleski 12. Ross was 29 of 51 in shooting. Tom Latham topped Fostoria with 15 points while teammate Mike Watson had 13.

Ross had 41 rebounds to Fostoria's 29. The Little Giants committed 19 turnovers, one less than Fostoria.

Defensively, McCarthy had five blocked shots.

Summing up, Sawyer had a crooked little smile on his face. "We waited until the Mansfield scouts left," he laughed while claiming the scouts from his team's sectional tournament opponent had left at halftime, "before we showed what we could do."

Ross has one regular season game — Friday at Findlay — remaining before playing Mansfield Senior at 6:30 p.m., March 5, in the Ashland College Class AAA Sectional Tournament.

High school

Boys

Ross 74, Fostoria 47

Score by quarters

Ross	12	12	26	24-74
Fostoria	8	10	13	16-47

Scoring

ROSS — Greg Bender 4-9-17, Dave Kovaleski 6-0-12, Shawn McCarthy 3-2-8, Mark Miesle 7-0-14, John Cahill 1-0-2, Chris Simmons 4-0-8, John Stierwalt 0-3-3, Gregg Gallagher 1-2-4, Manoah Jones 1-0-2, Pat Hetrick 2-0-4, totals 29-16-74.

FOSTORIA — Tom Latham 7-1-15, David Coburn 1-1-3, Mike Watson 4-5-13, Jamie Watson 2-1-5, Eric Drake 3-0-6, Donovan Lonsway 1-0-2, Gabe Sierra 0-1-1, Felix Cantu 1-0-2, totals 19-9-47.

Season records: Ross 14-5, Fostoria 2-17.

Ross JVs 58, Fost. 52 (OT)

Score by quarters

Ross	6	13	13	16	10-58
Fostoria	14	15	6	13	4-52

Scoring

ROSS — Stan Newell 2-0-4, Matt Reed 3-0-6, Kevin Brooks 1-3-5, Manoah Jones 6-8-20, Tracy McGee 0-1-1, Chris Mosser 5-1-11, Nick Hall 3-1-7, Mike Wolfe 2-0-4, totals 22-14-58.

FOSTORIA — Rene Galvan 2-0-4, Javier Gomez 2-0-4, Rodney Hampton 10-5-25, Glenn Parks 2-4-8, Brad Griffin 2-7-11, totals 18-16-52.

Season record: Ross 9-10.

Bender, Miesle lead Ross past Findlay 61-48

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

FINDLAY — Ross tuned up for the Class AAA Sectional Basketball Tournament with a 61-48 victory over Findlay in the final regular season contest for both teams.

Ross, with Greg Bender tossing in 22 points and Mark Miesle getting 16, finished with a 15-5 mark, the best since the early 1960s for the Little Giants. The win solidified third place in the Buckeye Conference for Coach John Sawyer's team with an 8-4 BC slate.

Findlay finished with an 11-9 mark and a 6-6 conference slate.

The victory also avenged a 49-45 overtime loss to the Trojans on Dec. 22. That loss was the first of the season for the Little Giants after four consecutive wins.

Both Sawyer and Findlay Coach Roger Renz agreed that Miesle was a big difference this time around.

"A lot of it," Renz said as he described the first and second game differences, "was Miesle handling the point. He controlled the ball well.

"We knew that Bender was going to get his points," Renz continued, "and I felt Stierwalt (John) hit a couple of key shots in the fourth quarter."

Sawyer also praised Miesle.

"He did a great job tonight. He got the ball to Bender and he had the hot hand in that first quarter," the Ross coach said. "He played very unselfishly tonight."

Miesle hit eight points in the first quarter as Ross pulled out to an 18-8 lead. His 20-footer from the left corner hit nothing but net as the period ended.

In the second quarter, Bender pumped in six points as Ross increased its lead to 28-16. The final two points of the half came on a Bender stuff off a steal which he had triggered while Findlay was working for the final shot of the half.

The Little Giants opened up as much as a 14-point lead in the third period but with Findlay guard Chad McClellan and Chris Weaver hitting from never-never land, the Trojans trailed by just a 38-32 count going into the final quarter.

That's when Stierwalt, a sophomore who had dislocated the little finger on his left hand during Thursday's practice, punched a hole in the Trojans. A bucket by Bender and one by Steirwalt made it 42-34. Later, Stierwalt clicked on a three-point play to put Ross up comfortably 56-44.

