

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Comeback lifts Ross

By BOB MARKER
Sports Editor

HOLLAND — Fremont Ross outscored Toledo Central Catholic 9-2 in the final 90 seconds for a 46-45 victory in the Division I girls district tournament semifinals at Springfield High School Thursday night.

"I never thought we were out of the game," Cari Ritzman of Ross said. "I thought we could come back."

DISTRICT FINAL

Ross (18-5) vs.
Sylvania Southview
7:30 p.m. Saturday
at Springfield High School

Dawn Zerman's two free throws with 22 seconds left gave Ross a 44-43 lead — the Little Giants' first lead since an 11-10 edge in the second quarter.

Cari Ritzman added two free throws 10 seconds later to give

the Little Giants a cushion that enabled them to survive a last-ditch attempt at a tie by Central's Breanna Heinrichs.

Ross coach Sue Wolf used a mixture of veterans with inexperienced youth in an outside attack that offset the lack of an inside game for the Little Giants.

"They were pushing us around and we weren't pushing them back," said Wolf, who countered

Zerman boosts Little Giants

Dawn Zerman's emergence as an outside shooter caught Toledo Central Catholic by surprise.

"I think she shot the ball from the perimeter much better than we had seen her," Central coach Steve Pfahler said. "We played her more for the penetration and drive. But tonight she stepped out and nailed 3s."

Zerman had four 3-point baskets, including two while scoring 12 points in the fourth quarter.

"We told our kids that she would be possibly one of the finest guards we faced all year," Pfahler said. "She stepped up and had a big game...good kids will do that."

— BOB MARKER

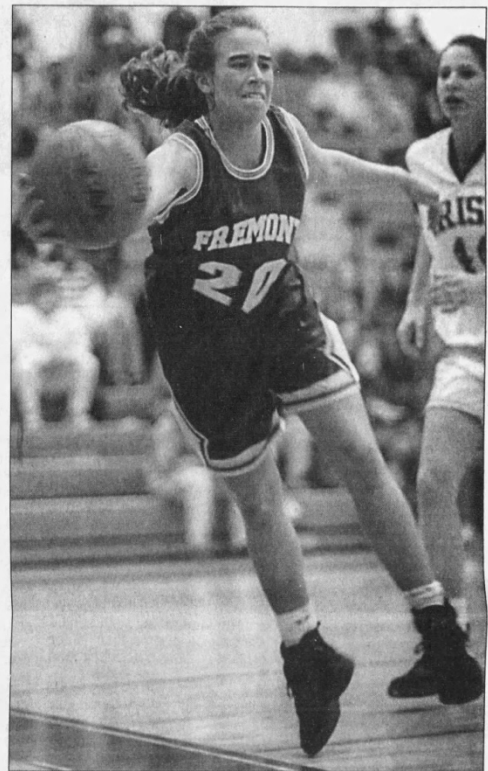
See ROSS, B2



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FREMONT ROSS basketball players Michele Smith (left), Emily Dowell (center) and Holly Peltrey (right) watch intently during the Little Giants' fourth-quarter comeback against Toledo Central Catholic in a Division

I district tournament game at Springfield High School in Holland Thursday night. At right, Cari Ritzman of Ross saves the ball from going out of bounds during the first half. The Little Giants advanced to the district finals.



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

DISTRICT GIRLS BASKETBALL

Ross falls in district finals

By **BOB MARKER**
Sports Editor

HOLLAND — It was not the best way to end a good season but Sue Wolf settled for it while thinking ahead.

Wolf stood silently in the noise of wildly celebrating Sylvania Southview fans Saturday after the Cougars defeated Wolf's Fremont Ross Little Giants 55-35 in the Division I girls district basketball tournament at Springfield High School.

After a moment, Wolf smiled. "The kids worked hard all season," she began and then gazed at the seats across the floor which were nearly filled by Fremont fans. "The support we are getting is unbelievable. If we can keep this up, hopefully, we can go a step further next year.

"It was a fantastic season ... I hope next season is better."

Getting to the district finals was a milestone for Wolf. Finishing with 18 wins in 24 games was another.

Wolf will lose only senior Holly Pelfrey from her squad. Her lineup, the same one she started all season, was comprised of juniors Dawn Zerman, Cari Ritzman and Dena Schepflin with freshman Emily Dowell and Pelfrey. Her first four substitutes are all sophomores.

