

# Tygers stomp out Ross

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WILLARD — The underdog role suits Mansfield Senior just fine, thank you.

The Tygers, unseeded for the first time in seven seasons, walloped top-seeded Fremont Ross, 85-61, Friday for the Division I sectional title at Willard High School.

Mansfield Senior blasted the 11th-ranked Little Giants with an 18-3 run to end the third quarter and cruised to Thursday's dis-

## Top-seeded Giants bounced, 85-61



trict semifinal against Ashland.

Although they didn't expect the victory to

be as easy as it was, the traditionally powerful Tygers had a hard time seeing themselves as Cinderellas.

"We were maybe the underdog, if you look at it," Mansfield head coach

Gregg Collins said. "They were the No. 1 seed. They have a great record, but we have a great record also. ... We didn't talk about that because we kinda felt we were as good as Fremont Ross."

Senior point guard Antonio Graves led the Tygers (18-4) with 25 points and seven assists. Big men Yima Chia-Kur and Jon Avery combined for 40 points and 36 rebounds. Chia-Kur

scored 22 points and pulled down 16 rebounds, while Avery, a sophomore, came up with career highs of 18 points and 20 boards.

Mansfield (18-4) recorded the first blowout in the storied six-game tournament rivalry with Ross. The Tygers had won three of the previous five games, four of which went into overtime.

"I give Mansfield all the credit. ... They brought

their A game, and we didn't make the grade at all," Ross head coach Mark Gedeon said.

Chad Clark led Ross (17-4) with 18 points. Luke Lyle chipped in with 16.

Gedeon said the Little Giants lost sight of what got them the top seed, an attitude of entitlement that surfaced long before last week's regular season-ending loss to Sandusky.

See ROSS, B3

# Ross falls to rival Mansfield, finishes year with 17-4 mark

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"To be successful, you've got to play as a team. Unfortunately, we played as individuals," Gedeon said. "We were able to dodge so many bullets throughout the course of the year. I think the kids got that mindset that just showing up was good enough. ... It's a great lesson for life as well. Hopefully these kids will learn from it.

"When we clinched the league title at Whitmer, I really thought our kids lost the focus of the goals we wanted to accomplish as a team. ... You play as you practice. Unfortunately, that showed tonight."

Ross was discombobulated from the tip of Friday's game. The Little Giants scored their first field goal with four minutes, 20 seconds to play in the first quarter.

Ross led briefly at 11-8, but Mansfield scored the next 11 points to grab the lead for good. Graves poured in the last seven points of the run.

The Little Giants, who averaged more than 76 points per game during the regular season, spent most of Friday's game out of synch. Ross finished 3-of-25 (12 percent) from 3-point range and 23-of-67 (34.3 percent) overall from the floor.

"We have seen Ross play a couple of times. I don't think there's any question we caught them on a right night," Collins said. "We didn't do anything differently than a lot of teams we've seen them play try to do. The difference is they shot (poorly) from the 3-point line. ... It just wasn't their night."

Mansfield led only 29-24 at halftime, mainly because of its own miscues. The Tygers committed 19 first-half turnovers to Ross's seven.

"We really felt the majority of those turnovers in the first half were unforced. ... If we don't throw those possessions away, with the way we're scoring, this isn't even a game at halftime," Collins said.

A 3-pointer to open the second

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**Mark Gedeon,**  
Ross head coach

half by Luke McElfresh got Ross within 29-27. But Mansfield responded by scoring the next eight points — Graves had five of them — to take over for good.

The Little Giants were still in the game at 44-38 after a Clark deuce with 4:15 to play in the third quarter.

That's when Chia-Kur and Avery stepped up for the Tygers. They combined for 16 straight Mansfield points as the lead ballooned to 62-41 after three quarters.

Mansfield enjoyed a 54-24 rebounding advantage, largely on the backs of Chia-Kur and Avery. Avery scored all 18 of his points in the second half.

"It just seemed like Jonathan and Yima were always around the basketball, both on the offensive and defense ends. That's obviously a key," Collins said.

Said Gedeon, "I thought Jonathan Avery was the player that busted open the game."

Ross and its eight seniors ended a remarkable season. The Little Giants became the first team in school history to claim a third straight league title, won a school-record 12 straight games and recorded the highest state ranking in recent memory.

"Hopefully the people remember those type of things," Gedeon said. "At tournament time, you know anything can happen. Those are neat things."