

# SLAM: Ross beats Findlay

## Little Giants advance to district final

By BRIAN SPIESS  
Sports editor

BOWLING GREEN — Fremont Ross guard Sam Root plays basketball a lot like the slogan in those BASF commercials.

He doesn't make the dunk, he makes the play that makes the dunk better. And possible.

Root, a 6-foot senior, stole a pass during the first quarter

Thursday against Findlay, then lofted a perfect outlet toss to Joell Heidelberg, who finished the play with a climbing, two-handed dunk.

**Thursday**  
Ross .....60  
Findlay .....40

**Saturday**  
Fremont Ross  
vs. Mansfield  
Senior at  
Bowling Green  
State University  
in Division I  
district final  
6 p.m.

The play ignited the crowd and

came as part of a decisive 21-2 run during a 60-40 win in the Division I district semifinal at Anderson Arena.

Ross (15-7) now needs to beat Mansfield Senior at 6 p.m. Saturday for its first district championship since 1965.

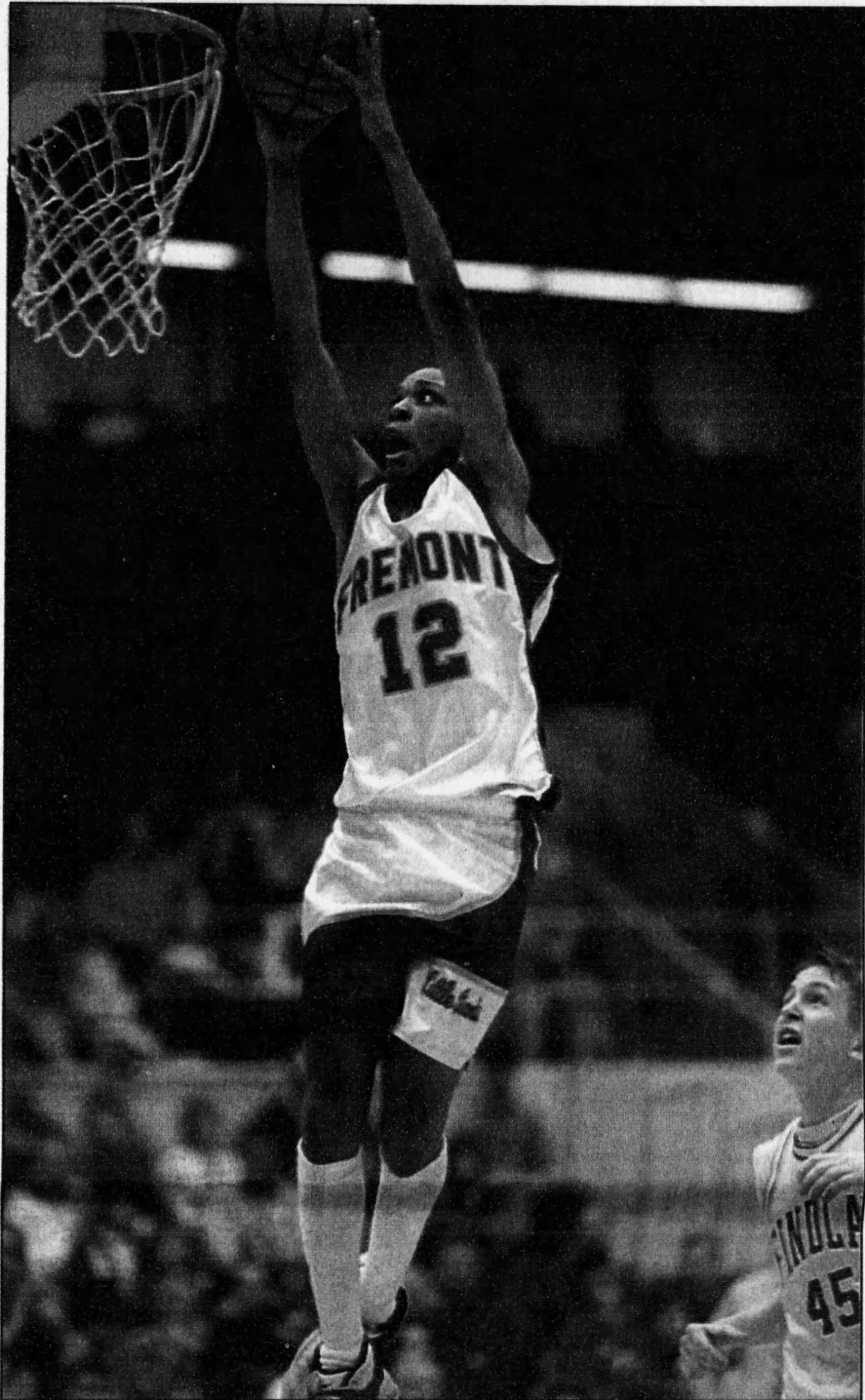
Findlay finishes at 10-12.

