



News-Messenger/Diane Cebula

FREMONT ROSS'S Alexis Johnson, right, hugs Ashley Long after the Little Giants' 41-38 victory over Mansfield Senior in a Division I sectional opener Wednesday at Hopewell-Loudon.

# Giants clutch down stretch

## Ross scores final six points in sectional win

By NICK MATHEWS  
Sports Editor

BASCOM — When Tia Simms was fouled, she certainly wasn't in a foul mood.

The Fremont Ross senior happily went to the free-throw line with 37.9 seconds left in Wednesday's Division I sectional opener with postseason nemesis Mansfield Senior at Hopewell-Loudon.

"When I got fouled, I was like, 'Yes,'" Simms said. "I knew I was going to make those free throws. I love the pressure."

Simms drained both attempts to put Ross ahead for good, and the Little Giants scored the game's final six points in a 41-38 victory.

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### Hoops du jour

# 6

Consecutive points scored by Fremont Ross to end its victory over Mansfield Senior

# 15

Consecutive points allowed by Bellevue in the second half of a loss to Port Clinton

### PRIMETIME SCORERS Girls

Tia Simms .....	25
Megan Abbey .....	20
Casza Rhodes .....	17
Alexa Nasonti .....	12
Lindsay Hill .....	11
Brittany Perkins .....	11
Ann Clark .....	10
Julie Beaschler .....	10
Danielle Lowry .....	10

### WEDNESDAY'S SCORES Girls sectionals

<b>Division I</b>	
Ross 41, Mansfield Sr. 38	
<b>Division II</b>	
P.C. 47, Bellevue 31	
<b>Division III</b>	
Woodmore 64, Genoa 59	
<b>Division IV</b>	
Gibsonburg 54, MVCD 25	

# Simms nets 25 points as Little Giants get revenge

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"Coach said it was up to us if we wanted to win," Simms said. "And I think we all wanted to win. As a team, we won."

Simms scored 25 points — capped by the pressure-packed free throws — and had 11 rebounds as the Little Giants (12-9) got revenge against Mansfield (7-14).

The Tygers eliminated the Little Giants each of the last two seasons.

"It was very nice to beat them," Simms said.

The breakthrough victory gave Ross an opportunity to avenge two regular-season losses to Marion Harding.

The Little Giants meet the Presidents Saturday in the sectional championship game.

"We would like another shot at them," Ross coach Sue Wolf said.

The Little Giants get that opportunity because of their clutch play down the stretch Wednesday.

After blowing a seven-point third-quarter lead and falling behind 38-35 with 2:01 left, Ross took control.

Dalanea Johnson's driving layup pulled the Little Giants within one point with 1:45 remaining.

Ross then forced the first of three Mansfield turnovers in its last four possessions.

Simms' free throws followed an offensive rebound and put Ross ahead 39-38.

Mansfield turned the ball over on its next two possessions, and Ashley Long made the first of two free throws to give the Little Giants a 40-38 lead with 21.7 seconds left.

Brittney Miller got an offensive rebound after Long missed the second foul shot. Miller was immediately fouled and drained a free throw to cap the game's scoring with 20.4 seconds remaining.

Ross did not allow a 3-point attempt in the closing seconds.

The Little Giants finished just 12-of-27 from the free-throw line for the game, but they went 4-of-6 in the final 37.9 seconds.

"We made them when we had to," Wolf said. "It's survive and advance (in the tournament),



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FREMONT ROSS'S Tia Simms takes a shot during the Little Giants' 41-38 victory over Mansfield Senior in a Division I sectional opener Wednesday at Hopewell-Loudon. Simms scored a game-high 25 points as Ross advanced to Saturday's sectional title game with Marion Harding.

and that's what we did."

The Little Giants led 29-22 after a Simms putback with 3:25 left in the third quarter.

Ross, however, allowed a 16-6 Mansfield run and fell behind by three points with two minutes left in the game.

The Little Giants finished 14-of-37 (38 percent) from the floor.

"I told the girls in the locker room, 'We actually played that badly and won,'" Wolf said. "That should show you that we have gotten better. Usually, we would lose those games."

Simms didn't let the Little Giants lose.

She finished 8-of-17 from the floor and 9-of-13 from the free-throw line.

Simms scored all of the Little Giants' points in a 9-4 run that gave them a 19-13 lead with 3:56 left in the second quarter.

At that point, Simms matched Mansfield in scoring.

She also tallied six of the Little Giants' 12 fourth-quarter points.

"She is a person that you can count on," Wolf said. "She is never going to stop taking it to the basket. She is somebody that is going to lead the team, no matter what."

"That's the sign of somebody who is a good player," Wolf continued.