

# Columbian ends Little Giants season

## Tornadoes top Ross in Shelby

By SCOTT TAPPA  
Sports editor

SHELBY — State tournament games carry a certain finality with them. It's one loss and out, and for seniors, the end of a high school career.

Such was the scenario Tuesday in Shelby, where the Fremont Ross girls dropped a 56-44 sectional semifinal decision to Tiffin Columbian, ending the Little Giants' season, and ending the high school career of Natasha

Watson, the lone Ross senior. "I think it's finally hit me that my season's over," said Watson shortly after the game. "I'm really starting to think about what I'm going to do now, for the next four years, where I'm going to go. It's real emotional for me."

The emotions could have been different for Ross, which ended 9-12. Columbian, which improved to 15-6 and

moved into Saturday's sectional final against Mansfield Madison, gave the Little Giants plenty of opportunities to win.

As was the case often this season, Ross's inability to score slammed the door on those opportunities.

"We just missed shots," said Ross coach Sue Wolf. "There's athletic talent coming out our ears, but you've got to be able to put the ball in the basket. We get the ball where we want it, and we don't finish. When you're finishing those shots, you're putting pressure on the other team."



WATSON

| Tuesday                         |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Columbian .....                 | 56 |
| Ross .....                      | 44 |
| Saturday                        |    |
| Columbian vs. Madison at Shelby |    |

Columbian was the team applying the pressure early, taking a 17-6 lead after one quarter. Erin Moore scored eight of her game-high 18 points in the quarter, but it was Katie Fazekas's long, off-balance 3-pointer at the buzzer that put the exclamation point on the quarter.

It also seemed to ignite Ross. The Little Giants had

one of their top shooting quarters of the season, hitting 10-of-12 shots, and the deficit was just 31-26 at half-time.

"They got hot from the outside, then they spread our defense and were able to go inside," said Columbian coach Larry Kisabeth. "In the second quarter, we did not stop penetration, and they really took advantage of that."

Sashay Price took advantage of the breathing room, scoring four points and dishing out three assists in the quarter. Watson and Alison Decker, who each led Ross with 14 points, scored six

points apiece in the quarter. Ross started the third quarter quickly, and back-to-back jumpers by Watson cut the Columbian lead to 33-32.

Over the next several minutes, Ross failed to take the lead on six straight possessions, turning the ball over three times, and missing three shots. Watson's basket late in the third quarter made it 39-38, but after consecutive Columbian baskets the Little Giants never got within one possession of the Tornadoes.

"It was kind of hard, not

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# Ross falls in sectional opener

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being able to get ahead, we just kept going back and forth and couldn't get over," said Watson.

The fourth quarter was all Columbian, as Ross scored just six points.

When the Little Giants missed shots, Columbian was quick to grab the rebound and limit Ross to one shot.

Columbian won the rebounding battle 36-17, with Moore grabbing a game-high 13.

"They were huge, especially in the fourth quarter, Fremont would come down and only get one shot," Kisabeth said. "We came up with all the key re-

bounds."

Said Wolf: "There were a couple times where there were four-point swings, where we had the easy shot, didn't score, and gave up the basket at the other end."

While shaky from the line late, Columbian made just enough free throws down the stretch to seal the win.

"It really has been that kind of year, we never seemed to come up with what we needed," Wolf said.

Wolf will return an experienced roster next year, as this year's team was comprised primarily of juniors and sophomores this season. While Wolf said she sees the potential for

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— Laura Wilson  
Ross player

great improvement, replacing Watson as both a scorer and a leader will be hard to do.

"It's been a real learning experience for me. Coach has really helped me a lot when I needed her. She's basically like a second mother to me," Watson said.

"I'm going to have to take what I've learned from her and my teammates and use it in the future."