

2009-2010 Season Review

BOYS BASKETBALL ■ FREMONT ROSS

Big numbers mean high hopes for Little Giants

JEFF ARENZ
Sports Writer

FREMONT — Interest in basketball at Fremont Ross is at an all-time high under coach Mark Gedeon.

Among the 55 players at the freshman, junior varsity and varsity levels, 38 of them comprise the top Little Giants two squads.

"When you're talking about the numbers that we have, we have to have people who understand their roles," Gedeon said. "And that is what the preseason is for... to develop players into those roles. Once we get into the regular season, we hope our players understand what they are going to contribute to the team and, when they are called upon, do that to the best of their ability. The competition will be for our players to go out and earn significant minutes."

After reaching the .500 mark at 11-11 last season, expectations during the 2009-2010 campaign have been set higher.

Five lettermen — senior guards Kenny Penn, Darien Spann and Marcus Dayringer and juniors Shunnar Gamble (forward) and Jake Hiestand (guard) — are back vying for major minutes while Allen Lewis (post) and Terrance Hill (guard) are also in the mix.

Penn, who set a Ross record by making 88 percent of his foul shots last season, came on strong at the end of 2008-09. His ability to penetrate and distribute the ball helped the Little Giants. Gamble used his quickness and jumping ability to penetrate the baseline and defend. Spann, Dayringer, Hiestand and Hill have the ability to be effective shooters from long range. According to Gedeon, Lewis is a post

FREMONT ROSS AT A GLANCE

■ **Coach:** Mark Gedeon, 15th season (175-133, .568)

■ **2008-09:** 11-11 overall, 4-6 GBC

■ **Key Losses:** Jordan Jones, guard; Stephen Carnicom, wing; Marc Bolen, wing/post; Andrew House, post.

■ **Key Returnees:** Seniors Darien Spann, guard; Kenny Penn, point guard; and Marcus Dayringer, guard; and juniors Terrance Hill, guard; Shunnar Gamble, forward; Jake Hiestand, guard; and Allen Lewis, post.

■ **Key Newcomers:** Seniors Max Price, forward; Max Sanchez, forward; Greg Smith, forward (transfer from Mississippi); and sophomores Skylar Refner, guard; and Jake Carnicom, post.

■ Schedule:

November
21vs St. Joe, OHSAA Foundation Game, 6 p.m.

December
4vs Oregon Clay, 4:30 p.m. (freshman start)

5vs Toledo Waite, 6 p.m.

11at Lima Sr., 6 p.m.

18vs Findlay, 6 p.m.

19vs Toledo Start, 6 p.m.

22at Whitmer, 4:30 p.m. (freshman start)

29vs Woodward, 11 a.m.

player that didn't see many varsity minutes last season, but could surprise opposing teams with his skills underneath the basket early on.

"For us to be successful, we're going to have to shoot the basketball well," Gedeon said. "Last year, from the free throw line, we made more than 70 percent of our shots. We want to make sure that we continue to do that. We also had multiple 3-point baskets from a variety of

shooters. We have to continue to do that. If we can stretch opposing defenses out by using the 3-point line, that's going to open our driving lanes. Even if we're not the tallest team out there, we can surely make opposing teams guard us the width and the length of the floor, which could give us opportunities inside."

With the graduation of post player Andrew House (6-foot-5) and swingman

January

7vs Sandusky, 6 p.m.

9vs Maumee, 4:45 p.m. (freshman start)

15at Marion Harding, 6 p.m.

21vs Napoleon, 6 p.m.

23at Willard, 6 p.m.

29vs Lima Sr., 6 p.m.

February

2at Rogers, 6 p.m.

5at Findlay, 6 p.m.

11at Sandusky, 6 p.m.

13at Port Clinton, 4:15 p.m. (freshman start)

19vs Marion Harding, 6 p.m.

20at Tiffin Columbian, 6 p.m.

26at Napoleon, 6 p.m.

■ Roster:

3 Darien Spann Sr. 5-7 W

5 Terrance Hill Jr. 5-9 W

11 Skylar Refner So. 6-2 W/P

15 Jay Carnicom So. 6-1 PG/W

21 Shunnar Gamble Jr. 6-3 W/P

23 Kenny Penn Sr. 5-10 PG

25 Marcus Dayringer Sr. 6-0 W

31 Matt Price Sr. 5-9 PG/W

33 Jake Hiestand Sr. 5-9 PG/W

35 Greg Smith Sr. 6-3 P

41 Max Sanchez Sr. 5-10 W/P

45 Allen Lewis Jr. 6-2 P

Stephen Carnicom (6-6), Ross is left without an extremely tall lineup. Gamble (6-2) and Lewis (6-3) are the Little Giants who have the most size.

Seniors Matt Price and Max Sanchez, both forwards, who saw limited varsity time last season, are looking for increased roles. Senior forward Greg Smith,

See ROSS BOYS
HOOPS | 5



News-Messenger file photo

Fremont Ross forward Shunnar Gamble is pressured by Findlay's Kevin Krucki during a game last season. Gamble returns for the Little Giants this season.

Good Luck

To All Area Teams!

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News-Messenger file photo

Fremont Ross guard Darien Spann drives to the hoop against Marion Harding.

ROSS BOYS HOOPS FROM 3

originally from Fremont, transferred to Ross after living in Mississippi. Sophomores Skylar Reffner and Jake Carnicom add depth to the Little Giants' pool of guards.

Gedeon will award minutes to players who bring forth solid defensive skills.

"Defensive intensity has to be a concept for us

by contesting passes and by contesting shots," Gedeon said. "We don't want to give our opponents anything easy. There will always be times when opponents make a shot, but we want to make life difficult for them when they bring the ball up the floor and when they execute their offense."

Penn, Spann, Dayringer, Hiestand, Hill and Reffner could gain more minutes by being effective rebounders. They also bring great quick-

ness to the Ross lineup.

"Our guards are going to have to make sure that they rebound," Gedeon said. "Sometimes, rebounding is not necessarily getting the ball, but making sure your opponent doesn't get it. If we can get to the ball quickly, then we can get out and run faster with our transition game putting pressure on an opposing defense."

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Fifth-annual alumni games honor memory of manager

JEFF ARENZ
Sports Writer

FREMONT — The memory of Billy Stierwalt remains alive in the hearts of Fremont Ross boys basketball alumni.

Chad Clark, who was a starter at forward for Ross in 2002-03, said Stierwalt, the Ross team manager, provided inspiration for the Little Giants.

"I remember a game that we played up at Oregon Clay," Clark said. "Both teams came into the game 7-1 or 6-2, but Billy couldn't make it because he was sick. Before it started, Billy called his dad's cell phone because he wanted to talk to us. I know the five starters used his message as inspiration for the game and we ended up winning by 25 points."

Stierwalt, who had been diagnosed with muscular dystrophy, was a sophomore at Ross in 2003. He died in February 2006 after suffering a seizure.

On Friday, the Purple Pit will be the site of the fifth-annual Billy Stierwalt Scholarship Alumni Basketball Games. At 6 p.m., the non-competitive half-court Slow-Break contest takes place. At 7:30 p.m., the competitive, Fast-Break game begins.

Clark is among the Ross alumni who have signed up to play. In addition to remembering Stierwalt, Clark said the event is a night of fun and a chance for former Little Giants to play together again at the Purple Pit.

Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon knew of Stierwalt's love of basketball before he decided to offer him the position as the basketball team's manager. One of Stierwalt's duties was to be Ross' official stopwatch operator. The Little Giants embraced Stierwalt, loved his company and saw his dedication.

"Over Christmas break, we had a bad snowstorm," Clark said. "I know a lot of us couldn't get to practice and we didn't know if Billy was going to show up. But there he was with his dad dropping him off."

"I think everyone on the team looked up to Billy. A lot of people thought that we were role models for Billy, but I think it was the other way around," he said.

A plaque bearing Stierwalt's image hangs in the southwest corner of the Purple Pit. It was the corner in which Stierwalt sat. Before each varsity home game to this day, Ross players emerge off the bench as they are announced and run across the court to the plaque in tribute to Stierwalt.

Proceeds from the game will be used for scholarships in the amount of

SEE MEMORY | B8



Submitted photo

Fremont Ross great John Lewis III shoots a layup.

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL ■ ROSS ALL-TIME TEAM

Best ever? You decide

News-Messenger reports

FREMONT — The candidates are in. Now it's time to vote.

Thanks to public input, a field of 15 Fremont Ross boys basketball players has been chosen and, from that list, readers of the News-Messenger and thenews-messenger.com are asked to pick no more than five.

Your responses can be e-mailed to sportsdesk@fremont.gannett.com. Winners will be recognized at halftime at an upcoming Ross game. Voting will continue through the end of the calendar year. The choices:

■ **Bob Shaw** — First-team all-Ohio player in basketball as well as football in 1939-40. He played at Ohio State and went on to a brief NFL career, playing for the Rams in Cleveland and Los Angeles and the Chicago Cardinals.

