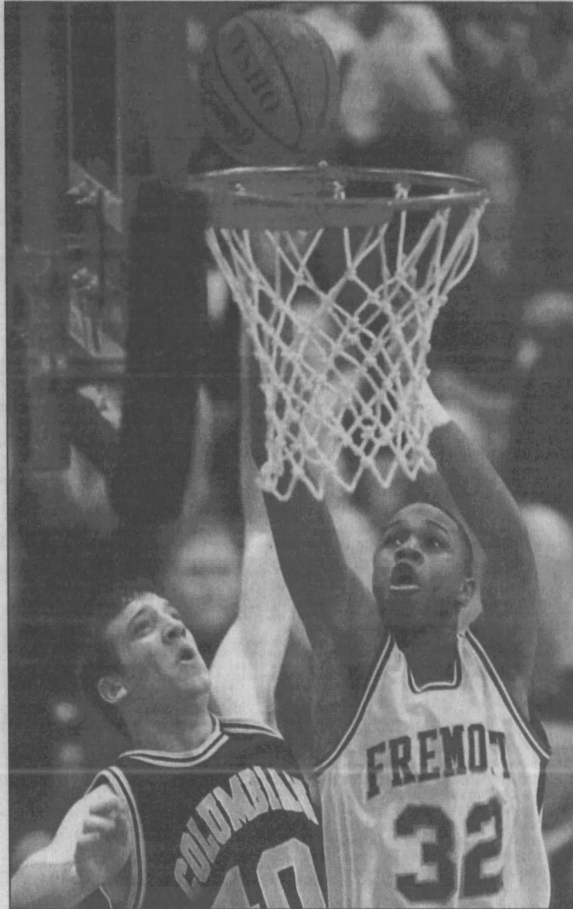


Boys basketball

# Giants advance



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

REGGIE JONES hits a layup over Beau Carmon in Ross's 67-43 win Tuesday night.

## Ross gets final with Sandusky

By SCOTT TAPPA  
Sports editor

**WILLARD** — For Fremont Ross, playing Tiffin Columbian in between two games with Sandusky was like sitting through NBC's 8:30 p.m. Thursday offering during the mid-1990s: no matter what show was on, there was no way it could match *Friends* before it or *Seinfeld* after it.

Tuesday night, the Little Giants gritted their teeth and withstood the basketball equivalent of *Suddenly Susan*, *The Single Guy* and *Jesse*, beating the Tornadoes 67-43 in a Division I sectional semifinal game, setting up a third meeting with Sandusky on Friday.

"We came out flat, we weren't as hyped as we wanted to be, but we were

### Tuesday

Ross.....	67
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### Friday

Ross vs. Sandusky, 9 p.m.

still ready to play," said Ross guard Steve Dagg, who along with Reggie Jones led the Little Giants with 12 points.

With the win, Ross improved to 17-4 and tied the 1953-54 team for most wins in a single season. Still, the rematch with a Columbian team Ross had beaten handily earlier this season concerned coach Mark Gedeon, especially after three Tuesday losses at Sandusky, Toledo St. John's and Toledo Rogers.

"This game was a huge concern for me," he said.

"If you look at the last three Tuesday road games that we've had, they've all been losses."

But Tuesday was also a road game for Columbian, and both teams struggled to find an offensive rhythm early. Jones and Joell Heidelberg scored four points apiece in the first quarter, but Ross held just a 13-9 lead, a far cry from the 21 first-quarter points the Little Giants scored in the teams' Jan. 16 meeting.

"We talked about how imperative it was to get off to a good first quarter, especially when you look at the box score of what Fremont did against Sandusky (Friday)," said Columbian coach Matt Hutchinson.

See ROSS, B2

# Ross beats Columbian going away

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"We tried some things to try to control tempo a little bit, and I thought our halfcourt defense was pretty solid throughout the first half."

The game remained close throughout the second quarter, but a 3-pointer from Juan Vela gave the Little Giants a 27-20 cushion at halftime. Ross had eight turnovers in the first half, while Columbian coughed it up 10 times.

"I thought in the first half, we were trying to do some of the things we wanted to do, but we were doing them too fast, make the big play instead of the fundamental play," Gedeon said. "We had eight turnovers in the first half, and many of those came in transition where we had numbers, and those are situations we expect to score on. We felt lucky going into the locker room up seven."

With Jones getting into foul trouble midway through the third quarter, Tyson Liggins stepped up his scoring, netting eight points in the quarter. Offensive putbacks from Liggins and Dagg put Ross up 47-34 after three quarters.

Ross eventually completed its 12-0 run with Liggins' layup midway

through the fourth quarter, taking a commanding 21-point lead the Tornadoes could not overcome. Liggins and Vela each added 10 points apiece for Ross.

"We came out early and took a lot of unnecessary shots, but as the game went on, we just started executing, and before you knew it, the lead was 20," said Dagg. "It just came out of nowhere, it was a quiet 20, it wasn't one of those real quick two-minute, 20 points kind of deals."

For Columbian, leading scorers Beau Carmon and Craig Hill combined for 16 of their 23 points in the second half, but the post players scored all the Tornadoes' second half points until Greg Hoke's layup with three minutes to play.

"We knew from the beginning that they were the people to stop," said Dagg. "We practiced all week on post pins, because we knew that's what they were going to do. When you're 6-7, you're going to get your points."

Ross pulled away without Jones and Vela, who both sat out the entire fourth quarter. In their places, Gedeon got solid performances from Andrew Diller, Bryan Root and Greg Garcia.

"If you'd have told me that we'd sit both Reggie and Juan for the fourth



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

**TYSON LIGGINS** squeezes through the trap of Tiffin Columbian's Greg Hoke, left, and Beau Carmon, right, in the second half of Ross's 67-43 win over the Tornadoes Tuesday.

quarter of a sectional game, I'd have been surprised," Gedeon said.

Friday's Ross-Sandusky game will be at 9 p.m., at the tail end of a split session. Tickets are on sale at the Ross athletic department.