

Ross lady cagers fall out of tourney

By BOB MARKER

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Ross survived a 10-minute scoreless famine only to watch helplessly as Katie Marritt's last second shot rolled off the rim to give Whitmer a 43-41 victory in the first game of the Class AAA Sectional Basketball Tournament at Bowsher High School Wednesday.

"We played good defense," disappointed Ross Coach Sue Wolf said quietly after the game.

Coursing through her mind was a phantom turnover charged to Ross with less than a half minute to play. Sandy Long was called for carrying the ball on the play while on a fast break. Whitmer had a 43-39 lead at the time.

"I just could not believe that turnover at the end," Wolf said. "I just could not believe it."

But the Lady Little Giants were their own enemies, committing numerous early turnovers and failing to convert on free throws.

Ross had the "one and one" from the line early in the first half but did not take advantage of it according to Wolf. "We should have gone at them," she said, "but we didn't.

"Then we missed too many free throws."

Ross was nine of 17 from the charity stripe but only five of 12 in the final eight minutes.

Whitmer, 17-4, built up a 24-14 lead midway through the third period as Ross, 13-8, failed to score from the 6:22 mark of the second period till the 3:20 mark of the third period when Marritt's steal and layup stopped the scoring drought.

Tina Michael's two free throws gave Ross a 14-12 lead, the only lead of the game for the Lady Little Giants, before the famine began.

Whitmer's Michelle Durand scored on three looping jumpers as the Lady Panthers ran off 12 unanswered points, but Ross was still in the game. "That just says how good our defense was," Wolf explained.

"We had our chance but we blew it," the Ross coach said.

Jerilyn Bushong and Jenny Ice carried Whitmer in the final period as Ross repeatedly charged but was beaten back by the Lady Panthers duo. Bushong had five points, including three crucial free throws, and Ice coolly dumped in six in the eight minutes.

Long, who finished with 10 points, brought Ross to the final score on a layup with 23 seconds left to play. With seven seconds left, Whitmer sub Tami Schwamberger missed a shot and Michael grabbed the rebound, got the ball to Long who passed to Marritt in the lane. Marritt's hurried shot from eight-feet bounced off the rim a second before the buzzer sounded.

Sharon Karlovetz, who hit three straight buckets in the first quarter, led Ross with 14. Long was next and sophomore Sue Gahn finished with eight.

Ross was 16 of 35 from the floor and Whitmer 19 of 43. Whitmer made just five of 14 from the line. Rebounding went to Ross 26-22 with Michael getting 10. Ross committed 17 turnovers, 11 in the first half.

Whitmer was paced by Bushong's 13.