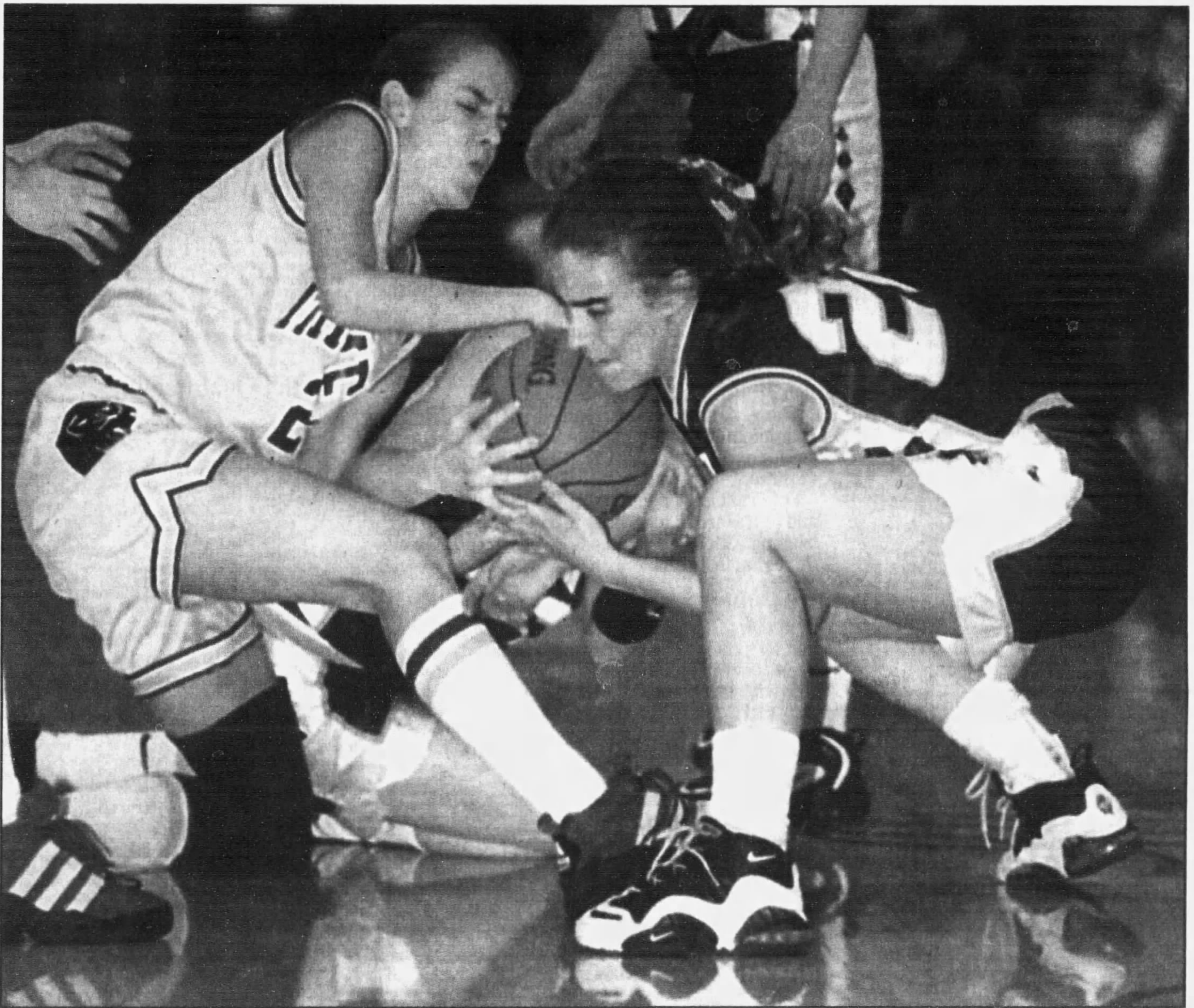


Ross struggles, but wins



News-Messenger/Jeremy Wadsworth

CARI RITZMAN, right, of Ross grabs the ball from Joanie Sisco of Maumee during first-half action Saturday at Springfield High School.

Little Giants take on Toledo Central Catholic in district semifinals

By **BOB MARKER**
Sports Editor

HOLLAND — Fremont Ross struggled Saturday before disposing of Maumee 51-30 in the Division I girls sectional basketball tournament finals at Springfield High School.

Ross, 21-1, will square off against Toledo Central Catholic, 20-2, at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at Northwood High School in the district semifinals. The Irish defeated Perrysburg 53-32 in the first game Saturday.

Maumee may have caught the Little Giants looking ahead while basking in the glow of defeating Libbey 103-25 in Thursday's sectional finals.

"It's very possible we were looking ahead," Ross coach Sue Wolf admitted. "The game (last) Thursday night ... I told them before we came out on the floor 'Everyone take hold of their heads and squeeze,' because with the 103 points, you begin to think you are pretty good.

"You have to be ready because these kids (Maumee) are well coached. We had to be ready ... they weren't going to lay down and die just because we scored 103 points."

Maumee, with Liz Bock scoring six points and Erin O'Shea five, led 11-9 after one quarter before the Ross defense took over.

"I don't think we were ever really in sync tonight," Wolf said. "I think it was probably one of Dawn's (Zerman) worst games but the mark of a good team is people come in off the bench and pick up

for someone not playing as well. Marcy Reinbolt came in and played a great game."

Reinbolt provided that spark that keyed a Ross pressing defense that stunned the Panthers in the second quarter. The Little Giants scored 10 points off seven Panther turnovers in the first four minutes to take a 21-11 lead. The Ross defense held Maumee to three second-quarter shots.

"We started out giving them the middle of the floor," Wolf said, "but we started getting in the passing lanes and took the middle away.

"We always rely on our defense to get us going and it did tonight."

So smothering was the Ross defense that Maumee had only 21 shots, a figure that made Wolf catch her breath.

"One of our goals was no easy shots and they definitely met that goal," she said.

Ross led 23-13 at the half and with Zerman scoring eight points took a 35-24 lead after three quarters. Maumee trailed 33-18 at one point but outscored Ross 6-2 in the last minute of the quarter.

In the final quarter, Cari Ritzman scored five points and five other Little Giants got into the scoring column as Ross steadily pulled away.

Zerman was off a little but still led the Ross scoring with 15 points and four assists. Ritzman had nine points. Bock had 12 for Maumee, which ended the season 12-10.