

# Eagles squelch Giant hopes

## St. Ed's uses glasswork, defense to dominate regional semifinal

By MICHAEL BOSI  
Staff writer

TOLEDO — Nothing lasts forever.

Did you think that the Fremont Ross basketball team's improbable victories and history-defying charge through the Division I tournament would never end? That Mark Gedeon would continue to be able to pull rabbits out of his magical coaching cap?

For the last four months, the Little Giants have been the talk of the town, and it was fun while it lasted. But before a crowd of 2,200 Wednesday night at the University of Toledo's Savage Hall, Lakewood St. Edward flexed the dominance it has shown throughout its rise to the No. 10 spot in the country, pummeling Ross into its worse loss of the season, 78-46, with its 18th straight victory in the Division I, Region I semifinals.

After opening the game with an 11-0 run, the Eagles punished Ross with their pressure, demoralized Ross with their defense and obliterated Ross with their many, many offensive weapons. Gino Bartolone led St. Ed with 18 points, Steve Lepore had 15 points and Larry Holmes earned 13.

Meanwhile, 6-foot-7 iceberg Sam Clancy, the son of the former Cleveland Brown, led the Eagles' 34-25 rebounds advantage with a dozen.

"It was definitely the worst-case scenario," said Gedeon, whose team finishes its best season since 1954 at 16-8.

This one was a David vs. Goliath mismatch from opening tap. It was Northwest Ohio's greatest overachievers vs. the second-ranked team in the state. It was the yellow school bus vs. the cushy motor coach. It was fans whose rowdiness cannot be overstated vs. fans who simply never have been in a position to taunt.

And it was obvious in the first half, as St. Edward crashed and banged its way to a 40-16 lead, the biggest halftime hole the Little Giants have faced this season.

While the Eagles were busy accumulating the game's first 11 points, Ross's first four posses-

### TOURNAMENT

#### And then there was one

The Bellevue boys basketball team, which plays Olmsted Falls tonight in a Division II regional semifinal, is the last area team still competing in the state tournament after Fremont Ross's 78-46 loss Wednesday. The Redmen play at 8:15 p.m. at Savage Hall in Toledo. The winner will need to beat the Cleveland Benedictine-Elda winner Saturday to reach the state final four.

High School pairings, B2

sions resulted in turnovers, and the Little Giants didn't dent the scoreboard until Sam Root hit a 3-pointer with 3:51 left in the first quarter.

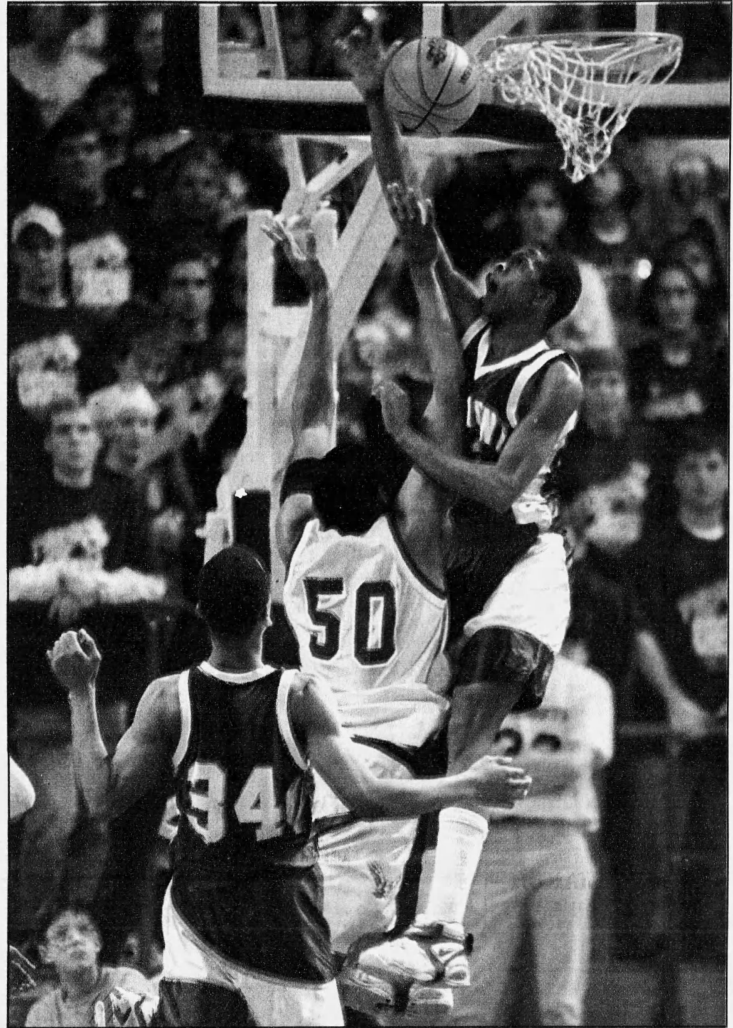
"I think the most important thing was for us to just get on the board and get some momentum going our way," Ross's Derrick Hershey said. "Everyone just came out playing scared and as soon as we scored once I figured maybe it would help us a little bit. But it didn't turn out that way."

St. Ed, using a 20-8 first-half rebounding advantage, ran plays at ease. They shot the 3-pointer (Lepore had a pair in the first half), they ran the fast break (Clancy had a dunk) and they crashed the boards (Clancy was an immovable object with eight first-half points and 10 rebounds).