"Take Sam Root out of there, and a lot of those opportunities don't happen," Findlay coach Jerry Snodgrass said after watching the Little Giants defeat his Trojans for the third time this season. "I still say that Sam Root makes all of those players better."

Both teams appeared tentative for the first minute on the 94-foot home floor of the Bowling Green State University Falcons, before Root broke the ice with a 3-pointer.

Findlay took its first and only lead of the game with 6:28 left in the first quarter when Nick Patterson slipped a pass by the Ross defense to center Mark Wilson, who layed it in for a 4-3 advantage.

But 18 seconds later it was Ross senior Ed Peters doing the



See LITTLE GIANTS, B2

JOELL HEIDELBURG of Fremont Ross dunks in two of his team-high 12 points Thursday against Findlay.

News-Messenger/Steven Garner

# Little Giants make finals

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scoring on a turnaround from four feet away. It would be the start of 16 straight points for the Little Giants.

The teams played virtually even after that.

"In the two times we played this year, we played with them for six of the eight quarters," Snodgrass said. "We were hell-bent that (a Ross-dominated quarter) was not going to happen. The bad one tonight was the first one. We couldn't play catch up against them."

One possession after Peters' basket, Root was fouled and made one of two free throws. Following Kurt Snyder's 3-point shot with 4:19 left in the opening quarter, Root flew through the lane and tipped in a Derrick Hershey miss to give his team an 11-4 edge.

"The last thing I remember before that run was that Sam Root gets an offensive rebound tap in," Gedeon said. "That's a play that starts us."

Hershey gave Ross its next two points by converting foul shots after being decked on a putback attempt.

Then Heidelberg added the oomph.

The sophomore, who had checked in off the bench along with freshman Reggie Jones, sank a 15-foot jump shot from the left wing.

Then Root got the game's biggest steal.

"Anticipation, I guess," Root said of his knack to grab steals. "Knowing what they're going to do."

From previous meetings with the Trojans, Root knew the player who

caught the ball in the center of the floor was going to make a pass to the sideline. He stepped in and grabbed the ball, then threw the pass so that only Heidelberg could catch up, elevate and dunk for a 17-4 lead.

Heidelberg settled for a reverse lay in on his next fast break basket, which again came from a Root steal.

"Sam Root's so tough because of his rotation," Gedeon said. "It's almost like watching a dancer ... he moves with such rhythm."

Root finished with eight points and four steals, while Heidelberg led the Little Giants with 12 points and four steals.

Ten of the 12 Little Giants who played scored.

"We're still getting contributions from every player," said Gedeon, who said 10 of his players average at least 11 minutes of playing time per game.

Most of Findlay's offense went through 6-foot-6 center Mark Wilson, who finished with five field goals and 12 points. Junior Benji Ballmer hit two 3-pointers in the closing minutes to finish with a game-high 13 points.

**LITTLE GIANTS NOTES:** Ross made seven 3-point shots Thursday, including two each from Snyder and John Overberg. ... Jones led the Little Giants with seven rebounds. ... Ross's 1963-64 and 1964-65 teams under coach Richard Norman each won four tournament games. Ross has a bye and two wins so far this year. ... Mansfield Senior beat Wapakoneta 75-55 in the 6:30 p.m. game Thursday.