Bender and Miesle had eight points apiece in the final period and Steirwalt seven. The Little Giants canned six of seven shots in the final eight minutes while finishing with 24 of 44 from the floor for the game.

"Before the game, we wanted to accomplish two things," Sawyer said. "First, we wanted to control the tempo and two, we did not want to have more than 10 fouls in the game. We did not want to put them on the line because they are a good free throw shooting team."

Ross committed just nine fouls and Findlay hit six of six at the line. Ross was 13 of 18 at the charity stripe including an 11 of 14 performance in the final quarter.

"We got a good rebounding job from Shawn McCarthy," Sawyer said. "We did not really know how he was going to be until he began to play."

McCarthy, a 6-8 junior, and John Cahill, a 6-3 sophomore, collided in Thursday's practice and as a result, both had to have seven stitches in their foreheads. Sawyer had said he would not make a determination on their playing status until pre-game warmups.

Both started with Cahill getting four points and McCarthy six. Ross outrebounded the Trojans 29-24. Findlay was 21 of 49 from the floor. Ross had a dozen turnovers and Findlay eight. McClellan and Weaver had 16 points apiece for Findlay.

Tuesday at 6:30 p.m., the Little Giants will play Mansfield at Ashland College in the AAA sectional tournament.

"You know," Sawyer said, "this is such a big win for us that now our problem is getting these kids back down so that we can have decent practices Sunday and Monday."

That, however, was one problem that Sawyer admittedly, was happy that he had.

Ross 61, Findlay 48

Score by quarters

Ross	18	10	10	23-6
Findlay	8	8	16	16-48

Scoring

ROSS — Greg Bender 9-4-22, Dave Kovaleski 2-0-4, Shawn McCarthy 3-0-6, Mark Miesle 5-6-16, John Cahill 2-0-4, John Stierwalt 2-3-7, Chris Simmons 1-0-2, totals 24-13-61.

FINDLAY — Chad McClellan 8-0-16, Chris Weaver 8-0-16, Rick Baerwaldt 2-0-4, Jon Irish 2-2-6, Mark Ritzler 0-2-2, Jim Steffen 1-0-2, Chris DeGennaro 0-2-2, totals 21-6-48.

Season records: Ross 15-5 (8-4), Findlay 11-9 (6-6).

Findlay JV's 65, Ross 54

Score by quarters

Ross	12	12	14	17-54
Findlay	12	19	14	20-65

Scoring

ROSS — Stan Newell 4-0-8, Mike Wolfe 2-2-6, Matt Reed 0-1-1, Scott Weber 2-0-4, Kevin Brooks 10-5-25, Manoah Jones 3-2-8, Kevin McDonald 1-0-2, totals 22-10-54.

FINDLAY — Jim Givens 6-6-18, Doug Hosey 3-1-7, Dave Smith 5-3-13, Jeff Denman 2-2-6, Barry Pry 2-0-4, Brad Burrows 0-2-2, Richie Bell 1-0-2, Alan Hackenberg 0-2-2, Scott Hehr 2-2-6, Tim Roth 0-2-2, totals 22-21-65.

Season records: Ross 10-10 (6-6), Findlay 12-8.

2 Ross players will play in Ohio showcase games

News-Messenger Reports

Greg Bender and Sue Gahn of Fremont Ross were named players of the year by the District VI Basketball Coaches Association Monday night.

Bender paced the Class AAA boys picks and will be the first Ross boy to play in the Ohio High School Basketball Coaches Association North-South All-Star game. That game will be played at 9 p.m., April 20, in Canton Memorial Auditorium.

It was the second consecutive year that Bender has won the player of the year honor.

Gahn was named the top Class AAA girls player and will play in the McDonald Classic at Rike Center on the Otterbein College campus in Westerville at 7:30 p.m., April 13. The game matches the top 20 players in Ohio.

In addition to the Ross athletes winning honors, Ross boys Coach John Sawyer was named the Class AAA coach of the year for the district.

In Class A, Matt Hiestand, a junior at Old Fort, was named the player of the year for the boys. Cindy Oprie of St. Joe was named to the first team Class A girls while Ed Green and Brian Schubert of Bellevue were named to the first Class AA boys team.

Karen Lepley of Bellevue won player of the year honors for the Class AA girls.