"They killed us in the first half. They just outpowered us. Every time we tried to box them out, they just threw us in the stands pretty much," Hershey said.

Ross's only semblance of offensive flow came when Hershey followed Root's 3-pointer with a pair of free throws to narrow the gap to 11-5. But St. Ed finished the first quarter on an 8-2 run and cruised to a 34-13 lead in the second quarter on a Lepore 3-pointer before Ross called another timeout with 3:30 left.

"One thing we concentrated on was we knew this was the first game in a new place and we



REGGIE JONES of Fremont Ross fouls Lakewood St. Edward center Sam Clancy while trying to block Clancy's shot during the first half of the Eagles 78-46 win Wednesday in the Division I regional semifinal at Savage Hall in Toledo.

News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

See ROSS LOSES, B4

## Ross loses semifinal to Lakewood St. Ed

Continued from B1

wanted to get out to a quick start, play defense and put the pressure on them to force them to make the decisions and then have us take care of the ball offensively and take the open shots. I think that was a big key to the victory," said first-year St. Ed coach Eric Flannery, whose team improved to 23-1.

The Little Giants raised the tempo a notch in the first two minutes of the second half, with Ed Peters scoring on a putback, Root converting a steal down low to make it 40-20 and Clancy incurring his third foul.

"With the style that we play with and the intensity we play with it's really hard to keep up that intensity for four quarters, although we try to do it," Flannery said. "When we do slack, there's not a team we're better than if we don't play hard and play aggressive."

However, St. Edward was in a state of denial, quickly hustling the length of the floor to close off the options and passing lanes for Root, Joell Heidelberg and the rest of Ross's guards.

"Our game plan is to push it, and they did a great job getting back on defense," Root said. "They were denying the wings. It's just hard to start an offense when you can't even pass the ball, that's how good the pressure was. It wasn't on me at all, they were just pressuring the

wings."

Ross got as close as 15 points, 45-30, as a result of a 10-2 run, spurred by six points from Kurt Snyder, who led the Little Giants with 11. But the Eagles, masters of the art of frustration, got 3-point plays from Lepore and Delante McGrew sandwiched around a Bartolone pullup jumper.

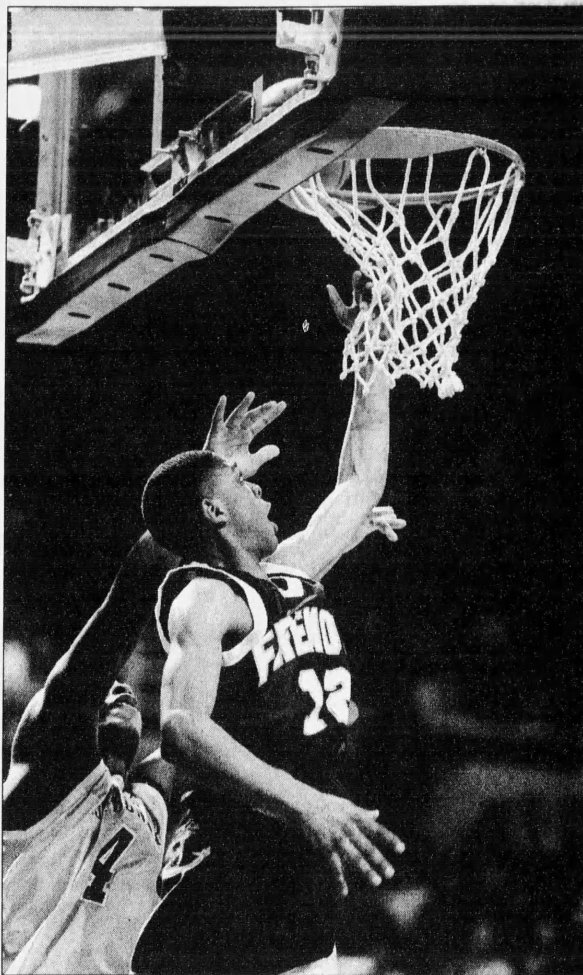
"We try to get into (opponents' heads)," Flannery said. "They know we have the national ranking and the state ranking, and our goal is to put that intimidation in them and make a team feel they can't play with us."

Another miraculous comeback attempt by Ross was just not to be. Instead, the Little Giants saw their season come to a close.

"It's a shock," Root said. "I thought it would never end."

But nothing lasts forever.

**LITTLE GIANTS NOTES:** The Eagles will face Valley Forge in Saturday's final at Savage Hall, which beat Toledo Central Catholic, 75-68. ... Although his team was hammered on the boards, Ross's tallest player, Kevin Mosser, played just eight minutes. ... Heidelberg and Peters each had five rebounds to lead Ross. ... Root had three steals. ... Ross finished with 25 turnovers to St. Ed's 12. ... Final proof that Murphy's Law was the law of the land Wednesday night: Ross's Reggie Jones missed a breakaway slam dunk in the final minute of the third quarter.



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

**JOELL HEIDELBURG** of Fremont Ross goes in for a layup against Lakewood St. Edward's Delante McGrew in the third quarter Wednesday at Savage Hall. The Eagles defeated the Little Giants 78-46 in a Division I regional semifinal. The Eagles play Valley Forge Saturday for the regional title.