

Slow start dooms Little Giants

By **MATTHEW HORN**
Sports Writer

WILLARD — Adam Gries undoubtedly took heed with his coach's message Friday.

The Fremont Ross junior responded to Mark Gedeon's halftime challenge with 15 of his game-high 17 points, but Tiffin Columbian scored the first 10 points of the game and never allowed the Little Giants within four thereafter in a 54-37 Division I sectional championship victory.

"Adam was the player by far that most accepted the challenge at the half," Gedeon said of Gries, who grabbed 10 rebounds. "He attacked the rim and got af-

ter rebounds. He was really assertive on the boards. We need Adam in that aggressive mindset at all times.

"We were very tentative and slow in transition," Gedeon continued. "We gave up too many offensive rebounds. We want our kids to be aggressive."

The Little Giants finished the season 9-13, and Tiffin Columbian advanced to face Mansfield Senior in a district semifinal.

Gries scored 10 of the Little Giants' 11 fourth-quarter points demonstrating an ability to crash the rim and a soft touch.

"He's pretty fluid and natural with his moves," Ross senior Fred Shearon said.

"You saw what he did tonight. If he can average more than eight shots and be determined to get to the hole, who knows what he's capable of."

Gedeon said Ross spent the first half finding the space on the floor where Columbian wasn't rather than fighting with it for the prime real estate.

"They earned what they got," he said. "They were the more physical, more aggressive team. They ran their gameplan better than we did. There's no question we came out flat."

See **GEDEON'S, B2**

Gedeon's Little Giants finish campaign 9-13

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"We know Tiffin plays great strong-side defense," he continued. "They did what I expected them to do. They bodied up, pushed us out of the paint and pressured the ball on the wings."

Now, Gedeon hopes the 12 non-seniors privy to his postgame speech respond in a similar fashion. The coach expressed his desire that his returning squad — which includes the entire roster except Shearon and Joe Diller — utilizes the upcoming off-season the way Diller did the last one.

"For a kid to work as hard as Joe in the off-season and improve as much as he did — if all the kids in the locker room listened to that speech and all 12 dedicate themselves and work at their skills it should make for an interesting season next year," Gedeon said. "Joe was in the gym constantly — every single day often by himself. It's very rewarding to work with a player like that."

Diller got a steal and hit a 3-pointer to kick-start a 7-0 run that pulled the Little Giants within 18-14 midway through the second quarter.

Gries later grabbed two offensive rebounds on the same possession and found Diller for a basket and a 23-19 deficit early in the third. Ross got no closer.

Gedeon said Gries' summer focus should be his aggressiveness.

Hoops du jour

15

Points Adam Gries scored after halftime in response to a team challenge from Mark Gedeon in Fremont Ross's sectional championship setback.

Adam Gries	17
Marcus Hoke	17
Ben Boos	15
Brennan Lowry	13
Cody Perry	13
Derrick Berberick	11
Brian Perkins	10

13

Points scored by David Rice in a crucial 13-2 run for St. Joseph Central Catholic.

FRIDAY'S RESULTS
Sectional championships

Division I
Tiffin Columbian 54, Ross 37

Division II
Port Clinton 53, Oak Harbor 40
Norwalk 60, Bellevue 47

Division III
Woodmore 65, Margareta 39

Division IV
SJCC 55, SMCC 53
Tiffin Calvert 70, Old Fort 55

PRIMETIME SCORERS

Boys

David Rice	29
Tyler Rosenberger	26
Doug Byrne	18

"He's shown us signs," Gedeon said. "He's been teasing us for a while. He defers to Fred, who is more aggressive and plays with energy. If Adam is going to achieve the goals he's established for himself, he has to establish an aggressive mindset on the court, in the weight room and at practice.

"Hopefully, the whole team accepts those challenges," he continued.

Gedeon believes Gries has had two solid post mentors in Diller and Shearon.

"Fred has that aggressiveness

and competitive passion," Gedeon said. "You'll never fault Fred Shearon for not wanting to compete."

Gries, who feels he learned a lot from the seniors, looks forward to occupying the primary scoring and leadership roles for Ross next season.

"I learned if you work hard, you'll improve," Gries said. "Joe's work during the summer showed. Both of them made me work hard."

"I think it's implied that I'm going to have to come in and step it up next year," he continued.