■ **Mike Reardon** — First-team all-Ohio player who scored 711 career points for Ross ending in 1974. He went on to Western Michigan University, where he started at forward and was named to an all-MAC team.

■ **Luke Lyle** — First-team all-Ohio player who scored 742 career points ending in 2003. Played for Ohio Dominican and Baldwin Wallace.

■ **Charles Woodson** — Known for his football prowess, but the 1995 Ross graduate and hall of fame inductee ended his basketball career with 856 career points before winning a Heisman

Trophy at Michigan.

■ **Greg Bender** — 1984 graduate holds the Ross record for most points in a season (494 in 1984) and career (1133). Great rebounder and ball handler. Played college basketball at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington.

■ **Pete Davis** — Second-team all-Ohio player who graduated in 1961. Also played for Bowling Green State University.

■ **John Stierwalt** — Earned three letters in basketball, as well as two in football and two in baseball. Inducted into the Ross Hall of Fame in 2001.

■ **Tim Thomas** — Honorable mention all-state player who ended his career in 1966 with 666 points, good at the time for second in school history, and an inductee into the Ross Hall of Fame.

■ **Dave Fahrback** — Played professionally in Europe and South America.

■ **John Lewis III** — Finished his playing career with 742 career points.

■ **Juan Vela** — Now the Ross girls coach, finished his playing career in 2000 with 846 career points.

■ **Joell Heidelberg** — Scored 849 career points, good for fifth all-time on the Ross list.

■ **Reggie Jones** — Second on the Ross scoring list with 1,093 points, including a 36-point game, his career best, against Sylvania Northview. A 2000 graduate.

MEMORY FROM B1

\$1,000 for senior Little Giants players who will be attending college in fall 2010.

In June, Alex House and Marc Bolen received Stierwalt scholarships.

More than \$13,000 has been raised during the first four years of the game with 13 scholarships being awarded thus far.

The alumni contests have featured 50 Little Giants' alumni and about 700 fans.

In addition, there will be concessions, raffles, a 50/50 drawing and fans will have the opportunity to sign up for a chance at making a halfcourt shot. One of the raffle items is a football signed by the 2009 Toledo Rockets.

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Ross falls short in closing seconds

JEFF ARENZ

Sports Writer

FREMONT — Guard Kenny Penn didn't have the answer the Little Giants were looking for in the final seconds.

Penn fought his way through a double team but missed a 3-point attempt as Oregon Clay held off Fremont Ross 52-49 in the season opener for both schools Friday at the Purple Pit.

"We had a chance to blow out this team and we didn't take advantage of it," said Penn, who scored a game-high 17 points for Ross (0-1). "Instead of it being really close, we missed a lot of opportunities. Then, it wouldn't have come down to a final shot."

Despite being outrebounded 29-22, the Little Giants failed to capitalize on their 11-5 advantage on the offensive glass by shooting 33 percent (18-of-54) from the field.

The Eagles, with four starters (Bruno Marotta 6-foot-4, Taylor Schabel 6-4, Jordan Wamer 6-6 and Doug Waldmanstetter 6-6) larger than Ross's tallest players (Shunnar Gamble and Greg Smith, both 6-3), shot a torrid 56 percent (19-of-34) from the field.

Trailing 45-42 with 4:30 left, Schable led a 9-2 Clay run with a trio of baskets. His baseline drive gave the Eagles a 51-47 lead as 51 seconds remained. Schable finished with 14 points.

"Our inside play toward the third and fourth quarter came through," Clay coach Rob Belegirin said. "We ran a couple specials and we tried to pound it down low. We had a couple mismatches, we took advantage of our size and it worked out for us."

Ross coach Mark Gedeon said the Little Giants failed to execute at the defensive end.

"We picked a poor time to have a defensive letdown," Gedeon

said. "I think (Clay's) last five field goals were shots from the paint, layups, post feeds and one on a homerun pass. We can't let teams get inside the paint that easy on us beacuse we know we're at a disadvantage size-wise."

Waldenstetter scored 2 points on third-quarter field goal, but pulled down a game-high 10 rebounds.

The Little Giants drew within 51-49 on a pair of Penn free throws, but the Ross guard missed a driving layup that would have tied the contest in the final 35 seconds.

"We had some opportunities for some layups and some open looks that we didn't cash in," Gedeon said. "We didn't execute our plays as crisply as we want. In varsity basketball, when it comes down to crunch time, we have to be precise in what we do."

A Penn layup gave Ross a 36-34 lead with 3:31 left in the third quarter. It was the Little Giants' first lead since a 7-6 edge midway through the first period before Clay's 10-2 second quarter run gave the Eagles their biggest lead (23-14) with five minutes left in the first half.

"In the second quarter, we were mixing up our defenses, trapping in different areas and we got after it with a lot of energy," Belegirin said. "We have a lot young kids with inexperience, but I think we used their energy wisely."

Clay guard Ross Achter scored 8 of his 10 points in the first half, including a 6-point first quarter.

Gamble drained a 3-pointer as Ross took a 39-35 advantage in the final minute of the third quarter and his putback of a missed shot midway through the fourth quarter put the Little Giants ahead 45-42. He finished with 13 points.

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ROSS FROM B1

Allen Lewis added six points for Ross, which hosts Toledo Waite at approximately 7:30 p.m. today.

The Little Giants won the junior varsity contest against Clay 53-31.

Boys basketball

Fremont Ross 83, Toledo Waite 76, OT

News-Messenger reports

FREMONT — Fremont Ross shot its way past Toledo Waite during a non-conference 83-76 victory in overtime Saturday at the Purple Pit.

After shooting 33 percent in a 52-49 loss at home Friday to Oregon Clay, the Little Giants were 24-of-41 (59 percent) from the floor, including a 10-of-15 (67 percent) effort behind the arc to tie a Ross record for 3-point shots made in a game.

The Little Giants led 16-14 after eight minutes and 38-31 at half-time. The Indians rallied with a 21-14 edge in the third quarter to tie the game at 52. Ross and Waite played to 20-all tie in the fourth quarter after Jake Hiestand hit a 3-pointer with 8.2 seconds left in regulation to send the game to overtime.

In the extra session, the Little Giants won the tip before Shun-nar Gamble (13 points) hit a 3-pointer to hand Ross the lead for good.

Hiestand scored 15 points on five 3-point shots. Kenny Penn, who had two 3-pointers among his six field goals, ended up with a game-high 27 points after a 13-of-16 performance at the foul line. Jay Carnicom and Marcus Dayringer also drained 3-pointers for Ross.

The Little Giants were 25-of-39 at the foul line compared to Waite, which was 13-of-18.

Allen had 16 points and 14 rebounds to lead Waite while Keyshawn Harris added 15 points.

The Indians out-rebounded the Little Giants 34-25.

ROUNDUP N

Ross drops GBC opener

News-Messenger reports

The Little Giants dropped their Greater Buckeye Conference opener 85-65 at Lima Senior on Friday night.

Kenny Penn led Ross (1-2, 0-1) with 18 points, while Skylar Reffner added 15.

Anton Hutchins had the hot hand for the Spartans (2-0, 1-0) with 24 points.

Lima Senior 85, Fremont Ross 65

Fremont Ross: Kenny Penn 4 7 18, Skylar Reffner 7 1 15, Marcus Dayringer 1 2 10, Allen Lewis 3 0 6, Darien Spann 3 0 6, Max Sanchez 2 0 4, Jake Hiestand 0 0 3, Jay Carnicom 1 0 2, Terrance Hill 0 1 1. Totals 21 11 65

Lima: ANTON HUTCHINS 12 0 24, TYLER WHITE 5 0 16, JERMONT HEALEY 1 0 14, KENDALL JACKSON 2 3 7, DA'SHON BATES 3 0 6, SHAWN DEVON ALLEN 0 1 4, ADRIAN HUTCHINS 2 0 4, TYRONE PERRY 2 0 4, Mike Rumbaugh 0 0 3, SHANNDAL WALTON 1 1 3. Totals 28 5 85

Fremont Ross	23	13	12	17	-	65
Lima Senior	26	18	26	15	-	85

3-point goals: Fremont Ross 8 (Carnicom 4, Dayringer 2, Hiestand 1, Penn 1). Lima 16 (ALLEN 8, HEALEY 4, WHITE 2, ALLEN 1, Rumbaugh 1).



Jennifer Young-Bower | News-Messenger correspondent

Fremont's Kenny Penn makes a pass during Friday's game against Findlay at the Purple Pit. Penn scored 10 points in the Little Giants' 51-41 loss.

Mistakes cost Little Giants

BY KEVIN SHIELDS

News-Messenger correspondent

FREMONT — When Fremont Ross needed to step up and get its offense going the most on Friday mistakes cost them a shot at a win in the final quarter.

Findlay, up 38-36 entering the final quarter, outscored the Little Giants 13-5 on the way to a 51-41 win in Greater Buckeye Conference play.

