

GIRLS BASKETBALL



Ross' Janiah Holmes PHOTOS BY MATTHEW HORN

Janiah can keep climbing higher for Fremont Ross

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Sophomore Janiah Holmes is most often first off the bench.

This is true of the player rotation for Fremont Ross coach Juan Vela. It's also the case when Holmes isn't in the game.

Holmes is a valuable sub. She's also quick and consistent to pop off her seat and cheer for teammates, which is even more important with fewer fans during the pandemic.

There was plenty to celebrate Thursday as the Little Giants beat visiting Toledo Whitmer 55-29 for a sectional crown in Division I. Holmes, who is starting to emerge on the court, had nine of her 16 points in the first quarter.

"The emotion and energy bring it out of us," Ross senior Brooklyn Baptista said.

The Little Giants (17-5) play Saturday's winner between Toledo Start and Toledo St. Ursula on Thursday at Lake.

Vela has never had a team more quiet. There is no hesitation, however, to have an impact when a clock is running.

Holmes was a starter from Day 1 as a freshman. She didn't back down.

"Come out ready to play," Holmes said. "You just have to keep working. Work in the offseason and get better."

Holmes is athletic and extremely versatile with her job description at 5-foot-11. Her strengths are defense, passing and rebounding.

"A lot," Baptista said. "Whether it's rebounding, offensive or defensive.



She's a hell of a defender. She's lengthy and her defense helps. Her game offensively taking it strong to the basket and finishing has improved."

Vela often wants Holmes to be more aggressive.

"Janiah can almost be too unselfish," he said. "The team we have, they love to play. They're not selfish. They're just kids enjoying basketball."

And rewards that come with execution.

"It's special because I never had a moment like this before," she said of the

sectional championship. "It feels good."

Vela sees a high ceiling for Holmes. "Finally, she came out of her shell," Vela said "She's more relaxed. She's reading the defense. She's taking better shots. The biggest thing is she's unselfish and she's playing better defense. Janiah has a lot of potential.

"She hasn't even scratched the surface."

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