

DIVISION I BOYS BASKETBALL

Mistakes cost Ross in defeat

Perrysburg uses free throws,
turnovers to top Little Giants

By Kevin Shields

Sports writer

FINDLAY — Every possession and every mistake can get amplified in tournament basketball.

Especially when more than half the game is a one possession contest, much like Ross' Division I sectional final with Perrysburg on Friday at Liberty-Benton. Equally matched and equally talented, the two teams waged what became a strong defensive battle. But the Little Giants couldn't defend the Yellow Jackets' free throws, as Perrysburg made 17-of-21 shots from the charity stripe in handing Ross a season-ending 48-36 defeat.

Nick Moschetti, who was 6-of-7 from the line, scored 19 points, while Nate Patterson added 10 to lead the Yellow Jackets (15-8) who forced the Little Giants (14-9) into 21 turnovers on the strength of 15 steals. Patterson had four thefts, as did Shane Edwards, while Moschetti made three steals.

"You can't have that happen in a possession by possession type game," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said. "If we play like we did against Findlay where we only had 10 turnovers for the game, we're talking about a different ball game right now. Some of our turnovers were very unforced, too. Granted, Perrysburg moved well defensively to close off some of those gaps, but it's what we did after we picked up the dribble I think is where a majority of our turnovers happened."

Ross seized the lead twice in the opening five minutes. Dylan Jagodzinski tallied six of the Little Giants' first eight points, as his third basket inside gave his team an 8-7 lead with under four minutes left in the opening quarter. After two straight trips to the line by the Yellow Jackets, Drew Solander then tied the game at 10 with another inside basket off a look inside by Jack Gedeon. Ross trailed 12-10 after one.

A 3-pointer from Gedeon in the second quarter gave the Little Giants a 15-14 lead and one of few points they scored in the half outside of the paint. Perrysburg held a slight 21-20 halftime edge, but Ross controlled the points in the key by a 16-12 count. Jagodzinski had eight first-half points as part of his team-high 12 for the game.

"We did a good job getting the ball inside early," coach Gedeon said. "Coming in, we thought with the personnel we had, going inside might be one of the things we had an advantage with. I thought our three junior posts (Jagodzinski, Solander and Jarvis Jones)

See ROSS, Page 28

Ross

Continued from Page 1B

did a great job in that first quarter trying to establish themselves in the paint. Second half, we didn't do as well at getting it to the post."

Ross' defensive effort in the second half was as good as coach Gedeon could have hoped for.

"If you had told me coming in, we'd give only 48 points to a Perrysburg team, I'd have taken it," he said.

But the Little Giants saw a potential lead escape them when Alex Metcalf converted just 1-of-3 foul shots, allowing Perrysburg to hang on to a 24-23 advantage. The Yellow Jackets' lead never climbed over two or four points until Moschetti hit a

three from the wing with 2:53 remaining in the third quarter to make it 30-25.

Empty trips on offense and too many turnovers by Ross on offense were the main culprits that allowed the Yellow Jackets to stay ahead.

"We were disciplined on defense. I think was the biggest thing," Perrysburg coach Dave Boyce said. "I think Nick Moschetti, for quite awhile, controlled the court with his defensive effort. And Nate Patterson really came to play today.

Back-to-back baskets in the paint by Dylan Starks and Jagodzinski pulled Ross within 34-32 with 4:55 left in the game. However, that was quickly answered by two foul shots from Perrysburg's Bryant Byrd, as the the Yellow Jackets' lead never dipped below four the rest of the way, making 9-of-10

foul shots in the final 4:35. From the field, Perrysburg was 14-of-42, while Ross finished 15-of-40. The Little Giants outrebounded the Yellow Jackets 29-24.

"I told people all day today and the last couple days, I thought it was the most even matchup we've had in the last couple years," said Boyce, whose team will play Anthony Wayne in next week's district semifinals. "If there was a betting line on it, it would have been a push."

Friday was the final games for Ross senior twins Dylan and Drew Starks, along with Metcalf and Tyler Wolf. The Little Giants' 14 wins are the most since they won 16 games during the 2005-06 season.

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