

Ross 'fouls' apart

By **BOB MARKER**
Staff writer

NORWALK — Alicia Paullin's free throw with two seconds remaining ended the tournament trail quickly for Fremont Ross Tuesday night.

Paullin's foul shot gave Ashland a 60-59 victory in the first round of the girls Division I sectional tournament at Norwalk Middle School.

While Ashland escaped at the foul line, the line was nothing but foul for the Little Giants.

Ross, 13-8, missed 19-of-29 free throw attempts.

"Anyone coming out of the stands can shoot them better than that," Ross coach Sue Wolf said while attempting to smile.

Ashland, 14-7, made 16-of-25 foul shots as it advanced to Saturday's championship game against Vermilion. The Arrows made 7-of-10 from the line in the fourth quarter, while the Little Giants missed 7-of-9.

"The kids stuck them all pretty well," Ashland coach Dan McFadden said. "We are hitting around 60 percent for the season."

Ironically, Amy Ritzman sank two free throws to pull the Little Giants even at 59 with 22 seconds left in the game.

Luck, however, was not on the Little Giants' side.

A foul on Vickie Castile — her fifth — put Ashland's Kathryn Jamieson on the foul line with 13 seconds to play. Jamieson became the only Eagle not to make a free throw, missing to the left side.

The ball hit the floor once and bounced off the hands of Ross's

Ross

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Becky Williams and out of bounds. After a timeout, Ashland took the clock down from 12 seconds to four when Jamieson launched a shot from the top of the key.

Jamieson's shot came up short but Paullin followed the miss, got the rebound, was fouled by Stephanie McGee, and calmly hit the first of her two shots. Paullin missed the second shot, but Ross could do little with just two seconds remaining.

"Alicia (Paullin) made a strong move to get the offensive rebound and had the presence of mind to stick it back up and draw the foul," McFadden said.

"The ball went off a couple of people; they were hustling for the ball but just did not hold onto it," Wolf said.

The win topped off a trying night for McFadden. He lost two players to fouls and a third to injury.

"What has made our team a success all year," McFadden said, "has been our bench and it proved it again tonight.

"We have kids who can come off the bench and our level of play does not drop off."

Dina Clark, his starting center and her backup, Kim Lewis, fouled out within two minutes of each other in the final quarter. Earlier, midway through the third quarter, McFadden lost his top scorer — daughter Michelle — when she hit her head on the floor.

"She is going to have to have a couple of stitches," McFadden said of the gash in the back of his daughter's head.

McFadden, a 5-7 junior, had scored 18 points in the first half, helping Ashland to a 33-31 lead.

Ross, with Castile scoring nine

of her team-high 16 points, led by as much as eight points in the first quarter but held just an 18-15 edge after the first period.

However, the quarter was costly for Ross. Castile picked up her second foul at the 2:15 mark of the quarter. Castile went to the bench for the first of a couple lengthy stints there.

"It did not help having Vickie Castile sitting on the bench the entire game," Wolf said.

Ashland took its first lead since early in the first quarter, 25-24, on two McFadden free throws midway through the second quarter.

Ross rallied to take a 31-29 lead but Michele Stauffer and McFadden scored, putting Ashland on top at the half.

The Little Giants never led in the second half but tied Ashland twice only to have the Eagles fly away both time in the final quarter.

The Arrows took a 45-40 lead into the final quarter and stretched it 53-42 two minutes into the quarter. Ross cut it to 53-49 on Amy Ritzman's 3-point bucket.

Ashland responded by pushing the lead back out to 57-49 with 3:43 remaining.

Ross bounced back again on Cortney Cominsky's basket and two Castile buckets, cutting the deficit to 57-55 with less than two minutes to play.

Kolleen Kopchak hit a pair of free throws to push the Ashland lead back to four. Stephanie McGee's putback and Ritzman's free throws tied it, setting up Paullin's game-winner.

Ritzman added 14 points for Ross and Cominsky 13.

McGee, had 14 rebounds, unofficially, for the Little Giants as they held a 38-28 rebounding edge.

While cold at the foul line, Ross made 24-of-46 shots from the floor.