Zach Elbin had four of his game-high 15 points in the final stanza for the Trojans (4-1, 1-1) who held Ross scoreless till 1:05 remained in the game. A Greg Smith bucket in the paint for the Little Giants finally broke the drought as Findlay scored the quarter's first 10 points.

"We went on a long dry spell with not being able to execute the way we wanted," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said of the final quarter. "That's something we've even been battling in practice too — trying to get five players to focus on their responsibilities on each and every possession."

Clay Paul hit a 3-pointer just 23 seconds into the fourth to give Findlay a 41-36 edge. That would be the only scoring, though, until Elbin got a lay-up in the paint with 4:11 left, as Ross missed shot after shot and had some bad turnovers.

The Little Giants were just 3-for-11 from the field, while the Trojans went 3-for-6 and 5-for-7 at the foul line.

"I thought we had some good hustle plays to create turnovers there," Findlay coach Jim Rucki said. "We pressed once and (Ross) came down on a 2-on-1 and the next thing I know, Kyle Boyd is coming out with the ball because he had sprinted from behind to get it."

"I think we also spread the floor out and made (Ross) work defensively, which is tough to do and then make shots at the other end."

Findlay's run came after the Little Giants battled back from a 29-21 deficit at halftime to tie the game at 33 all in the third quarter. Two Allen Lewis buckets down low and the first 3-pointer of the game for Ross by Kenny Penn cut the lead to 31-28 with 3:43 left in the quarter.

Skylar Reffner then went coast-to-coast for lay-in off a Findlay turnover to cut it to one, before Marcus Dayringer tied the game with 1:07 left after a Brock Ammons bucket for the Trojans.

"I thought we were very fortunate to be just down by eight at halftime," Gedeon said. "Knowing that our execution was not where it needed to be."

"We had some pretty poor rotations in the first half where we gave up some lay-ups inside and gave up some uncontested threes and it was very frustrating to see."

Following Dayringer's 3-pointer that tied the game for Ross, he would immediately be hit with a technical foul coming back down the court. Paul sank both free throws to start a five-point run for Findlay that swung the momentum in their favor just before Penn hit a three at the buzzer to cut the lead to two.

Penn's 3-pointer was gave him only eight points for the game, as he finished with a team-best 10 points, but was guarded well all night by Findlay's Grant Birchmeier.

"I thought Grant (Birchmeier) did a tremendous job on Penn," Rucki said. "He's a really good player, he can also get to the rim and Grant did a nice job of staying in front of him."

The only points Ross got in the first half were in the paint or on the foul line, as they had 12 points down low and were 9-for-10 at the line. They finished the game 9-for-11 at the line, while the Trojans were 13-of-19.

SEE ROSS | B8

ROSS FROM B1

"We need that good inside-outside game," Gedeon said. "We can't just win it from the free throw line or we can't just win it from the 3-point line. We need to have that balance."

Findlay led 14-11 after one quarter and went a 10-2 run in the final 4:12 of the first half to open its

halftime lead. Elbin had 11 points in the opening half, as Findlay shot 10-for-22 in the opening half and 16-for-36 for the game. Ross was 6-of-14 and 15 -for-34 respectively. The Little Giants won the rebounding battle 22-17, but had 21 turnovers to 18 for the Trojans.

"Overall, this was a pretty good performance by us," Rucki said. "We've not

played well here (at Ross) and even when we've had really good teams and won here — we haven't always played well. Tonight we seemed to have a little better flow offensively."

Findlay also came away with a 32-28 win in the JV game. Boston Ballmer had a game-high 14 points for the Trojans, while Dylan Starks had eight points for Ross.

Boys Basketball Findlay 51, Fremont Ross 41

Findlay: Zach Eblin 4 5 15, Clay Paul 3 5 13, Grant Birchmeier 3 1 9, Brock Ammons 3 1 7, C.J. Gettys 2 0 4, Justin Richter 1 1 3, Michael Lange 0 0 0. Totals 16 13 51

Ross: Jay Carnicom 0 0 0, Marcus Dayringer 0 0 0, Shunnar Gamble 0 0 0, Jake Hiestand 0 0 0, Terrance Hill 0 0 0, Allen Lewis 0 0 0, Kenny Penn 0 0 0, Matt Price 0 0 0, Skylar Reffner 0 0 0, Max Sanchez 0 0 0, Greg Smith 0 0 0, Darien Spann 0 0 0. Totals 0 0 41

Findlay	14	15	9	13	-	51
Fremont Ross	11	10	15	5	-	41

3-point goals: Findlay 5 (Ammons 5). Ross 4 (Carnicom 4).

Rebounds: Findlay 17 (Eblin 4, Gettys 4, Ammons 3, Paul 2, Birchmeier 1).

Assists: Findlay 8 (Ammons 5, Paul 2, Birchmeier 1).

Little Giants lose to Toledo Start

Fremont Ross dropped a non-conference game to Toledo Start 80-42.

Anthony Henderson led the Spartans with 18 points, and Kenny Penn led the Little Giants with 14 points.

Toledo Start 80, Fremont Ross 42

Start: Henderson 8 0 18, Copeland 0 1 11, Morris 4 3 11, Grays 5 0 10, Wietrzykowski 4 0 10, Hank Oswald 2 3 7, Demond Crisp 2 0 5, Grimmett 2 0 4, Scott Oliver-Shorter 1 0 2, Devon Price 0 0 0. Totals 28 7 80

Ross: Kenny Penn 6 0 14, Allen Lewis 0 1 5, Skylar Reffner 2 1 5, Greg Smith 2 1 5, Jay Carnicom 2 0 4, Darien Spann 2 0 4, Shunnar Gamble 1 0 3, Matt Price 1 0 2, Marcus Dayringer 0 0 0, Jake Hiestand 0 0 0, Terrance Hill 0 0 0, Max Sanchez 0 0 0. Totals 16 3 42

Start	20	18	19	23	-	80
Fremont Ross	10	7	9	16	-	42

BOYS BASKETBALL ■ TOLEDO WHITMER 65, FREMONT ROSS 41

Whitmer latest TCL team to rudely greet Little Giants

BY KEVIN SHIELDS

News-Messenger correspondent

TOLEDO — The Fremont Ross boys basketball team is getting no love from its soon to be home — the Toledo City League.

Ross dropped its third-straight contest Tuesday, losing 65-41 to Whitmer in non-league play.

It was the Little Giants second consecutive loss to a City League opponent as they dropped an 80-42 decision to Start on Saturday. Ross is 1-2 against its future league this season, with its lone victory coming Dec. 5 (83-76 OT) over Waite.

Ross will join the TCL during

the 2011-12 academic year.

Dareon Jones led the Panthers (2-1) with 10 points. Whitmer had seven players finish with six or more points.

Luke Hickey added nine off the bench for Whitmer as it dominated from start to finish against an undersized Ross (1-5) team.

Kenny Penn had a game-high 14 for the Little Giants.

"We knew (Whitmer) is the biggest team in the city," Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon said. "They're very physical, very aggressive and we're the Little Giants for a reason."

"We've got to make sure we're doing things we're capable of doing against that physical play."

Right from the start, the Panthers established their inside game, scoring four quick points in the paint as part of an early 10-4 lead. Whitmer scored a total of eight points in the paint in the first 8 minutes and 14 in the first half to eight for Ross.

A 3-pointer by Jake Hiestand brought the Little Giants within three (10-7) with 3:28 left in the opening quarter. But that was as close as Ross would ever be.

The run came from the small-

er Little Giants penetrating to the basket and drawing defenders for open looks on jumpers.

"That's part of the style of this team," Gedeon said. "We know we have to have a lot of five around zero, four around one-type of sets and we need to be successful both penetrating to the basket, but also being able to kick it out and knock down some outside shots too."

The Panthers went on a 9-0 run to lead 19-7 after one and outscored Ross 13-7 in the second quarter to lead 32-18 at halftime.

"(Whitmer) needed to get the

ball inside, which it established early," Gedeon said. "Fourteen of their first 16 points were either paint shots or free throws, which is part of their game. Obviously, they're a good free throw shooting team — shooting 92 percent from the line."

Whitmer finished the game making 13-for-14 free throws while Ross finished 14-for-19 (73 percent).

The Little Giants never got closer than 12 in the second half, ending the game 13-for-48 from the field. The Panthers finished 24-for-51 (47 percent) and won the rebound battle 30-23.

