

'Dumb shots' propel Tygers past Ross

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ASHLAND—The Mansfield Tygers could have fallen in a mud puddle and come out clean.

"They were taking dumb shots; the things you want them to do," Ross High School basketball Coach John Sawyer grimaced, "but they went in."

The Tygers (spelled with a "v") could not shoot the "i" out of a tiger during much of the game but when the "dumb shots" were flying, the "i" was disappearing in a 55-49 victory over Ross in the Class AAA Sectional Finals at Ashland College.

Mansfield, leading 45-41 after Ross's Jim Hufford's layup closed it to that margin at the 3:59 mark of the final quarter, began to attempt to spread Ross's zone defense.

"We wanted to spread them out and when they were spread, we wanted to attack them inside," Mansfield Coach Joe Prats explained.

Ahmed Kent did not get the message. Kent lofted one up from 20 feet and it hit nothing but net. After a Greg Bender layup made it 47-43, Kent again neglected waiting for the spread and put another one up from 10 feet out on the side. Another net job.

Bender tipped in a shot and Jeff Nossaman took a pass from Mark

Miesle for a layup to make it 49-47 with 1:20 to play before Prats' team did use the spread to perfection. Eric Toddie drove the middle for a layup and a 51-47 advantage with 1:06 to play but after Ross failed twice, one time getting three close shots at the bucket, Miesle's shot from the key brought Ross to within two, 51-49 with 27 seconds remaining.

That's when Prats found out one of his players had his own play book.

Tim Harless put up a 10-footer from the left baseline with 16 seconds left and not one Mansfield player under to rebound. Harless didn't need it, the ball hit the nets. Nine seconds later, after Hufford's 15-footer was off the mark, Harless was fouled and he calmly iced the game with two free throws.

"That last shot by Harless was not planned," Prats admitted. "I think he got that out of his own play book."

Ryan Smith's 18-footer with seconds left in the third quarter gave Ross a 39-37 lead going into the final quarter.

That the last of Ross's scoring until Hufford's layup with 3:59 to play in the game.

"We were totally out of our offense in the fourth quarter," Sawyer said. "No one was attacking the basket; we were not very organized with our offense."

"We really did not run our offense well throughout the game but even though we were out of it, we hit the open man."

Sawyer was shocked that his team did not shoot more free throws. In the 63-47 win over Ashland in the first game of the sectional, Ross was 25 of 27 at the line while against Mansfield, the Little Giants were five of six.

"I am amazed that we did not get to the foul line after the first quarter," he said. "The way they press and as quick as they are, they did not have many fouls."

"We did not get any breaks and that is not taking anything away from Mansfield, but they took those dumb shots and they would go in. But it was the slow start in the fourth quarter that hurt us."

"Really," Sawyer continued, "the

Redskins in AAA district

ASHLAND—Howard Walters scored a career high 18 points to lead Port Clinton to a 57-53 victory over Vermilion in a Class AAA Sectional Basketball Tournament championship game at Ashland College.

Walters, a 6-6 junior, was seven of 10 from the floor. Duane Norman had 15 points to back up Walters.

Port Clinton, 17-5, took the lead for

kids played very good defense. I thought it was one of the better games that we have played this season."

Mansfield's biggest lead of the game was six points—23-17—and the final margin. Tyrone Buck had 14 points to pace the Tygers while Harless ended up with a dozen and Eric Toddie had 10.

Bender finished with 20 for Ross and grabbed 13 rebounds. Hufford had eight and Miesle seven. Shawn McCarthy had six for Ross while grabbing six rebounds and blocking five shots.

Ross, 9-14, finished with 22 of 57 from the floor and Mansfield, 15-7, hit 22 of 58. The Tygers held a 38-37 edge in rebounding and had one less turnover than the Little Giants with 15.

good with a six-point spurt in the final 1:45 of the first half. The Redskins put the game on ice with seven of 10 from the foul line in the 2:10 of the game.

Port Clinton will play Lima Senior in Anderson Arena on the Bowling Green State University campus at 6:30 p.m., Thursday in the first round of the AAA district tourney.