Joining Bender on the first AAA first team were Paul Colston of Port Clinton, Eric

Toddie and Tim Harless of Mansfield Senior and Tim Dennison of Mansfield Madison.

On the second team was Brian Watson of Sandusky, Mark Cunningham of Columbian, Tryone Buck and Ahmed Kent of Mansfield Senior and Mark Miesle of Fremont Ross.

On the Class AA boys first team with Green and Schubert are Nolan Richardson of Willard, Melvin Selmon of Malabar and Bob Counts of Lexington. On the AA second team are David Wood of Clearfork, Don Grieves of Huron, Ronell Spencer of Norwalk, Don Williams of Malabar and Tom Baum of Bucyrus.

Robison won player of the year honors and Steve Miller of Malabar won the coaching honors.

Along with Hiestand on the first Class A team are Aaron Roth of St. Mary's, Andrew Booth of Lucas, Chris Wilson of Mansfield St. Peter and Chad Riedel of Seneca East.

On the second team are Matt Spriggs of Norwalk St. Paul, Scott Karl of Buckeye Central, John Ernsthausen of Gibsonburg, Jeff Lamb of St. Mary's and Jeff Craft of Hopewell-Loudon.

John Schlessman was named the Class A coach of the year.

Oprie, a 5-5 senior who scored over 1,000 points in her St. Joe career, was named to the Class A girls first team along with player of the year Diane Gresh, of Danbury-Lakeside, a 6-

0 senior who averaged 24 points per game, Nancy Winston of Mansfield St. Peter, Ann Stouse of St. Wendelin, Cindy Oprie of Fremont St. Joe and Lisa Kilgore of Lucas.

On the second team are Phyllis Arbogast of Hopewell-Loudon, Rocky Jones of Lucas, Jill Studer of Buckeye Central, Pam Conley of Ashland Crestview, Cathy Fretz of Tiffin Calvert and Rhonda Branham of Plymouth.

Vainard Spiess of Buckeye Central was named coach of the year.

Along with Lepley on the first team are Deb DeLong of Lexington, Amy Featheringham of Clearford, Vicki Dornbier of Wynford and Lynn Andrew of Huron.

On the AA second team are Tracy DeMore of Perkins, Lisa Gehrisch of Clearfork, Jean Tomich of St. Mary's, Shelly Burke of Western Reserve and Susie Shumaker of Upper Sandusky. Brian Baker of Huron was named the coach of the year.

Gahn's mates on the first team are Tecca Thompson of Malabar, Monica Pearson of Sandusky, Amy Young of Shelby and Sherry Robertson of Madison.

On the second team are Jackie Marshall and Selina Cunningham of Mansfield Senior, Wendy Dick of Columbian, Lisa Daugherty of Malabar and Kristen Cross of Shelby. The coach of the year is John Miefert of Mansfield Senior.

Four area players on all-district first teams

Lakota coach shares honor

By ROB BOUKISSEN

News-Messenger Sports Writer

Greg Bender and Sue Gahn of Ross, Cindy Oprie of St. Joe, Matt Hiestand of Old Port and Coach Dave Worstein of the Lakota girls team head the list of area people honored on The Associated Press All-Northwest Ohio high school basketball teams for 1984-85.

The AP all-district teams were selected by a panel of sports writers and broadcasters who cover boys and girls high school basketball in Northwest Ohio.

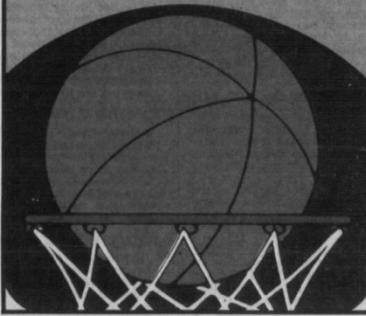
Bender was named to the prestigious Class AAA first team, along with such other stars as Chris Popp of and Melvin Newell of Toledo Scott, Andre Reed of Lima Senior and Tim Dennison of Mansfield Madison. Poellnitz and Reed were named co-players of the year.

The 6-5 Ross senior star is averaging 19 points and nine rebounds a game for the 14-5 Little Giants. He was a second-team all-district selection last season and is now the Ross career scoring leader with more than 1,100 points.

Gahn, meanwhile, earned Class AAA first team honors on the girls side. The 5-9 senior, who is averaging 22 points a game, was joined on the first team by Toledo Scott's Felicia Hill, Mansfield Malabar's Tecca Thompson, Notre Dame's Antie Mathews, Sylvania Northview's Lynn Flece and Maumee's Sue Pollock. Hill and Thompson were named co-players of the year.