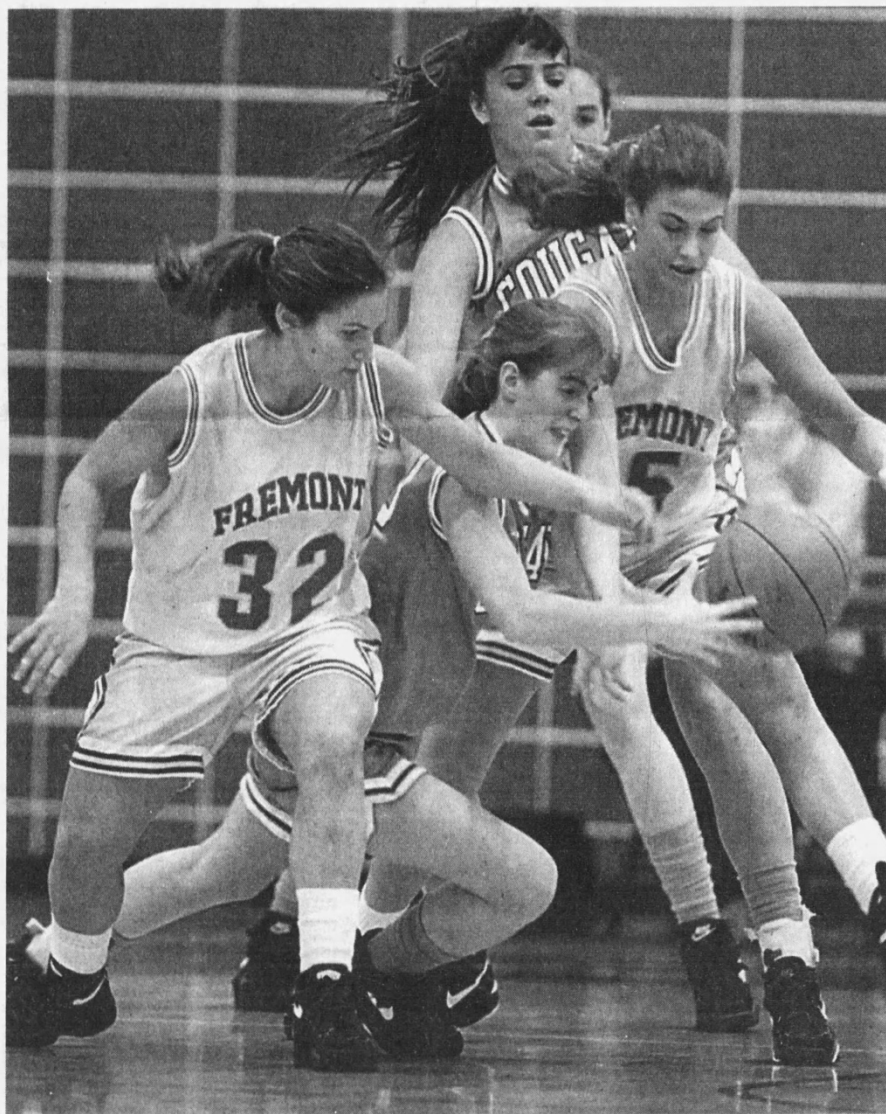
Saturday, Southview, with only two seniors on its squad, led 13-10 after one quarter and followed it up with a 7-of-9 shooting performance in the second quarter to put Ross down 30-19 at halftime and the Little Giants never recovered.

The Cougars, 22-1 and on a 22-game winning streak, will play Toledo St. Ursula at 6:15 p.m., Tuesday in the regional tournament at Galion. St. Ursula defeated Toledo Notre Dame 51-46 in the Toledo Bowsher district finals.

Dawn Zerman scored 12 of her 16 points in the first half for Ross.

Ross never got closer than 11 points in the second half and in the final quarter, with Southview up 41-38, the Little Giants were forced to shoot over the packed-in Cougar zone defense. That was a problem.

"We could not hit the broad



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

LISA OPRIE (32) and Michele Smith (right) of Fremont Ross battle for a loose ball with Southview's Stephanie

Raszka during Saturday night's district championship game at Springfield High School.

side of a barn (14-of-55)," Wolf said. "I thought we were flat. When we go to the foul line and are missing there ... we just did not have our legs, I guess."

In this game, Ross was truly the Little Giants. The Cougars started a pair of six-footers and brought a pair of 5-11 girls in off the bench.

"Karen Barcus on inside is

really strong," Wolf said. "We could not find a way to stop her."

