

Ross takes first step down tourney trail

Tight defense, solid shooting combine to lift Little Giants over Lima Shawnee in sectional

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

ADA — Ross led from start to finish to defeat Lima Shawnee 61-50 Tuesday night in the Class AAA boys sectional basketball tournament at Ohio Northern University's King-Horn Center.

The Little Giants, 10-11, combined tight man-to-man and zone defenses with a 20-of-37 shooting performance to oust the Indians, 11-10, from the tourney. Ross will play the winner of Thursday's Tiffin Columbian-Lima Senior game at approximately 2:30 p.m., Saturday, for the sectional title.

Ross's win followed top-seeded Elda's 63-40 win over Bowling Green.

"The key to the game was tempo," Ross Coach Pat McGhee said. "Even though we were ahead at the half, because of the score (Ross led 19-16), I thought Lima Shawnee had the game going the right way for them."

"In the second half, we tried to run them a bit."

Run, Ross did. Getting balanced scoring, the Little Giants ran to a 34-20 lead with 2:25 to play in the third quarter. The Ross defense held the

Indians scoreless from 6:10 until 2:21 remained. Nick Hall, Mike Wolfe and John Stierwalt had four points apiece with John Cahill scoring three and Manoh Jones two as Ross outscored Shawnee 17-11 for the quarter.

Contributing to the scoring were three assists by sophomore center Adam Bulger, who finished with five assists, seven rebounds, two blocks and a steal for Ross.

In that quarter, Cahill, assigned to cover Shawnee's leading scorer — Brian Newland — limited him to four points after Newland had scored 10 in the first half.

"Cahill was assigned to Newland," McGhee pointed out, "but we had a lot of others helping out. We made sure we knew where he (Newland) was on the floor. We felt he would get his 20 points, but we wanted to make him earn them."

Newland "earned" 24 points, six over his average, but was generally pushed out of the Indians' offense, along with his teammates. Cahill played one of his better games of the season, McGhee agreed, with his defense, 12 points and six rebounds.

The Little Giants scored the

game's first five points on Jones' jumper, a free throw by Cahill and Bulger's rebound of Cahill's miss on the second foul shot. Cahill finished with five points and Stierwalt four as Ross took a 13-10 lead after eight minutes.

The second quarter was a 6-6 stalemate as both defenses ruled.

Ross shifted into high in the third quarter and used the momentum to cruise to a 25-23 scoring advantage in the final period. Ross was five of six in the final quarter and sank 15 of 21 free throws as Shawnee, forced to foul attempting to

catch up, committed 12 fouls.

Stierwalt, handling a wing slot and running the team from the point guard position when Jones picked up three first-half fouls, topped Ross with 21 points and grabbed seven rebounds. Jones matched Cahill with 12 points and Hall had a team-high eight rebounds to go with eight points. Newland was the only Shawnee player in double figures.

The Little Giants held a 33-32 rebounding edge and committed just eight turnovers, two more than Shawnee. Ross was 21 of 34 from the foul line while Shawnee made eight of 13 foul shots and 21 of 55 field goal attempts.

Ross 61, Shawnee 50

Score by quarters

Ross	13	6	17	25	— 61
Shawnee	10	6	11	23	— 50

Scoring

ROSS — John Stierwalt 6-9-21, John Cahill 4-4-12, Adam Bulger 1-0-2, Nick Hall 3-2-8, Manoh Jones 3-6-12, Mike Wolfe 2-0-4, Arlo Brown 0-0-0, Tracy McGee 0-0-0, Kevin McDonald 1-0-2, totals 20-21-61.

SHAWNEE — Brian Newland 10-4-24, Eric Rhodes 1-0-2, Lorne Weight 2-2-6, Darby Buroker 2-2-6, Adam Monroe 2-0-4, Jeff Cowan 2-0-4, Pete Moore 2-0-4, totals 21-8-50.

Season records: Ross 10-11, Shawnee 11-10.

Little Giants win sectional championship

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

ADA — John Cahill and John Stierwalt can smile. After three years of frustration, they are getting their reward.

Cahill and Stierwalt led a host of Ross stars Saturday to the Class AAA boys sectional basketball title in King-Horn Center on the Ohio Northern University campus. The Little Giants knocked off Lima Senior, coming from seven points down in the third quarter to post a 63-57 victory.

Ross, 11-11, will play Lexington, 12-11, at 9 p.m., Thursday, in Bowling Green

State University's Anderson Arena in the second game of the AAA district.

"This is probably the biggest game we have played in," Cahill said while watching the net-cutting ceremonies. "It seemed like some other team was always taking our place."

Stierwalt, who had 24 points to pace the Ross win, echoed his teammate's feelings about the game adding that this was the first championship for the basketball team.

Three years ago, Cahill was a starter and Stierwalt a key reserve on the Greg Bender-led Ross team that posted a 15-6

record. Mansfield beat the Little Giants in overtime in the first game of the sectionals and cruised all the way to the state tourney finals. That memory was mentioned by both the Ross seniors.

Manoh Jones, the third Ross senior starter, popped in eight points while handling the Spartan half-court pressure and directing the Ross offense. Jones said that even though Lima Senior took that seven-point lead, he was not too concerned.

"There are breaks during a game," he said while alluding to the hot and cold spells teams can have, "but we brought it back. I

knew that we could."

Nick Hall, a 6-4 junior, carved through the tired Spartan defense for nine final quarter points as the Ross outscored Lima Senior 25-16, wiping out a 41-38 deficit after three quarters. Ironically, it was a series of Ross misses at the end of the third quarter that Coach Pat McGhee said lit the spark that ignited Ross in the final eight minutes.

Arlo Brown, a 6-3 sophomore, stole a Lima pass, drove to the basket but missed the layup while under heavy pressure. He got the rebound but missed the easy lay-in. Teammate Mike

Wolfe got that rebound but he also missed the short shot as the buzzer ended the period.

"Even though we did not make that shot," McGhee said, "that sparked us."

Ross caught Lima at 46-46 at the 6:07 mark of the final quarter. Hall and Jones scored but Ross still trailed 46-42 before Jones scored again and Stierwalt dropped in two free throws to tie. Cahill gave Ross its first lead since the first quarter with an 18-foot jumper but Carlton Thomas' bucket tied it with 4:37 to play.

Jones put Ross ahead for good with long jumper and sophomore Adam Bulger made it a four-

point lead with a layup. The Little Giants outscored the Spartans 11-3 in the next two minutes to put the game on ice. Stierwalt's final two of 12 free throws in the game, put Ross up 63-53 with 35 seconds remaining.

"The key to the game was our three guards — Jones, Stierwalt and Cahill — McGhee said. "They controlled the play and made sure we took the good shots."

Hall finished with 19 points and Cahill had eight while holding Lima Senior's top scorer, Thomas, to no points in the first three quarters. Kevin Ingram had 14 points for the Spartans.