Oprie was named to the Class A girls first team after earning second-team honors last year. The 5-5 St. Joe career scoring queen, who is averaging 15 points a game this year, was

Associated Press district teams



joined on the top unit by Jodi Witte of Edgerton, Anne Strouse of Findlay, St. Wendelin, Lisa Kilgore of Lucas, LeeAnn Mullins of Upper Scioto Valley and Jackie Motycka of Convoy Crestview. Mullins was named player of the year.

Hiestand was selected to the Class A boys first unit as a junior. The 6-4 Old Port standout

is scoring at a 20-point-a-game clip and is pulling down an average of 15 rebounds a game.

He was joined on the first team by Aaron Roth of Sandusky St. Mary's, Jim Keane of Union City Valley, Tom Parent of Pioneer North Central, Andy Booth of Lucas and player of the year Chad Keller of Van Buren. Worstein, coach of the Lakota

Lady Raiders, was named Class AA co-coach of the year along with Huron's Brian Baker. Worstein guided Lakota to a 16-4 record this season and the Suburban Lakes League championship while Baker led Huron to a 15-3 mark and the Sandusky Bay Conference title.

Other area players named to the top three units were:

•Paul Colston, Port Clinton's 6-4 senior, who was named to the Class AAA boys second team;

•Ed Poellnitz, Fremont's 6-2 senior, who was named to the Class AA boys second team;

•Mike Ziptel, Lakota's 6-4 senior, who was named to the Class AA boys second team;

•And Karen Lepley, Bellevue's 5-1 senior, who was named to the Class AA girls second team.

On the Class AA boys first team are Paul Moore of Sandusky Perkins, Nolan Robinson of Willard, Terry Morman of Ottawa-Glandorf and Melvin Sorenson and Doug Williams, both of Mansfield Malabar. Robinson was named player of the year.

On the Class AA girls first team are Vicki Dornbier of Bucyrus Wynford, Amy Featherstone of Cedar Park, Tonya Dixon of Swanton, Brenda Steinbrunner of Coldwater and Steff Molnar of Lake Dixon was chosen as player of the year.

Other honored coaches were Bart Schroeder of Toledo Macomber and Jim Robinson of Fremont (Class AAA boys co-coaches of the year), Dave Sweet of Ottawa Glandorf (Class AA boys coach of the year), Doug Krauss of Archbold and Don Ames of Crestline (Class A boys co-coaches of the year), Tom Schaeffer of Safford (Class AAA girls coach of the year), and Mitch Emmons of Lucas and Randy Baker of Arcadia (Class A girls coach of the year).

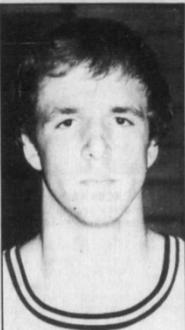
Complete all-district listings for boys and girls are on page 15.



GREG BENDER



CINDY OPIE



MATT Hiestand



DAVE WORSTEIN

Ross's Greg Bender named best player in the Buckeye

News-Messenger Reports

Greg Bender was named the Buckeye Conference "player of the year" in all-conference selections released today.

Bender, a 6-5 Fremont Ross senior, led the conference in scoring this past season with a 19.0 average. He also led the seven-team conference in free throw accuracy, converting on 85.5 percent of his opportunities.

He also shot 53 percent from the floor and averaged nearly nine rebounds per game.

It was the second year in a row that Bender has been named to the All-Buckeye Conference first team. His efforts led Ross to a 15-5 regular season.

Joining the Ross senior on the first team are Chad McClellan of Findlay, David Bansek of Admiral King, Mike Martin of Elyria and Brian Watson of

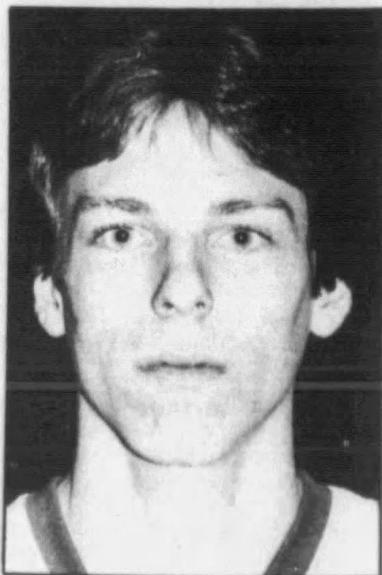
Sandusky. All are seniors.