Whitmer 65,
Fremont Ross 41

Ross: Kenny Penn 4 6 14, Allen Lewis 2 1 5, Shunnar Gamble 2 0 4, Skylar Reffner 1 2 4, Jake Hiestand 0 0 3, Max Sanchez 1 1 3, Darien Spann 1 1 3, Jay Carnicom 0 2 2, Greg Smith 1 0 2, Matt Price 0 1 1, Marcus Dayringer 0 0 0, Terrance Hill 0 0 0. Totals 12 14 41

Whitmer: DAREON JONES 3 4 10, LUKE HICKEY 1 4 9, KENNETH HAYES 4 0 8, NIGEL HAYES 4 0 8, CHRISTOPHER REAPER 4 0 8, CHRISTOPHER WORMLEY 2 3 7, FRANKLIN S. LINDSEY 0 0 6, HUNTER BARNES 0 2 5, ADAM DOTSON 1 0 2, RANDALL KENNEDY 1 0 2, JACOB S. GORNEY 0 0 0, MITCHELL KOSIER 0 0 0, MICHAEL SZYMANSKI 0 0 0. Totals 20 13 65

Fremont Ross	7	11	7	16	-	41
Whitmer	19	13	15	18	-	65

3-point goals: Ross 1 (Hiestand 1). Whitmer 4 (LINDSEY 2, BARNES 1, HICKEY 1).

Rebounds:

Assists: Ross 0 (Carnicom 4). Whitmer 0 (BARNES 10).

Penn and Gamble magical in Little Giants' matinee victory

BY MATT MILLS

News-Messenger correspondent

FREMONT — Kenny Penn and Shunnar Gamble led the Little Giants boys basketball team to a 68-55 win over Toledo Woodward on Tuesday afternoon in the Purple Pit.

Penn tallied 22 points while Gamble scored 19.

"(Monday) was the best practice we've had all season, from the top of the roster to the bottom, everyone practiced like

they needed to," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said. "Hopefully that reinforced a little bit what we need to be doing in practice, because it showed in today's game."

The Little Giants pulled away at the start of the fourth quarter, outscoring Woodward 23-14 in



GAMBLE



PENN

the final period. The biggest reason Ross finished the game strong was because of its hustle and quick tempo.

"Without question we are looking to be a very fast, up tempo team," Gedeon said. "Our defense created a lot of offense for us out there,

and that's always a good thing."

Ross started the game forcing seven turnovers in the first period and was helped out in large part by Woodward's foul trouble. Ross was in the bonus with a minute to go in the period. Ross maintained its lead in the second quarter and took a 27-22 lead to halftime.

Gamble was assessed a technical foul midway through the third quarter for jawing back and forth with a Woodward player.

From that point on, Gamble took his game to a new level.

"I like to play off of people's trash talking, it makes it a lot more fun for me," Gamble said. "My back spasms are starting to feel better and that's letting me be my normal stuff and do the things I am used to doing on a basketball court."

The Little Giants are off until Jan. 7, when they host archival Sandusky with the junior varsity game tipping off at 6 p.m.

Fremont Ross 68, Woodward 55

Woodward -Toledo: Ray Hooker 8 3 25, Brandon Wyatt 4 0 11, Antonio Dinkins 2 1 5, Riles 2 1 5, Vonnie Parker 2 0 4, Wells 1 1 3, Howard 1 0 2. Totals 20 6 55

Ross: Kenny Penn 5 9 22, Shunnar Gamble 8 3 19, Greg Smith 4 1 9, Allen Lewis 2 0 4, Darien Spann 2 0 4, Marcus Dayringer 1 0 3, Matt Price 1 0 3, Skylar Reffner 1 0 3. Totals 21 13 68

Woodward	11	11	19	14	-	55
Fremont Ross	15	12	18	23	-	68

3-point goals: Woodward -Toledo 3 (Hooker 2, Wyatt 1). Ross 4 (Dayringer 1, Penn 1, Price 1, Reffner 1).

BOYS BASKETBALL

Little giants fall to Maumee

FREMONT — The Little Giants jumped out to an 11-8 lead after the first eight minutes, but fell 53-49 to Maumee Saturday in non-conference play at the Purple Pit.

Senior Kenny Penn had a game-high 17 points for Ross (2-6), while Shunnar Gamble added 13 and Allen Lewis tallied 10.

Maumee led 19-17 at halftime and 35-32 heading into the fourth quarter.

Anthony Barnum led the Panthers with 13.

“We just had too many missed opportunities,” Ross coach Mark Gedeon said. “We shot 31 percent in the second half and when it’s a two possession game, you can’t afford to have those and our guys need to learn that.”

BOYS BASKETBALL ■ MARION HARDING 73, FREMONT ROSS 52

Rebuilt Little Giants fall

With a new lineup, Ross drops GBC decision at Harding

BY DENNY MCPHERSON
CentralOhio.com

MARION — What amounted to a four-day-old Fremont Ross boys basketball team ran up against a seasoned Marion Harding squad in Greater Buckeye Conference play Friday night and the result was fairly understandable.

Nonetheless, Ross coach Mark Gedeon believes his Little Giants took a positive step despite a 73-52 setback.

The Little Giants played without leading scorer Kenny Penn, Terrance Hill and Allen Lewis, who Gedeon said are no longer with the team because of disciplinary issues. They took 25 points and nine rebounds a game with them.

Gedeon brought up three freshmen from the JV team and they saw quite a bit of action after only three days of practice with the varsity unit.

"I told the players after the game this was our first game of the season," Gedeon said of the discussion he had with his "new" squad. "Three practices don't get you into mid-season form, but some kids got their first varsity experience on the floor and had some success."

"What really impressed me was the kids said in the locker-room they want to get to practice the first thing Saturday morning and they want to work hard on offense and defense to catch up. They are hungry and they want to be Little Giants. They want to keep that uniform on, so that's a step in the right direction."

Harding coach Roger Jury, whose team is now 8-1 overall and 3-0 in the GBC, was concerned with the revamped Ross squad that came to his building.

"You basically throw your scouting reports out the window," Jury said. "They still did a lot of the same things Ross does, but they did it with different people than we've seen."

"You worry about different energy levels and matchup problems, and you have to convince your kids a team which loses two starters can still play well. Those Ross kids were hungry and ready to go."

They were in the first period when they trailed by only four points at 13-9 by the first break.

The Little Giants (2-7 overall, 0-3 GBC) were still within six points in the second period before Harding closed the stanza with a 15-8 run to up its advantage to 34-21.

Five points from Shunnar Gamble in the third period helped the Little Giants stay within range as they twice cut their deficit to 10 points, but Harding maintained its 13-point edge at 42-29 entering the last quarter.

After Gamble completed a three-point play to open that period and slice Harding's advan-



Bill Sinden | CentralOhio.com

Ross guard Drew Starks is trapped by Marion's Shawn Dyer (22) and Jake White during Friday's Greater Buckeye Conference game in Marion.

tage once again to 10, the Presidents built an 18-point lead and eventually won by 21.

Gamble had a big game for Ross with 18 points and a game-high 13 rebounds. Jake Hiestand

added 12 points and Matt Price connected for seven.

Marvin Owens paced Marion with 31 points.

Ross was a 33-17 winner in the JV game as Diante Pettiford

canned 10 points and Trent Stout hit for six for the winners.

Denny McPherson: 740-375-5158
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Marion Harding 73, Fremont Ross 52

Ross: Shunnar Gamble 6 6 18, Jake Hiestand 4 0 12, Matt Price 1 4 7, Nick Streacker 2 0 4, Jay Carnicom 1 1 3, Marcus Dayringer 0 3 3, Skylar Reffner 1 0 2, Drew Starks 1 0 2, Darien Spann 0 1 1. Totals 16 15 52

Harding: Marvin Owens 9 8 31, Shawn Dyer 3 5 11, Steve Manning-Rogers 4 2 10, Shaquille Smith 2 5 9, Jake White 2 2 8, Marc Yost 1 0 2, Keivus Prude 0 1 1, Delayce Smith 0 1 1. Totals 21 24 73

Fremont Ross	9	12	8	23	-	52
Marion Harding	13	21	8	31	-	73

3-point goals: Ross 10 (Carnicom 5, Hiestand 4, Price 1). Harding 14 (Dyer 7, Owens 5, White 2).

Rebounds: Ross 27 (Gamble 13). Harding 27 (Dyer 6, Manning-Rogers 5).

Assists: Harding 5 (Dyer 5).

Notes: Turnovers: Fremont Ross 17, Harding 7. Rebounds: Fremont Ross 27, Harding 27. Records: Fremont Ross 2-7, Harding 8-1. JV: Fremont Ross 33-17. Next: Napoleon at Fremont Ross, Thursday; Harding at Olentangy Liberty, today.

Napoleon dribbles past inexperienced Ross boys squad 54-44

BY KEVIN SHIELDS
Sports Writer

FREMONT — It's not the result Fremont Ross was looking for.

But even though the Little Giants boys basketball team dropped a 54-44 Greater Buckeye Conference game to Napoleon at home Thursday, they know they're taking big steps forward.

Missing two of their top players for disciplinary issues, Ross played once again with three freshmen brought up from the JV team. It's a big task to ask of any young kid, to replace 25 points and nine rebounds per game. But you wouldn't know the Little Giants (2-8, 0-4) were missing any pieces the way they fought and competed.

