

1973 Class AAA Sectional Tournament

Ross Battles Galion High

The way things are lined up in the Class AAA Sectional basketball tournament at Ashland College, Fremont Ross could conceivably come out with a bracket championship and trip to the Bowling Green District event two weeks hence.

But any thinking along that line is a little further ahead than most high school coaches like to plan — and Little Giants Coach Ken Miller is no exception.

“Right now our purpose is only to produce a fundamentally sound game against Galion tomorrow night,” said Miller. “We don’t have time to think beyond that point and a lot of teams that do won’t be around to enjoy it.

“Going into the game, there are five areas we’ve stressed that must be done to win. And when you cover those five, you’ve covered the game of basketball.

“We’ll have to work as a unit which brings in teamwork. Second, our board work has to be strong — getting a second and

third effort on offense rather than just one. We must be tenacious on defense and on offense we have to be alert and play with our heads up. Fifth, there has to be 100 per cent hustle and desire. If we cover those five, the other things will fall into place.”

Ross and Galion square off in the opening game at 7 p.m. with Mansfield Malabar and Tiffin Columbian matched at 8:30. The two winners play for the bracket championship March 2 at 7 p.m.

“Galion is not an extremely tall team,” Miller said. “I’d compare them to Bellevue or Toledo Whitmer in height — but on the other hand we weren’t especially effective against either of those teams when it came to rebounding.”

Mike Reardon’s 14.3-point average leads the Little Giants and he’s the only member in double figures. Six-foot-five Bob Brudzinski has a 9.7 mean. Reardon also leads rebounders with eight per game and Miller

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Ross Vies Galion Hi

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reports that 6-4 sophomore Neal Oberholtzer is the only Ross player averaging two offensive rebounds a game.

"Bob, Mike and Obie are the only set starters right now," Miller added. "Our guard play is still unstable at the moment."

Two top guards possibly sidelined include senior Tim Smith who has missed three weeks after an emergency appendectomy and sophomore Jim Flower who has the flu. Jim Thomas and sophomore Bob Ford appear to be likely candidates.

"Galion was quite impressive when we scouted them against Willard," Miller stated. "They have five lettermen back and can change the game tempo to keep you off balance. Dave Repp (6-0 guard) is averaging nearly 19 points a game and also leads the team in rebounding. He's an overall good player. Dave Jones (6-2 center) and Steve Kent (6-1 forward) also average in double figures.

"We're at the crossroads now where there's no return. It's either do the job or forget about it for another year. Mentally I feel we're ready."

Tourney Hopes Shattered, 43 To 38 Ross Defeated By Galion

By DICK KINNEY, News-Messenger Sports Editor
ASHLAND — For sheer excitement, thrills and chills, the Class AAA Sectional basketball game here last night between Fremont Ross and Galion High Schools ranked slightly below a date with your own sister.

The two teams played for 3:13 before the first points were scored.

Ross didn't connect until 2:16 was left on the first-quarter clock.

From that auspicious beginning, Galion slogged and squatted to a 43-38 victory. The Little Giants' tournament trail met a permanent detour just inside the forest. The Tigers made it to the first tree, a Sectional bracket final next Friday against Northern Ohio League foe Tiffin Columbian.

Columbian, which owns a pair of regular-season wins over Galion, captured a 56-52 overtime decision from Mansfield Malabar.

After finally breaking the scoring ice, Galion "raced" to a 6-0 advantage. Ross sophomore forward Neal Oberholzer began things for the Giants when he grabbed an offensive rebound, spun around and put up a six-foot jumper at the 2:16 mark.

Mike Reardon of Fremont accounted for the next three points to close the gap to 6-3. The period ended with

Galion up by an 8-5 margin. Subsequent rest stop scores read 19-16 and 27-22 with the Tigers holding forth.

Ross nearly doubled its three-quarter output over the four stanzas with 16 points. Reardon collected 19 of his team-high 17 points over that eight-minute span to tie Galion's Dave Repp for game honors.

The game was never really out of reach for Fremont — the largest Galion lead being an eight-point advantage, 19-11, near the end of the second quarter. Five straight points by 6-6 Ross center Bob Brudzinski cut the lead to three by halftime.

But the 800 fans spotted around Ashland College's 2,500-seat facility never had a great deal to cheer about since the Giants couldn't take advantage of the situation even when they closed to within a single point (three times in the third canto).

Neither team strayed from its control-type offense, each seemingly content to work for the percentage shot. The main difference was that when the time finally arrived, Galion didn't hesitate while Ross consistently squandered the extra split second it takes for the defense to catch up with the ball.

The Tigers came out on top of virtually every statistic. Their full-court press during the entire game gave the Giants fits and helped force 14 costly turnovers while returning the favor only nine times.

Galion cracked the Giants zone and man-to-man defenses several times for easy layups. The Tigers scored 16 of their points from close range while Ross had only 10 from around the bucket.

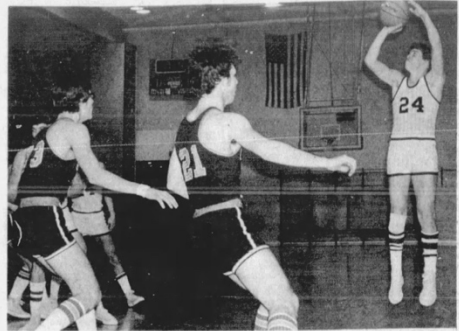
With both teams hitting 17 times from the field, it left the outcome to be decided at the charity stripe and Ross couldn't keep up with the Tigers' accuracy. Ross missed half of eight free throws including the first end of three one-and-ones. Galion stripped the cords on nine of 11 tries and missed once on a bonus attempt.