On the second team named by the conference coaches are Jared Wilbanks of Elyria, Mitch Gillam Jr. and Tim Moore of Admiral King, Ken Balmert of Lorain and Fritz Wink of Marion Harding. The second team is also comprised of seniors.

Mark Miesle of Ross was named to the third team. Joining Miesle are Milt Cook of Admiral King, Chris Weaver of Findlay, David Belle of Sandusky and Mark Cannon of Elyria. Cannon is a sophomore while the rest are seniors.

Dave Kovaleski and Shawn McCarthy of Ross were on the honorable mention list.

The coach of the year is Mitch Gillam of Admiral King. He led the Admirals to the conference title and has a 41-4 record the past two seasons.



GREG BENDER

Basketball

High school

Boys

All-BC

FIRST TEAM

Greg Bender, Ross, 6-5, sr., 19.0 points a game; Chad McClellan, Findlay, 5-11, sr., 14.2; David Bansek, Admiral King, 6-5, sr., 10.5; Mike Martin, Elyria, 6-3, sr., 15.5; Brian Watson, Sandusky, 5-7, sr., 16.2.

SECOND TEAM

Jared Wilbanks, Elyria, 5-11, sr., 14.3; Mitch Gillam, Admiral King, 6-2, sr., 9.2; Tim Moore, Admiral King, 6-3, sr., 12.3; Ken Balmert, Lorain Senior, 6-5, sr., 13.8; Fritz Wink, Marion Harding, 5-10, sr., 10.5.

THIRD TEAM

Chris Weaver, Findlay, 6-0, sr., 12.3; Milt Cook, Admiral King, 5-11, sr., 9.4; Mark Miesle, Ross, 6-3, sr., 9.3; Mark Cannon, Elyria, 6-4, soph., 11.3; David Belle, Sandusky, 5-9, sr., 11.8.

HONORABLE MENTION

Ross — Dave Kovaleski, Shawn McCarthy.

Elyria — Brian Rogers.

Findlay — Jon Irish.

Admiral King — Adrian Harris.

Lorain Senior — Mike Randle.

Marion Harding — Jerry Carter, Willis Owens.

Sandusky — Brian Cooper, Todd Croom.

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Greg Bender, Ross.

COACH OF THE YEAR

Mitch Gillam, Admiral King.



BASKETBALL SPECIAL award winners named at the Ross Winter Sports Award Program Tuesday night were, left to right, front row: Nicole Buehler, Denise Wilkins, Sue Gahn, Michele Blue and Amy Wilkins; back row: Minerva Nearez, Mark Miesle, Greg Bender, Chris Mosser and Manoah Jones.



SPECIAL AWARD recipients for swimming and wrestling at the Ross Winter Sports Award Program Tuesday were, left to right, front row: Lori Nighswander, Heather Winning, Kelly Sabiers; back row: Matt Marinis, Mike Mezinger, Todd Scherer, Mike Mulholand, Matt Smith, Tom McDonald and Brian Mowry.

Ross hands out winter sports awards

News-Messenger Reports

Sue Gahn, Greg Bender, Mike Mezinger, Heather Winning, Tom McDonald and Brian Mowry were named "most valuable" for their respective sports Tuesday evening during the Ross High School Winter Sports Award Program.

Gahn and Bender topped the girls and boys basketball awards, respectively, while Mezinger won in wrestling. Winning was the girls swim team top award winner while McDonald and Mowry shared the boys swim team top honor.

Gahn received her MVP trophy along with trophies for being the best free throw shooter, rebounder and defensive player. She also got a co-captain's trophy along with Michele Blue.

During the past season, Gahn, a senior, was named the Buckeye Conference player of the year while averaging 21 points per game. She was also named the Coaches Association District VI player of the year and will be playing in the McDonald's Classic at Otterbein College April 13. The game matches the top high school girls players in Ohio. Gahn was named to the third team Class AAA All-Ohio by the United Press International (UPI) coaches poll and received special mention in the Associated Press poll.

Denise Wilkins shared the best defensive player honor with Gahn. All three are seniors.