The inexperienced Little Giants

outscored the Wildcats 14-9 in the third quarter, to enter the final eight minutes down 39-37. In the end though, 28 trips to the foul line for Napoleon (5-7, 2-4) and an 11-1 run to open the fourth quarter, proved too much.

"They just created plays," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said. "We were late on some defensive rotations and they were the more aggressive team off the dribble tonight."

Napoleon used its athleticism and quickness all night to make up for being under-sized.

"That's been a focus for us," Napoleon coach Tim Badenhop said. "We have some good athletes, who can dribble penetrate with the basketball."

The Wildcats got to the line 18

times alone in the final quarter, as they finished 15-for-28. Ross was 5-for-12.

"They got easy points and our team, right now, doesn't have the experience or the necessary skill to overcome that," Gedeon said.

Ross trailed 16-7 with 1:43 remaining in the first quarter, before going on a 13-5 run that bridged the first and second periods to tie the game at 16 all. Shunnar Gamble had eight first-half points and Skyler Reffner six, as Ross trailed 30-23 at halftime.

The Little Giants got as close as one on a 3-pointer by Jake Hiestand with 1:54 to go in the third quarter. But the Wildcats picked up the defense and held Ross scoreless until 3:19 remained in the game.

That allowed Napoleon to take a commanding 52-38 lead with less than two minutes left on a layup by Jordan Myles. Myles finished tied for a game-high 19 points, adding seven rebounds.

Shunnar Gamble led Ross with 19 points, adding a game-high eight boards and three assists.

Giving the Little Giants a big energy-boost, were freshmen Dylan Starks, Drew Starks and Nick Streacker. The trio combined for six points, seven rebounds and five assists off the bench.

"That's just what these kids bring to the table," Gedeon said. "They're going to play hard. They want to compete and represent Fremont Ross."

Streacker led the way, scoring six points and grabbing six rebounds.

"Nick (Streacker) is something we don't have a lot of, which is height," Gedeon said. "But has a great shooting touch for 6-foot-3-inches and we expect big things from him."

Reffner tallied seven points and six boards, and Greg Smith pulled down seven.

The Little Giants were 18-for-43 from the field and 3-for-16 from behind the arc. Napoleon finished 16-for-37 and 5-for-11 respectively.

"We just got to finish a complete game now," Gedeon said. "We're showing sparks, but we need to make sure each possession matters."

E-mail Kevin Shields at kshields@gannett.com.

Napoleon 54, Fremont Ross 44

Napoleon: Jordan Myles 7 2 19, Jordan Lauf 5 6 16, Fulton Lankenau 3 7 14, Drew Gerken 1 0 3, Andy Durham 1 0 2, Logan Badenhop 0 0 0, Thomas Conry 0 0 0. Totals 17 15 54

Ross: Shunnar Gamble 8 2 19, Jake Hiestand 2 0 6, Nick Streacker 3 0 6, Greg Smith 2 0 4, Marcus Dayringer 1 0 2, Darien Spann 0 0 0, Drew Starks 0 0 0, Dylan Starks 0 0 0. Totals 16 2 44

Napoleon	16	14	9	15	-	54
Fremont Ross	14	9	14	7	-	44

3-point goals: Napoleon 10 (Badenhop 5, Myles 3, Gerken 1, Lankenau 1). Ross 6 (Dayringer 3, Hiestand 2, Gamble 1).

Rebounds: Napoleon 24 (Myles 7, Conry 5, Lankenau 4, Badenhop 3, Lauf 3, Gerken 2). Ross 29 (Gamble 8, Smith 7, Streacker 6, Dayringer 1, Spann 1, Starks 1).

Assists: Napoleon 5 (Badenhop 5, Badenhop 1, Conry 1, Lankenau 1, Lauf 1, Myles 1). Ross 11 (Dayringer 12, Starks 4, Gamble 3, Smith 2, Hiestand 1, Starks 1).

Ross drops game to Willard

Skylar Reffner had 12 points but Fremont Ross's boys basketball team fell to Willard 78-54 in a non-conference matchup.

Shunnar Gamble added 10 points for the Little Giants (2-9).



Jennifer Young-Bower | News-Messenger correspondent

Fremont's Shunnar Gamble dunks during Tuesday's Greater Buckeye Conference with Sandusky. Ross started well, but lost 68-45.

BOYS BASKETBALL ■ SANDUSKY 68, FREMONT ROSS 45

A start to build on for Ross

Little Giants open well, but Sandusky finishes stronger

BY KEVIN SHIELDS
Sports Writer

FREMONT — For two minutes and 15 seconds Tuesday, the Fremont Ross basketball team did what it needed to do.

Unfortunately, there are 32 minutes in a basketball game.

After jumping out to an early 7-2 lead, Ross was outscored by Sandusky 17-4 the rest of the opening quarter, going on to fall 68-45 in a Greater Buckeye Conference game.

"The first couple minutes is sort of how we were hoping to play," Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon said. "We wanted to try getting some stuff in the paint with some backdoor cuts, hit the open 3-point basket and try keeping Sandusky on the perimeter."

That's exactly how the opening minutes went for Ross. Shunnar Gamble and Skylar Reffner got inside buckets in the paint, before Gamble hit a wide-open three at the top of the arc, as the Blue Streaks called time-out.

From there, Sandusky's (5-8, 2-3) defense and its rebounding took control of the game. The Blue Streaks went on to score 32 of the next 46 points for a 34-21 halftime edge.

"Our defensive intensity was the key to

this basketball game," Sandusky coach Steve Keller, Jr. said. "We did a nice job of defending and creating transition off our defense."

Post Caleb Young had five first-half points for Sandusky, but his biggest contribution came on the glass. Young had eight boards in the first 16 minutes, as the Blue Streaks out-rebounded Ross (2-9, 0-5) 18-13 in the opening half with eight of them coming on the offensive end. In total Sandusky had 36 rebounds to 24 for the Little Giants.

"Our interior defense really started to let us down," Gedeon said. "(Sandusky) got a couple cuts to the elbow where they hit a couple jumpers and then their penetration started hurting us."

"Then it turned into a transition game and then it was offensive rebounding and then just one thing led to another."

Sandusky also forced Ross into 12 first-half turnovers and 19 for the game. The Blue Streaks finished with 18. Five different Blue Streaks racked up steals, as 10 Ross turnovers came from thefts. Jay Page topped Sandusky with four thefts with Rayshawn Daniels and Dominique Stovall both tallying two.

"That's a big part of Sandusky's game," Gedeon said. "Putting defensive pressure on,

attacking the wings, pressuring the ball hoping for a mistake and then turning that into offense."

The Blue Streaks kept the foot on the gas, scoring the first seven points of the second half to open up a 41-21 lead. The lead would grow to as much as 25 points after a Page layup off a steal with under three minutes to go in the third quarter.

Page finished with 19 points for the Blue Streaks, also grabbing eight rebounds. Cordney Strickland's 20 points topped Sandusky, who also had a game-high four assists.

Ross trailed 52-35 entering the final quarter, but never closer than 15.

"We got a young team, but that doesn't mean you don't go out and compete," Gedeon said. "I thought at times, we didn't compete with all five players on the floor, whether it was mentally or physically."

Gamble led the Little Giants with 15 points, adding six boards, two steals and two blocks. He was the lone Ross player to reach double figures.

Reffner finished with seven points, six rebounds and blocked two shots for Ross, who dropped its fifth straight game.

E-mail Kevin Shields at KShields@gannett.com.

Sandusky 68, Fremont Ross 45

Sandusky: Cordney Strickland 6 6 20, Jalevion Page 8 3 19, Dominique Stovall 2 3 8, Caleb Young 3 1 7, Rayshawn Daniels 2 1 5, Tristen Jeffries 0 4 4, Delon Roldan-Johnson 1 0 2, Damyion Smith 0 2 2, Devonte Turner 0 1 1, Jaron Green 0 0 0, Jordan Jones 0 0 0, Dominic Will 0 0 0. Totals 22 21 68

Ross: Shunnar Gamble 7 0 15, Marcus Dayringer 3 0 7, Skylar Reffner 2 3 7, Jay Carnicom 3 0 6, Nick Streacker 2 2 6, Greg Smith 1 0 2, Darien Spann 1 0 2, Jake Hiestand 0 0 0, Diante Pettiford 0 0 0, Drew Starks 0 0 0, Dylan Starks 0 0 0. Totals 19 5 45

Sandusky	19	15	18	16	-	68
Fremont Ross	11	10	14	10	-	45

3-point goals: Sandusky 6 (Daniels 3, Strickland 2, Stovall 1). Ross 4 (Carnicom 2, Dayringer 1, Gamble 1).

Rebounds: Sandusky 36 (Daniels 10, Young 10, Page 8, Strickland 3, Jeffries 2, Green 1, Smith 1, Stovall 1). Ross 24 (Gamble 6, Reffner 6, Smith 5, Spann 3, Dayringer 1, Pettiford 1, Starks 1, Streacker 1).