"I'm really confused," said Ross Coach Ken Miller. "We just don't play the way we practice. In practice we're loose and in the game we're tight. The only thing I can attribute it to is the fear of losing — and the whole ballgame is in the attitude."

To be fair, the Giants were playing under difficult circumstances with sophomore guard Jim Flower sidelined with the flu and senior guard Steve Smith returning for the first time since an emergency appendectomy three weeks ago.

"At halftime, Steve looked a little pale," Miller said, "but I asked him how he felt and he said he was fine."

Smith wound up with eight points. "The way we played last night, we're right where we belong — on the sidelines," Miller stated. "The 1972-73 season may have ended, but basketball hasn't."



BACK IN ACTION—Steve Smith (24) of Fremont Ross takes aim for the first two points of the second half against Galion defenders Steve Kent (21) and Dave Jones (33). Smith returned to action for the first time since he underwent an emergency

appendectomy three weeks ago and scored eight points while putting in a good floor game. This two-pointer put the Little Giants within a single point of the Tigers, 19-18. (News-Messenger Photos by Dick Kinney)

St. Joe Fails In Tournament Bid

By ROY WILHELM
FOSTORIA — The St. Mary's Panthers knew what they had to do and they did it.

The St. Joseph Crismos Streaks also knew what they needed to do, but they didn't.

As a result, the Streaks had a short tournament trail and the Panthers took a 2-1 edge in the season series between the two teams with a convincing 64-64 sectional tournament victory at Fostoria High School Friday night.

The Panthers knew they had to play better offense than they did the last time the two teams met — a game won by St. Joe, 54-52.

"Our offense was the difference," St. Mary's Coach Ray Miller said after the contest.

"We played much better than we did the last time we met. We got a real good job out of our guards and a good job from our front line even though they didn't score as much as usual." The winners hit 50 per cent in the first half.

The Panthers knew they had to lighten up underneath and slow down John Barrington — the Streaks senior forward who almost single-handedly destroyed the St. Mary live the last time they clashed.

"We were trying to keep the ball away from Barrington. Our shot chart indicated they (St. Joe) didn't hit that well from the outside," Miller explained.

but they turned ice cold in the second quarter and Miller's planning worked.

"Barrington's a heck of a ball player. We were crowding all around him and he still got some points," Miller said. Actually, in spite of all the attention he was getting, Barrington finished the night as the game's high scorer, coming five field goals and six free throws for 16 points. "If he would have scored like he did the last time against us," Miller said referring to Barrington's 28-point outburst two weeks ago, "we would have been in trouble."

The Streaks knew — just as they have known all season —

that to win they had to play good defense.

Coach Pete Guerrero, who has said all year that defense wins ball games, turned that phrase around after the game Friday, indicating that a lack of defense loses games. "Out of 19 games this year, this was the only game when our defense let us down. We just were not aggressive on defense. It's a shame to lose like this."

The Streaks knew that the Panthers would be sagging on defense to clog the middle so St. Joe would have to hit some medium range shots.

"We practiced against the two-

one-two and two-three all week,"

Guerrero said. The Panthers played a two-three for the entire game.

"They did just what we prepared for. We were not getting our first option — Barrington — but we were getting our second and third options and not connecting. We just did not do the same thing we have not done all year — put the ball in the basket."

The Streaks were as frigid as could be in the second period, canning just three of 17 attempts — a miserable 18 per cent performance. And, it was in that quarter that the Streaks lost the

ball game. In each of the other three periods, the two teams matched scores, but in that second quarter St. Mary's hammered St. Joe, 20-10.

The Streaks fell behind by as many as 14 in the third quarter, but made a real run at the Panthers before falling off the pace in the final quarter again. The Streaks cut the St. Mary lead to six points and seemed to have the momentum, but lost it and then could never tighten the game any more than that.

Miller was particularly pleased with the work of his junior guards Tad Windau and John Seiler. Each scored 15 points and Seiler did an excellent job of breaking the press and directing the offense.

The Panthers, now 11-4, will play the winner of Saturday night's Fostoria St. Wendell-Carey game in a contest set for next Friday.

In the second game at Fostoria last night, the New Riegel Blue Jackets were eliminated by a hot-shooting team from Mohawk High School, 76-41.

Mike Dunn and Dan Burks combined for 33 points to down New Riegel. Dunn had 30 markers and Burks contributed the other 23.

The Blue Jackets' effort was led by Mike Hogier as he tallied 20 in a losing cause.

This quarter course with the



CENTER OF ATTENTION—Fremont Ross center Bob Brudzinski (34) wraps his arms around the ball on this third-quarter rebound in the Giants Class AAA Sectional basketball tiff against Galion last night at Ashland College. Also reaching for the ball is

teammate Mike Reardon (32) and Galion's Steve Kent (behind Reardon). The scene — all five Tigers converging on the basketball — was a familiar sight in the contest as Galion led the entire game en route to a 43-38 decision.