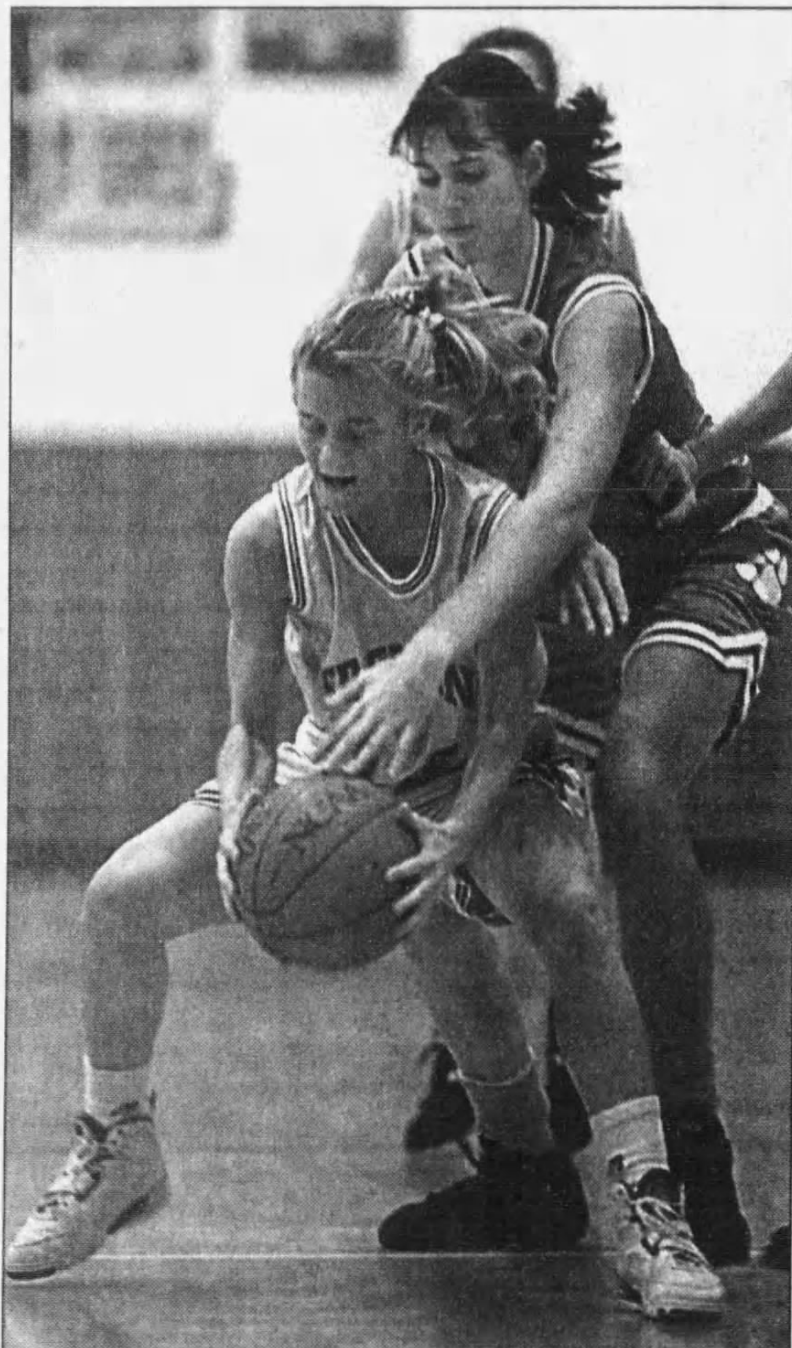
Barcus, a 6-foot senior, finished with 14 points and 5-11 substitute Kerry Gilligan added seven. Sophomore point guard Kati Stedcke added 13. Ritzman had six and Dowell four for Ross.

For Southview coach Kevin

Mitchell, the win topped off the day. Earlier Saturday, his wife Laurie presented him with a Cougar of the future, a baby girl.

"No matter what happened, it was a great day for me," Mitchell said.

And a day to look to the future for Ross.



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

Over the shoulder

Marcy Reinbolt of Fremont Ross keeps the ball away from Karen Knemeyer of Sylvania Southview during second-half action of the Division I girls district tournament finals Saturday at Springfield High School in Holland. Reinbolt was able to keep the ball away from 6-foot-1 Knemeyer but the Little Giants lost the game 55-35.