Assists: Sandusky 9 (Daniels 9, Strickland 4, Stovall 3, Daniels 1, Page 1). Ross 8 (Carnicom 8, Smith 2, Starks 2, Carnicom 1, Gamble 1, Hiestand 1, Streacker 1).

Fourth-quarter rally leads Ross boys to upset of Lima Senior

News-Messenger reports

FREMONT — The Ross boys basketball team garnered their first Greater Buckeye Conference, coming back from an 11-point fourth-quarter deficit to beat Lima Senior 67-63 in overtime.

The Little Giants (3-11, 1-5) went 11-of-15 in the final period and overtime to beat the Spartans (8-6, 3-2), outscoring them 29-14 in that time period.

"Our kids played with a tremendous amount of heart," said coach Mark Gedeon. "They took it upon themselves to play the game like we expect them to play."

Shunnar Gamble led the Little Giants with 18 points. Anton Hutchins led Lima with 17 points.

Gedeon said the victory was particularly sweet, showing the maturing process of a young team after a disappointing 68-45 loss Tuesday to Sandusky.

Greg Smith scored 15 points for Ross, and Drew Starks chipped in 11.

don Wasserman scored 17 points and Jake Scott had 15 as the Rockets beat Edison 64-57 in a Sandusky Bay Conference matchup Friday night.

Kevin Young added 11 for Oak Harbor (4-10, 3-7 SBC). The Rockets went 14-of-20 from the foul line.

Coltyn Grant and Taylor Emody led the Chargers with 14 points apiece.

Old Fort falls to Carey

OLD FORT — Roman Ream led the Stockader boys basketball team with nine points as Old Fort fell to Carey 68-39 in a Midland Athletic League contest Friday night.

Tommy Gillmor and Austin Frankart each had seven points for the Stockaders.

Lakota tops Seneca East

Lakota as the Raiders earned a 63-55 Midland Athletic League win Friday at Seneca East. The win was coach Tim Walsh's 100th career win.

"It was a team accomplishment," Walsh said. "The credit definitely goes to the teams and players I've coached."

Josh Kelley was the third Lakota (9-4) player to earn double figures finishing with 13 points.

Jaime Schafer led the Tigers (5-7) with 22 points.

SWIMMING

FREMONT — Jordyn Gallagher finished third in the girls one meter diving Friday, as the Fremont Ross girls sit in fourth-place (16 points) after the diving portion of the Northwest Ohio Aquatic Conference Championships.

Katie Lowe finished 14th for Oak Harbor, which will go into the swimming portion Saturday in 10th (3

girls side with a diving score of 420.10. Gallagher scored 325.20 and Lowe put up a mark of 241.45.

On the boys side, Ross sits in sixth-place thanks to 12th and 13th-place finishes by Brett Foos (12th, 214.00) and Jared Schueren (13th, 150.40).

Toledo St. John's Bill Magill's 338.55 topped the boys.

WRESTLING

Austin Hilty is the only SJCC wrestler with a shot at a championship at the Lima Central Catholic Invitational.

Hilty, at 119, won his first two matches, and faces



Greg Burr | Submitted photo

Fremont's Greg Smith scores in the lane during the Little Giants' 67-63 upset of Lima Senior.

Dylan Kleman of Columbus Grove today.

The Newspaper Network of Central Ohio's Newspapers In Education (NIE) program would like to say

Fremont Ross 67, Lima Senior 63

Lima: ANTON HUTCHINS 6 2 17, JERMONT HEALEY 4 1 15, TYLER WHITE 2 0 11, TYRONE PERRY 2 2 6, SHAWN DEVON ALLEN 1 0 5, KENDALL JACKSON 2 1 5, ADRIAN HUTCHINS 1 0 2, SHANNDALE WALTON 1 0 2. Totals 19 6 63

Ross: Shunnar Gamble 5 5 18, Greg Smith 6 3 15, Drew Starks 3 2 11, Skylar Reffner 1 3 8, Darien Spann 2 3 7, Nick Streacker 1 3 5, Marcus Dayringer 1 0 2, Jake Hiestand 0 1 1. Totals 19 20 67

Lima Senior	18	11	20	6	8	-	63
Fremont Ross	11	14	13	17	12	-	67

3-point goals: Lima 14 (ALLEN 7, WHITE 3, HEALEY 2, ALLEN 1, HUTCHINS 1). Ross 6 (Dayringer 3, Gamble 1, Reffner 1, Starks 1).

Little Giants take step back in road loss

BY KYLE SCHIMMING

News-Messenger Correspondent

TOLEDO — After taking a step forward in its previous game, the Fremont Ross boys basketball team took two more backwards, getting beat 70-48 by Rogers in a Tuesday non-conference game.

After defeating Lima Senior on Friday, it appeared the inexperienced Little Giants (3-11) were beginning to come together.

However, they could not handle the Rams' defensive pressure.

"Our players have to know that every time they step in between the lines there is going to be competition and they've got to be ready to compete," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said. "I thought tonight we took a big step backwards after a big overtime victory against Lima Senior."

The Rams' full-court pressure forced the Little Giants to commit 38 turnovers, many of which resulted in easy layups and dunks for Rogers.

The Little Giants trailed 35-21 after the first half. After a 9-0 run by the Rams in the first two minutes of the second half, the game was out of reach.

"To turn the ball over 38 times is ridiculous," Gedeon said. "Against an athletic team like

Rogers, they're going to create some pressure, they're going to press, and they are going to be very aggressive. I thought our players backed down from the contact."

Rams coach Earl Morris said his team's defensive pressure is important to the team's success.

"When we pressure we're a good team," Morris said. "The

SEE LITTLE GIANTS I 8

LITTLE GIANTS FROM 7

three games we lost, we didn't play any defense and we're not a big team so we have to pressure and get turnovers and easy baskets.

"When Damond (Powell) and Quincy (Caldwell) go well, we go well and when they don't, we're just an average team."

Powell was the main beneficiary of the Rams ability to force turnovers, as he finished with a game-high 23 points.

"Coach has told us that we need to start putting more pressure on the ball and we came out

and really executed that tonight," Powell said. "It helped make it easier to get to the basket and get buckets."

The Little Giants were led by Skylar Reffner's 15 points. They were outrebounded 24-15.

"We have to keep getting better every time we go between the lines," Gedeon said. "We have to continue to work. This group we have right now has been very receptive to coaching studying video, trying to make sure they're in the right place at the right time and I think this will be a very easy video for them to go in and see the mistakes that we made."

Boys Basketball

Findlay 66, Fremont Ross 41

Ross: Shunnar Gamble 4 2 10, Skylar Reffner 3 4 10, Greg Smith 2 1 5, Nick Streacker 2 0 4, Marcus Dayringer 1 0 3, Jay Carnicom 1 0 2, Diante Pettiford 1 0 2, Darien Spann 0 2 2, Dylan Starks 0 2 2, Drew Starks 0 1 1. Totals 14 12 41

Findlay: C.J. Gettys 6 4 22, Justin Richter 4 2 10, Justin Richter 4 2 10, Brock Ammons 2 4 8, Clay Paul 2 0 6, DeVantae Blessett 1 2 4, Michael Lause 1 2 4, Grant Birchmeier 0 3 3, Tommy Murtha 1 1 3, Boston Ballmer 0 1 1. Totals 21 21 66

Fremont Ross	9	13	6	13	-	41
Findlay	15	18	17	16	-	66

3-point goals: Ross 1 (Dayringer 1). Findlay 2 (Paul 2).

BOYS BASKETBALL

SANDUSKY 66, ROSS 59

Second half dooms Little Giants to loss

BY KEVIN SHIELDS

Sports Writer

SANDUSKY — The Fremont Ross boys basketball team has taken its share of beatings this season, but through it all, there has been no towels thrown in or quit shown in the player's attitudes.

And for much of Thursday's game at Sandusky, the Little Giants played and executed the way they needed to win.

But a 20-5 second half run and key plays in the final two minutes, helped the Blue Streaks escape with a 66-59 Sandusky Bay Conference win.

Tristen Jeffries scored 15 points off the bench to lead Sandusky (6-11), including eight in the final quarter.

Ross trailed 58-57 with 1:51 remaining and had plenty of chances to cut into the lead, but the Blue Streaks finished on an 8-2 run.

"Right there every play becomes that much more magnified," Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon said of the stretch. "They make two free throws, they go down and get a bank shot and we turn the ball over in transition and then we miss layups.

"That all turned out just to be the difference at the ending point."

Up till the ending point, the Little Giants (3-13, 1-6) played very inspired basketball. They executed their inside game early and played hard for a good 25 to 26 minutes of the game.

Shunnar Gamble poured in 12 first-half points, including eight in the first quarter as Ross led 16-14 entering the second quarter.

