

Ross falls in district finals

By **BOB MARKER**
Sports Editor

HOLLAND — It was not the best way to end a good season but Sue Wolf settled for it while thinking ahead.

Wolf stood silently in the noise of wildly celebrating Sylvania Southview fans Saturday after the Cougars defeated Wolf's Fremont Ross Little Giants 55-35 in the Division I girls district basketball tournament at Springfield High School.

After a moment, Wolf smiled.

"The kids worked hard all season," she began and then gazed at the seats across the floor which were nearly filled by Fremont fans. "The support we are getting is unbelievable. If we can keep this up, hopefully, we can go a step further next year.

"It was a fantastic season ... I hope next season is better."

Getting to the district finals was a milestone for Wolf. Finishing with 18 wins in 24 games was another.

Wolf will lose only senior Holly Pelfrey from her squad. Her lineup, the same one she started all season, was comprised of juniors Dawn Zerman, Cari Ritzman and Dena Schepflin with freshman Emily Dowell and Pelfrey. Her first four substitutes are all sophomores.

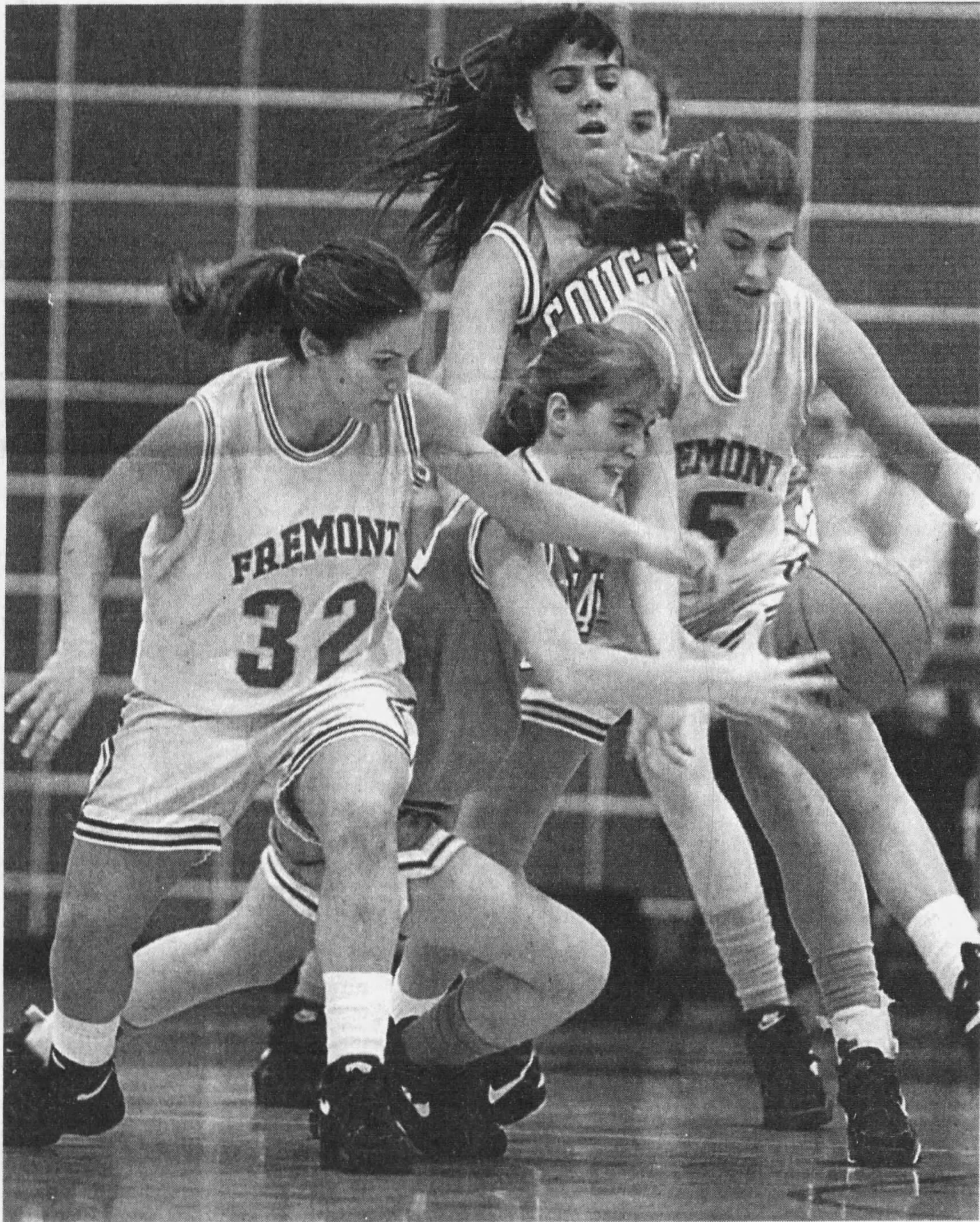
Saturday, Southview, with only two seniors on its squad, led 13-10 after one quarter and followed it up with a 7-of-9 shooting performance in the second quarter to put Ross down 30-19 at halftime and the Little Giants never recovered.

The Cougars, 22-1 and on a 22-game winning streak, will play Toledo St. Ursula at 6:15 p.m., Tuesday in the regional tournament at Galion. St. Ursula defeated Toledo Notre Dame 51-46 in the Toledo Bowsher district finals.

Dawn Zerman scored 12 of her 16 points in the first half for Ross.

Ross never got closer than 11 points in the second half and in the final quarter, with Southview up 41-38, the Little Giants were forced to shoot over the packed-in Cougar zone defense. That was a problem.

"We could not hit the broad



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

LISA OPRIE (32) and Michele Smith (right) of Fremont Ross battle for a loose ball with Southview's Stephanie

Raszka during Saturday night's district championship game at Springfield High School.

side of a barn (14-of-55)," Wolf said. "I thought we were flat. When we go to the foul line and are missing there ... we just did not have our legs, I guess."

In this game, Ross was truly the Little Giants. The Cougars started a pair of six-footers and brought a pair of 5-11 girls in off the bench.

"Karen Barcus on inside is

really strong," Wolf said. "We could not find a way to stop her."

Barcus, a 6-foot senior, finished with 14 points and 5-11 substitute Kerry Gilligan added seven. Sophomore point guard Kati Stedcke added 13. Ritzman had six and Dowell four for Ross.

For Southview coach Kevin

Mitchell, the win topped off the day. Earlier Saturday, his wife Laurie presented him with a Cougar of the future, a baby girl.

"No matter what happened, it was a great day for me," Mitchell said.

And a day to look to the future for Ross.