Other awards passed out by Coach Sue Wolf were the most improved varsity player trophy going to Minerva Nearez. The most valuable reserve player is Nicole Buehler while the most

improved reserve player award went to Amy Wilkins.

In boys basketball, Bender, in addition to his MVP trophy, took home the best free throw shooter and rebounder trophies. He was also presented with a plaque from the Buckeye Conference for being a first team selection and its player of the year. Bender also got a captain's trophy along with co-captain Mark Miesle.

During the season, Bender, a 6-5 senior led Ross to a 15-6 record while averaging 19 points per game. He was named to the second team Class AAA All-Ohio by the UPI and was a special mention on the AP team. Bender will play April 20 in the Ohio High School Basketball Coaches Association All-Star Game in Canton.

Coach John Sawyer also passed out the best defender and most improved varsity player trophies to Miesle. The most valuable junior varsity player is Manoah Jones while the most improved JV player was Chris Mosser.

Mezinger led the wrestling honors passed out by Coach Al Voggenthaler. In addition to his MVP trophy, Mezinger also took home the trophy for the most takedowns during the season and the captain's trophy. His 96 takedowns for the season broke the old Ross mark of 72. Mezinger qualified for the state tournament and won one match before being eliminated.

During his Ross career, Mezinger won 75 matches and this past season was 28-4. In the past season, he helped Ross to a 7-0 dual record, opposite of the 0-7 that Ross had registered the previous season.

Other wrestling awards went to senior

Matt Smith for the most pins with 17, junior Todd Scherer as being the most improved and the Coaches' Award went to freshman Matt Marinis, one of three freshmen to qualify for the state tournament in the Class AAA division. Voggenthaler also announced that John Lozano had been elected captain of the wrestling team for the 1985-86 season. Lozano will be a senior.

Winning, a senior who qualified for the state swim meet the past two years, topped the Lady Aqua Giants awards portion of the program. She also received the Coaches' Award and a captain's trophy. Kelly Sabiers was the team's other co-captain and received her trophy.

The most improved girl swimmer is Lori Nighswander. Coach Art Bucci presented the awards.

McDonald and Mowry shared the MVP award for the boys swim team. McDonald added the Coaches' Award to his honor.

The most improved boys swimmer honor went to Mike Mulholand while Mike Robinette and Tracy Turner were presented with captains trophies.

Bucci announced the captains for next season. McDonald and Mowry will be the boys co-captains while Julie Randolph and Dawn Vogel will be the girls co-captains.

Following are the letter winners:

THIRD YEAR

Girls basketball: Sue Gahn.

Boys basketball: Greg Bender, Mark Miesle and Chris Simmons.

Wrestling: Todd Beatty, Mike Mezinger and Dave Middleton.

Girls swimming: Kelly Sabiers and Heather Winning.

Boys swimming: Tracy Turner.

SECOND YEAR

Girls basketball: Michele Blue, Shelly Leggett and Denise Wilkins.

Boys basketball: Dave Kovaleski, Shawn McCarthy and Rodney Smith, mgr.

Wrestling: John Lozano, Matt Smith, George Weissinger and Bob Flahiff, trainer.

Girls swimming: Julie Randolph.

Boys swimming: Jim Boggs, Jon Lagrou, Tom McDonald, Brian Mowry, Mike Robinette, Andy Scott and Bill Taylor.

Cheerleaders: Brenda Brown, Tam Marinis, Lori Mooney and Monna Rodriguez.

FIRST YEAR

Girls basketball: Brenda Kline, Aimee LeJeune, Minerva Nearez, Belinda Walters, Chris Yeager and Lisa Miarer, mgr.

Boys basketball: Karl Bury, John Cahill, Gregg Gallagher, Pat Hetrick, John Stierwalt and Halvar Oltersdorf, mgr.

Wrestling: Greg Abdo, Jim Carroll, Matt Marinis, Jerry Palomo, Jerrid Potter, Shawn Ramirez, Jesse Sepeda, Todd Scherer, Beth Yingling, trainer, and Romel Miller, mgr.

Girls swimming: Jamie Brudzinski, Elizabeth Goins, Lori Nighswander, Julie Schaaf, Julia Smith and Dawn Vogel.

Boys swimming: Paul Bietz, Mike Mulholand, Mike Nighswander, Ryan Nuhger, Steve Schaaf and Ty Weickert.

Cheerleaders: Jodi Beatty, Christy Michael, Ann Schroeder and Wendy Wooll.