"We wanted Shunnar (Gamble) to get some touches by the rim," Gedeon said. "We thought he could be very effective for us inside and he did that early, but then he got away from it."

The Little Giants held serve and kept the lead much of the second quarter, but a steal and resulting layup by Cordney Strickland in the half's final seconds sent the Blue Streaks to the break with a 28-27 edge.

Gamble went on to tally a game-high 22 points for the Little Giants, adding 13 rebounds and three assists. But he was held to just six points in the second and third quarters.

A Jeffries basket in transition gave the Blue Streaks a 36-31 lead just 2:21 into the second half. Ross responded, though, as a jumper by Greg Smith, a basket inside by Skylar Refner



GAMBLE

ROSS FROM B1

and a basket off an offensive rebound from Gamble gave it a 37-36 advantage.

Then things got away.

"Up till that point, we had a done a good job of playing good position defense," Gedeon said. "The first time we played them, I thought we gave them too many opportunities by being out of position. And In the third quarter, I think we reverted back to that, being out of position and opening up driving lanes for them."

Sandusky led 47-39 entering the final quarter and quickly stretched it with a 9-2 spurt keyed by four points apiece from

Damyion Smith and Jeffries.

That's when Ross called a timeout to get re-focused and nearly pulled off a great comeback.

"We had a great run there," Gedeon said. "We took a timeout with 6:06 to go in the game. We changed our defense and, more importantly, got our kids to focus again in terms of what we needed to do to be successful."

Leading the charge was Gamble with eight fourth-quarter points. Reffner added seven of his 13 points. Reffner also added three steals with all coming in the final six minutes.

"Skylar (Reffner) had a great game in the fourth quarter," Gedeon said.

Ross had a 15-2 run over the four minutes after the timeout.

Greg Smith added 10 points and five boards for Ross, who out-rebound Sandusky 34-30.

"We were definitely better playing this game than

we were in Findlay (66-41 loss)," Gedeon said. "We're saying every time we come to practice, we want to grow and get better and we're still doing that."

E-mail Kevin Shields at KShields@gannett.com.



GIFTS T

Sandusky 66, Fremont Ross 59

Ross: Shunnar Gamble 9 4 22, Skylar Reffner 6 1 13, Greg Smith 4 2 10, Marcus Dayringer 2 0 6, Jake Hiestand 1 0 2, Darien Spann 1 0 2, Dylan Starks 1 0 2, Nick Streacker 1 0 2, Jay Carnicom 0 0 0, Drew Starks 0 0 0. Totals 25 7 59

Sandusky: Tristen Jeffries 4 7 15, Cordney Strickland 4 2 10, Jalevion Page 3 2 9, Jordan Jones 4 0 8, Damyion Smith 4 0 8, Dominique Stovall 2 2 6, Delon Roldan-Johnson 1 0 3, Dominic Will 1 0 3, Rayshawn Daniels 2 0 2, Caleb Young 0 0 0. Totals 25 13 66

Fremont Ross	16 11 12 20 - 59
Sandusky	14 14 19 19 - 66

3-point goals: Ross 4 (Carnicom 2, Dayringer 2). Sandusky 6 (Daniels 3, Page 1, Roldan-Johnson 1, Will 1).

Rebounds: Ross 34 (Gamble 13, Smith 5, Streacker 5, Reffner 4, Carnicom 3, Dayringer 2, Spann 2). Sandusky 30 (Page 8, Daniels 7, Jones 7, Jeffries 3, Strickland 3, Young 2, Smith 1, Will 1).

Assists: Ross 15 (Carnicom 15, Starks 4, Carnicom 3, Gamble 3, Dayringer 2, Hiestand 1, Smith 1, Spann 1). Sandusky 9 (Daniels 9, Page 3, Smith 3, Stovall 2, Daniels 1).

N Port Clinton 70, Fremont Ross 45

Ross: Shunnar Gamble 5 0 11, Skylar Reffner 3 2 8, Greg Smith 4 0 8, Nick Streacker 2 2 6, Darien Spann 1 2 4, Jake Hiestand 1 0 3, Marcus Dayringer 1 0 2, Diante Pettiford 1 0 2, Drew Starks 0 1 1. Totals 18 7 45

Port Clinton: Josh Francis 11 3 25, Ryan Hicks 8 3 19, Allen Tigner 5 1 13, Derek Colston 3 0 6, Cory Brown 1 0 3, Caleb Helline 0 2 2, Eric Reynolds 1 0 2, Jason Faust 0 0 0, Alex Greene 0 0 0, Kevin Hiller 0 0 0. Totals 29 9 70

Fremont Ross	14	10	9	12	-	45
Port Clinton	15	14	24	17	-	70

3-point goals: Ross 4 (Dayringer 2, Gamble 1, Hiestand 1). Port Clinton 6 (Brown 3, Tigner 2, Brown 1).

Rebounds: Ross 23 (Streacker 5). Port Clinton 30 (Hicks 10, Francis 8).

BOYS BASKETBALL ■ MARION HARDING 75, FREMONT ROSS 59



Jonathon Bird | News-Messenger

Fremont's Marcus Dayringer eyes the Marion Harding defense during Friday's Greater Buckeye Conference game at the Purple Pit.

Bad quarter dooms Ross

GBC leader Marion Harding explodes in second quarter for win

BY KEVIN SHIELDS
Sports Writer

FREMONT — Take the second quarter out of Friday's game between Greater Buckeye Conference leader Marion Harding and last-place Fremont Ross and things would look equal.

But there is a reason the Presidents are the top team in the GBC and Ross isn't and it showed in that second stanza.

Shawn Dyer poured in 11 of his game-high 25 points in the period and Jake White eight of his 14, as Harding stayed perfect in the league with a 75-59 win.

Trailing 15-6 after a Little Giants' basket from Darien Spann halfway through the opening quarter, Harding went on a 25-8 run.

White's 3-pointer from the top of the arc with 4:41 remaining till break put the Presidents (17-1, 9-0) up 22-19 — a lead they would not relinquish.

"We knew Ross would play hard here," Harding coach Roger Jury said. "They had the big win against Lima Senior a week or so ago and their kids all play hard."

Ross (3-15, 1-7) led 6-0 just 1:13 into the game, as Shunnar Gamble, playing the point, had

"We can't get out of position and let teams have silly fouls. We bailed them out a lot trying to be shot blockers, instead of taking charges."

MARK GEDEON
Fremont Ross coach

a hand in all six points. Gamble finished with six points, seven rebounds and four assists, but didn't play a majority of the second half because of foul trouble.

"(Gamble) was very active in our first game and he was a key for us tonight," Jury said. "When he was out, we knew we had to make a run."

That Harding run started with a three from White and ended with another of his threes, as he was 4-of-8 from downtown.

The Presidents led 34-24 at the break. Then the teams played even in the third, as Ross cut the lead to six once and seven twice.

Fouls were one thing that kept the Presidents scoring, throughout, though, as they went 27-of-33 from the line. That included 17 first-half trips. Ross finished 9-of-16.

"We can't get out of position and let teams have silly fouls," Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon said. "We bailed them out a lot trying to be shot blockers, instead of taking charges."

Dyer, who was 80 percent at the line coming in, got there 15 times, converting 12.

Marvin Owens, held to just two points in the first 16 minutes, then started to warm-up for Harding in the second half. He went on to finish with 15 points, adding two assists.

"(Ross) was very aware of Marvin (Owens)," Jury said. "But when we expanded the lead we got him out in transition more."

Owens had two fourth-quarter dunks, including one off a steal that upped the Harding lead to 62-47 with four minutes left. Shaquille Smith was another President that benefited

from the transition offense, as he poured in 12 of his 15 in the half. He chipped in a game-high 13 boards and three steals. Keivus Prude led Harding with four thefts.

All of that came after Ross's quick start, however, as the Little Giants came out fired up for their final home game.

"I was very pleased with the start," Gedeon said. "We ran things, offensively and defensively, exactly how we wanted."

Skylar Reffner had 11 points in the first eight minutes for Ross, but disappeared in the second quarter as the Little Giants were held to five points.

"We just became stagnant," Gedeon said.

Reffner paced the Little Giants with 23 points, while Spann added 15 in what was the best effort of the season for both.

"That was the hardest game Skylar has played all year and that was the Darien Spann we had last season," Gedeon said.

Ross finished 24-of-50 from the field and 2-of-8 from 3-point land. The Presidents were 21-of-53 and 6-of-14 respectively.

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Marion Harding 75, Fremont Ross 59

Harding : Jake White 4 2 14, Shaquille Smith 5 5 15, Delayce Smith 0 0 0, Marvin Owens 4 6 15, Steve Manning-Rogers 1 2 4, Shawn Dyer 6 12 25, Keivus Prude 1 0 2, Marc Yost 0 0 0. Totals 21-53 27-33 75.

