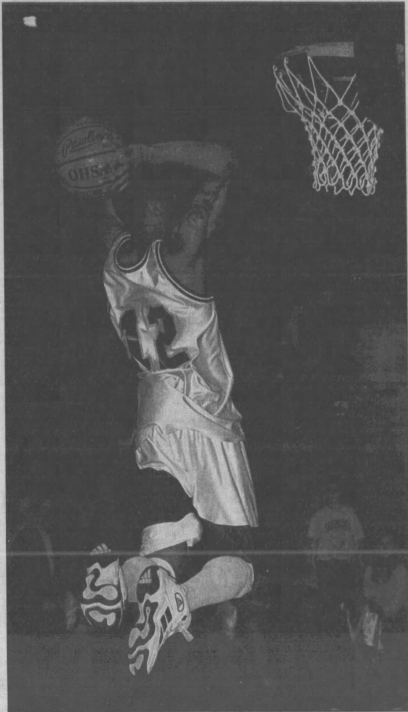


# District-bound



News-Messenger/Guy Schultz  
JOELL HEIDELBURG soars for a dunk in the first quarter of Ross's 63-50 win over Sandusky.

## Ross beats Sandusky in title game

By SCOTT TAPPA  
Sports editor

**WILLARD** — It was all right there for Fremont Ross in Friday's Division I sectional final against Sandusky.

A chance for a second win in seven days against the rival Blue Streaks.

A school-record 18 wins, breaking the record of the 1963-64 team.

And, most importantly, a chance to win a sectional title for the third straight season, and the chance to meet Mansfield Senior in next Thursday's district semifinal.

Break out the scissors. In a game of runs, Ross came up with the most, beating Sandusky 63-50 at

Friday	
Ross.....	63
Sandusky.....	50

Thursday	
Ross vs. Mansfield at Willard, 7:30 p.m.	

Willard High School. "We feel like we're on top of the world right now," said Ross forward Reggie Jones, who led all players with 20 points and 14 rebounds.

"It feels great, it feels great," said center Tyson Liggins, who was also a force inside with 13 points and 13 rebounds. "We should have beaten them the first time."

The first time, as Lig-

gins referred to, was an 80-69 Sandusky win on Feb. 2 in which the Blue Streaks pounded Ross on the offensive boards and used several lightning-quick runs to take control. The Little Giants (18-4) came up with answers for both Sandusky weapons on Friday.

On the glass, Ross was dominant, outrebounding Sandusky 42-23. The Great Lakes League champion Blue Streaks (17-4) came up with just four points off offensive putbacks, all coming in the fourth quarter when the game was out of reach.

"Before we came out, we were talking about how we

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# Ross beats Sandusky for second time in seven days

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had to own the boards, crash the boards hard," said Liggins, who burned Sandusky for 16 points in last Friday's win. "We just had to do it like we know we can play."

As for the second key, Ross answered every serious Sandusky challenge with a firm response, never losing the lead over the last 3½ quarters.

The first serious Blue Streaks run came at the tail end of the second quarter. After Ross had jumped to a 22-8 lead after one quarter, Sandusky took the Little Giants completely out of their game in the second quarter, forcing 10 turnovers and allowing just six points.

"We really got out of our game in the second quarter and allowed them to get back in the game," said Ross coach Mark Gedeon.

Brock Alexander's 3-pointer cut the lead to 28-21 near the end of the quarter. With time running out, Chante Smith stole the ball for Sandusky and raced in for a dunk attempt. Out of nowhere, Jones swooped in to block the shot, re-energizing the junior the Little Giants

as they headed for the locker room.

"(It helped) a lot, it gave me more momentum," said Jones, who admitted to feeling winded at times during the first half.

Jones looked as if he were using rocket boosters on his dunk to open the third quarter, as Ross stretched its lead to 32-23. But Sandusky made another run, cutting the lead to 32-29 on Alexander's free throws with 5:18 remaining in the quarter.

From there, Ross went on a 15-3 run, scoring the last seven points of the quarter with three points from Greg Garcia and two each from Robb Ritzman and Jones. Gedeon said his team's response at the end of the third quarter was crucial.

"They had cut it to three, had momentum in their favor, and then we started executing the way we were capable, like we did in the first quarter," he said.

From there, it became a free throw shooting contest, with Ross winning. While Sandusky's Jahn Farris uncharacteristically missed 3-of-4 free throw attempts, Juan Vela nailed 5-of-8 in a 1:10 span.

"Yeah, I wanted the ball," said Vela, who had 10 points. "(Brandon

Pettis) was talking trash, but it was fun. Good thing I started making some."

Joell Heidelberg added 11 points for Ross, Garcia scored five points in a solid effort off the bench, and Ritzman added to his school record with seven assists. Alexander led Sandusky with 13 points, Farris had 10 and El Dasheon Nix had 10 points and seven rebounds.

"We didn't advance in the tournament because they were able to execute their offense," said Sandusky coach Ed Kurt.

Ross advances to face Mansfield Senior, a 64-46 winner over Ashland in the first game at Willard Friday. The district semifinal game is 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Willard.

"It's a great feeling, it's one of those things you work for all year," Gedeon said. "It's nice, with the work these kids have put in since last spring, to know that we've won a championship, it's very, very rewarding for our kids."

"This team is improving, they came up with some plays when they had to make them. We came together as a team, and as a coach that's always the goal."