

Ross upset bid falls short

By BOB MARKER
Reporting for The News-Messenger

MT. CORY — Findlay "jittered" but did not dance the night away.

"We only jittered for three-and-a-half quarters," Findlay Coach Bill Lobb muttered after watching his team shake tournament jitters just in time Tuesday at Cory-Rawson High School.

That was a half-quarter too little for Fremont Ross as the struggling Trojans edged the Little Giants 46-41 in the first round of the Class AAA girls sectional tournament.

"We did not shoot well," Ross Coach Sue Wolf said quietly after watching her team bow out of the season with a 6-15 record.

What Ross did well, though, nearly led to Findlay's demise.

"We did what we wanted to defensively," Wolf described, "and we handled the press."

Wolf's defensive game plan was to "pack" the Little Giants' 2-3 zone in tight around Findlay's version of the twin towers, 6-0 Sarah Edelbrock and 5-9 Heather Creel. Wolf coupled that with a trapping, full-court press.

"I thought we would be able to press them," Lobb said. "Then they packed it in on us and our kids were reluctant to take the outside shot; they were trying to force it inside."

"It's tough to play any team three times," Lobb continued. "We beat them relatively easy the first two times."

In those games, Ross committed 34 and 29 turnovers, and in this one, 21, but most of them were not caused by the Findlay press.

Ross's undoing was its inability to hit free throws and the short shots.

The Little Giants finished with nine of 19 from the line while Findlay dropped 10 of 17. Findlay made seven of 10 in the first half to help it take a 29-19 lead at the half.

Ross finished with 16 of 49 from the floor and Findlay 18 of 58 with a seven-of-13 performance in the final quarter.

The Trojans seemed ready to break the game open at the half, but the Ross press and the tight zone played havoc with the Trojans in the third quarter.

"It was the type of press we see all the time," Lobb said,



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AIMEE LEJEUNE of Ross gets off a pass around Little Giants' fastbreak. Jeanine Gralak (5) and Findlay defender Kai Miller (15) during a first-half Sarah Edelbrock (43) of Findlay trail the play.

"and" we usually either run around it or stand around, and tonight we stood around."

Findlay scored only two points in the quarter, but while the Ross defense was clicking, the offense, even while outscoring Findlay 7-2, was misfiring and Ross trailed 31-26 heading into the final eight minutes.

Paced by Aimee LeJeune, Brenda Kline and Shelly Leggett, the Little Giants forged into a 32-32 deadlock with 5:15 remaining in the game.

Buckets by Leggett, LeJeune and Julie Young got the tie.

The Trojans, with Kristi Erner scoring five points, outscored Ross 8-1 in the next three minutes for a 40-33 lead.

Once again, Ross charged back, cutting the Findlay lead to 40-37 on a pair of free throws by Kline and LeJeune's basket.

That was as close as Ross was to get as Edelbrock got her only basket of the second half and Amy Pirschel scored on a driving layup for a 44-39 lead

with a minute to play.

Kline cut the margin to 44-41 with 10 seconds to play, but Kai Miller's two free throws with four seconds remaining iced the game for Findlay.

Kline led Ross scoring with 13 points. LeJeune had eight, Leggett seven and Amy Schepflin five.

Erner had 14 for the Trojans, now 14-7, while Elderbrock finished with 13.

The taller Trojans held a 28-21 lead in rebounding.