ROSS: Darien Spann 7 0 15, Dylan Starks 0 0 0, Skylar Reffner 9 5 23, Shunnar Gamble 3 0 6, Drew Starks 1 2 4, Marcus Dayringer 0 1 1, Diante Pettiford 1 0 2, Jake Hiestand 1 1 4, Greg Smith 1 0 2, Trent Stout 0 0 0, Nick Streacker 1 0 2. Totals 24-50 9-16 59.

Harding	13	21	17	24	—	75
Ross	19	5	17	18	—	59

TEAM STATISTICS: 3-pointers — Harding 6 (White 4); Ross 2 (Spann 1, Hiestand 1). Rebounds — Harding 32; Ross 26. Turnovers — Harding 10; Ross 16. Records — Harding (17-1, 9-0), Ross (3-15, 1-7). JV — Ross, 51-34.

BOYS BASKETBALL ■ TIFFIN COLUMBIAN 74, FREMONT ROSS 68

Too many easy points doom Little Giants to loss

BY KEVIN SHIELDS
Sports Writer

TIFFIN — The hardest points to defend against in basketball are the free points given up at the foul line.

For the second straight game, Fremont Ross let the opposition's freebies cost it a chance to win. The Little Giants allowed Tiffin Columbian a chance to get to the charity stripe 28 times Saturday in a 74-68 non-conference loss.

Of those 28 shots at the foul line, the Tornados converted 21, out-scoring Ross (7-of-12) at the foul line by 14.

"We need to make sure we're solid offensively and defensively so things add up," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said. "We can't

have some of the reaching fouls we're taking or be trying to always block shots. Marion (Harding) out-scored us by 18 from the line and we lost that game (Friday) by 16.

"And on the flip side, we only drew nine fouls tonight, so it shows our kids need more experience being aggressive and being assertive in the paint."

Derek Kneeskern shot nine free throws for Columbian, knocking down seven of his game-high 25 points there. He added five rebounds and four steals to lead three Tornados in double digits. Cole Williams tallied 22 points and 11 rebounds, while Jared Kuhlman poured in 10.

Ross trailed 18-15 after a quar-

ter, but thanks to an early 11-2 second-quarter run, the Little Giants grabbed a 26-22 advantage with 4:06 until halftime. Shunnar Gamble sparked the run with six of his 12 first-half points during that four-minute span. The run gave the Little Giants their fifth lead of the half, as the lead switched sides 10 different times.

But just as Ross did, the Tornados made a run of their own. Tiffin scored 12 of the next 16 to lead 34-30 at the break. Much of the run was keyed by the Tornados' inside game and the ability to drive to basket and draw fouls.

"We feel we have a good outside and inside game," said Columbian coach Bill Beaston, a

former Ross assistant. "Generally, we're taking what the defense gives us and getting the best shots possible."

Three buckets by Darien Spann got Ross within one three different times during the third quarter, but Columbian held serve and led 46-39 entering the fourth.

Spann was one of the four Little Giants who reached double figures, recording 11 points. Skylar Reffner led the way for the second straight contest, pouring in 21 points and grabbing seven boards and four steals. Gamble and Jake Heistand finished with 12.

"Skylar (Reffner) was great again," Gedeon said. "After having 23 points (Friday), he has 21

points tonight and it was against much taller players too."

Reffner tallied 13 of his 25 in the final quarter. He grabbed a steal and took it in for a lay-in on Columbia's first possession of the fourth. But a big shot by Coleman off an offensive rebound got the Tiffin lead back to seven, before Jonah Boyer made it 50-41 on the next trip down.

"That gave them that comfort zone from that point on," Gedeon said. "We could make a little run and maybe get it to five, but we had to extend our pressure out and their players showed their experience passing the ball and getting lay-ups."

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ROSS FROM 5

Shortly after Boyer's points, Kneeskern swiped a ball away from a Ross ball-handler and took it all the way in for a basket and foul to up the Columbian lead to 55-43, the game's largest margin.

"I finally relaxed there a little bit," Beaston said. "But give credit to Fremont and its young kids, they came right back got another score, and we could never put them away on the defensive end."

Spann and Heistand both got

Ross as close as six on 3-pointers in the final three minutes. But despite another trey from Heistand in the final seconds, the Tornados put the game away at the line. Heistand finished 4-of-5 from behind the arc.

In the junior varsity game, Columbian pulled out a 55-53 win in a double overtime thriller. Trent Stout led the Little Giants with 15 points, while the Tornados, were paced by 17 points from Tim Wiggins.

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at kshields@gannett.com.

Tiffin Colombian 74, Ross 68

Ross: Darien Spann 5 1 11, Dylan Starks 0 0 0, Skylar Reffner 7 7 21, Jay Carnicom 0 0 0, Shunnar Gamble 6 0 12, Drew Starks 2 0 4, Marcus Dayringer 0 0 0, Jake Hiestand 4 0 12, Greg Smith 2 0 4, Nick Streacker 2 0 4. Totals 28-51 7-12 68.

Columbian: Jonah Boyer 1 2 4, Jesse Hernandez 3 2 8, Mitch Kneeskern 0 0 0, Derek Kneeskern 8 7 25, Jared Kuhlman 2 4 10, Nick Loura 2 0 5, Cole Williams 8 6 22. Totals 24-49 21-28 74.

Ross	15	15	9	29	—	68
Columbian	18	16	12	28	—	74

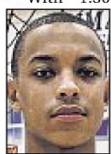
Team Statistics: 3-pointers — Colombian 5 (Derek Kneeskern 2, Kuhlman 2); Ross 5 (Hiestand 4). Rebounds — Colombian 25; Ross 24. Turnovers — Colombian 13; Ross 17. Records — Colombian 11-7, Ross 3-16. JV — Colombian, 55-53 (2 OT) .

Dunk gets Ross rolling past Napoleon

BY KYLE SCHIMMING
News-Messenger correspondent

NAPOLEON — With 1:30 remaining in the third period of Friday's game, Ross's Shunnar Gamble stole a Napoleon pass and took it the length of the floor for a two-handed dunk.

The dunk put the Little Giants up and spurred a 10-point Ross run to pull away from the



GAMBLE

Wildcats en route to a 55-38 Greater Buckeye Conference win Friday.

"My team always yells at me for not dunking so when I dunk it gets them pretty excited," Gamble said.

Fremont Ross would end up scoring 21 of the final 25 points of the game, as they limited Napoleon to just 13 second-half points.

Little Giants coach Mark Gedeon credited the dunk for helping his team get over the hump and take control of the game.

"Especially when you have a young team, emotion comes

into play a lot more than logic sometimes," Gedeon said. "We know Shunnar is a special player for us, I think that gave our players a lot more energy on the defensive end."

Gamble finished with a team-high 17 points while Jake Hiestand poured in 13 points, including three 3-pointers, and Nick Streaker added 10. Fremont Ross dominated the boards, outrebounding Napoleon 32-20.

Gamble said the win showed improvement from their recent performances.

"Our play was a lot better, we had a couple good practices this

week," Gamble said. "I think it helped us get focused and play more as a team."

Jordan Myles finished with 11 points for Napoleon. Wildcats coach Tim Badenhop credited the Little Giants for their execution throughout the game.

"I thought they did a good job, they attacked us inside where most teams should attack us," Badenhop said. "They did a good job adjusting to what we were trying to do defensively and found openings."

Fremont Ross will begin tournament play on Tuesday against Ashland at Willard. Gedeon hopes

to take the momentum of the win into its sectional matchup.

"This could springboard us a little bit, I think the last two weeks we've had some very good practices," Gedeon said. "I think our kids have been very positive, they've worked hard."

"Our last three games have all come against teams that are in first place in their respective leagues in Port Clinton, Marion, and Tiffin. The fact that we were able to at times play with those teams gives our kids some confidence but now we can get some confidence from seeing it on the scoreboard."

All-GBC

Player of the Year: Shawn Dyer, Marion Harding

First Team

Anton Hutchins, Lima Sr.
Marvin Owens, Marion
Grant Birchmeier, Findlay
Shunnar Gamble, Fremont
Tyler White, Lima Sr.

Second Team

Brock Ammons, Findlay
Jordan Lauf, Napoleon
Jay Page, Sandusky
Shaquille Smith, Marion
C.J. Gettys, Findlay

Honorable Mention

Findlay: Michael Lause, Boyd
Fremont Ross: Skylar Reffner
Lima Sr.: Jeromie Healy, Tyrone Perry
Marion: Steve Manning-Rogers, Jake White
Napoleon: Ryan Gerkin, Jordan Myles
Sandusky: Cordney Strickland, Dominique Stovall

Team Awards
Voted by the Players or Statistical Leaders

Most Valuable Players: Shunnar Gamble

Most Improved Player: Greg Smith

Best Defensive Player: Skylar Reffner

Captain's: Darien Spann and Shunnar Gamble

Billy Stierwalt Award: Jake Hiestand

Most Assists: Shunnar Gamble - 37

Most Rebounds: Shunnar Gamble - 125

Best Free Throw Percentage: Darien Spann 67%