

Ross loses with 0:00 left

Miracle tip knocks out Little Giants

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

WILLARD — Bryan Murvine had given up hope.

"I thought the clock was going to expire before we even touched the ball," the 6-foot-6 Ashland senior said.

Murvine, with help from a pair of Ross Little Giants, tipped the ball toward the rim, watched it as it bounced off the back of the iron and fell through as the buzzer went off, giving Ashland a 45-44 win in the Division I sectional boys basketball finals at Willard High School Saturday afternoon.

Charles Woodson's running jumper with 17 seconds left gave Ross a 44-43 lead.

After Ashland coach Jody Peters set his offense in a timeout with 14 seconds remaining, Ross seemingly had the perfect defense set up with the Arrows' Jeremy Anderson at the top of the key trying to find Murvine.

"They (Ashland) tried to set a back pick for Murvine for an alley-oop pass," Ross coach Frank Gioffre described the play in the depths of a stone-silent Ross locker room. "Our kids were there. I thought maybe even one of our kids tipped the ball — I'm not really sure who tipped it — but the ball happened to find its way into the basket and that's the game."

Mike Patterson and Woodson repented to Anderson's lob to the left of the basket as the clock hit two seconds. The Little Giants duo went up with Murvine four feet from the basket and all three appeared to touch the ball, sending it careening toward the goal.

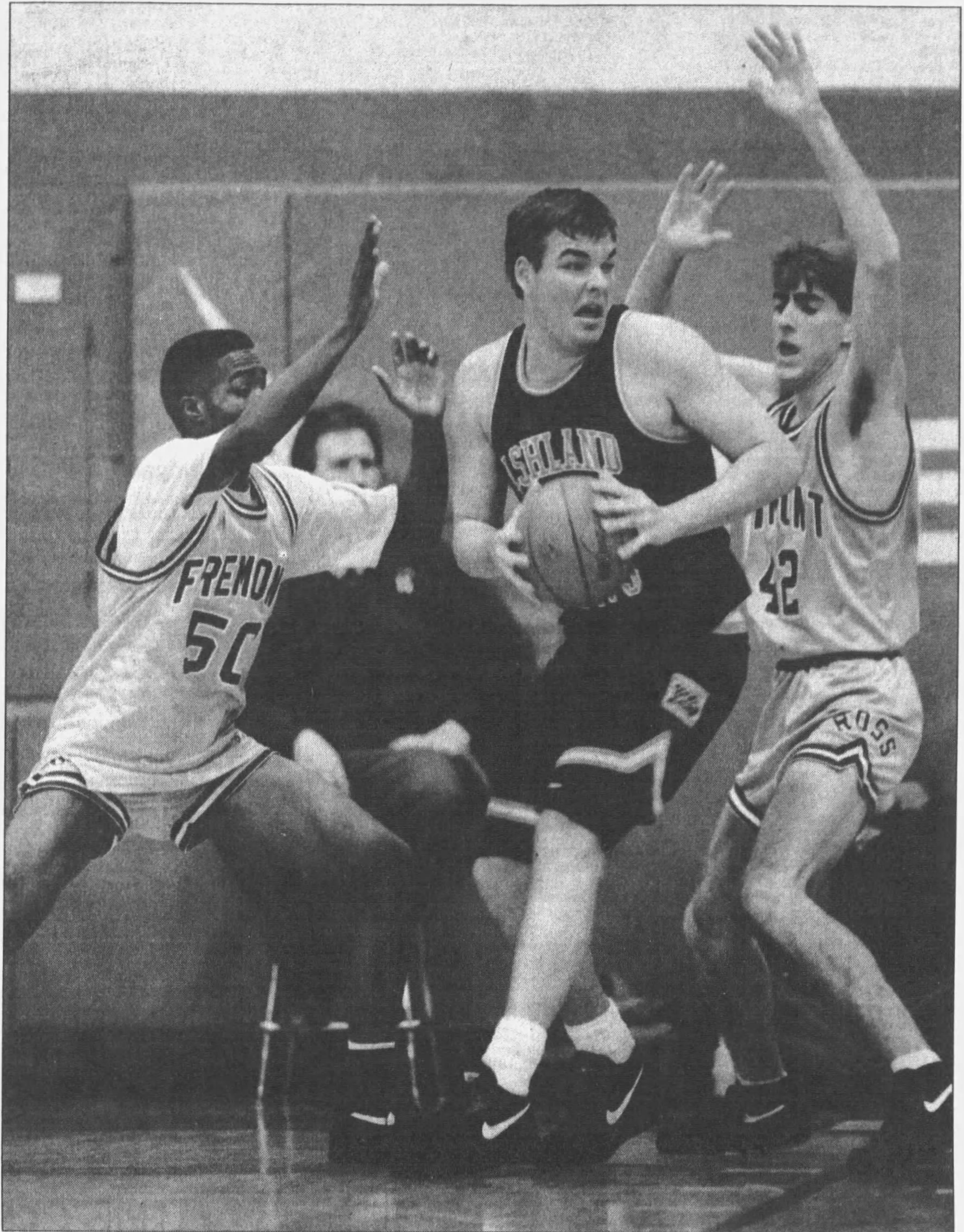
Murvine, who finished with 24 points, was confused over who tipped the ball.

"I touched a little bit of it," Murvine said, "but I think Woodson got more of it."

Peters also did not have a definitive answer.

"It looked like Murvine got a hand on the ball," he said. "It looked like he flipped it over his back, had no idea where it was going, and somehow it ended up in the hoop."

Whoever tipped it, the ball fell through, ending a rocky season for Ross, 7-15, and putting the



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

MIKE PATTERSON (left) and Jason Zilles of Fremont Ross put defensive pressure on Ashland's

Bryan Murvine Saturday in the Division I sectional championship game.

Arrows, 15-6, into the Division I district tournament against Lima Senior at Bowling Green State University Thursday.

"You hate to see anybody lose that kind of basketball game," Peters said, "especially like that. If you are going to win great basketball games like that, you got to have some luck."

Ross had bounced back from a

15-4 second-quarter deficit to trail 23-21 at halftime. Woodson and Patterson scored all of the Ross first-half points, with Patterson getting 12.

In the final quarter, Ashland led 41-36 before four free throws by Chad Root closed the Arrows' lead to 41-40 with 3:16 to play. Anderson and David Gibbs of Ross each sank two free throws

but Murvine missed three consecutive free throws, the last giving the ball to Ross with 55 seconds left, trailing 43-42.

Woodson led Ross with 20 points and Patterson had 16.

"I really feel bad for the kids because they deserved to win today," Gioffre said, "but the ball bounced in Ashland's favor."