

SANDUSKY 75, ROSS 61

Foul finish



FREMONT ROSS senior Jake Kingsborough walks off the court after the Little Giants' season-ending 75-61 loss to Sandusky on Wednesday. News-Messenger/David Distelhorst

Free-throw line woes hurt Ross in sectional loss

By NICK MATHEWS
Sports Editor

WILLARD — With about six minutes left in Wednesday's 75-61 loss to archrival Sandusky in the Division I sectional opener, Fremont Ross's Joe Diller stepped to the free-throw line.

The junior had the opportunity to bring the Little Giants, who had trailed by as many as 17 points, into a one-possession game for the first time since mid-way through the first frame.

Diller's first attempt bounced off the rim. His second went in temporarily before rolling all the way around the rim and out.

Ross coach Mark Gedeon looked up at the ceiling briefly and sighed, almost not believing what he was witnessing.

It was certainly a foul finish to a frus-

Hoops du jour

36

Percent shooting from the free-throw line (9-of-25) for Ross in a season-ending loss to Sandusky.

8

Points Clyde scored in an overtime victory, compared to just two for Oak Harbor.

PRIMETIME SCORERS

Matt Muratori.....	22
Nick Tea.....	19
Kevin Favro.....	16
Eric Dusseau.....	15
Justin Tank.....	15
Wes Newsom.....	11
Fred Shearon.....	11
Aaron Opelt.....	10

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS

Sectional openers
Sandusky 75, Ross 61
Clyde 63, Oak Harbor 57 (OT)

trating 6-15 campaign for the Little Giants

Ross finished just 9-of-25 from the free-throw line, its most glaring weakness in the all-important rubber match with its rival.

Ryan Williams scored 10 of his game-high 23 points in the first quarter as Sandusky (14-7) took charge.

The Blue Streaks, who trailed once at 6-5 just 2:41 into the game, avenged a heart-breaking 69-67 loss at Ross in the regular-season finale and advanced to face Tiffin Columbian in Friday's sectional final.

During the regular season, the Little Giants shot 58 percent from the foul line. On Wednesday, they shot 36 percent.

"If you want to score points," Gedeon said, "what better place to do it than the foul line? ... It's just you and the basketball hoop."

"That's something that each individual can improve on on their own," Gedeon said.

Even in the darkest hour of the worst season in his nine-year career, Gedeon was thinking positively about the growth of his young team.

Gedeon had just three seniors on his roster and started all underclassman for much of the season.

"I think (fans) know that the future is still bright for Fremont Ross basketball," said Gedeon, who at 127-71 is the winningest coach in school history.

After Diller's missed free-throws, Daishun Brown scored on a driving lay-up to put Sandusky back ahead 59-52 with 5:40 left.

Ross senior Jake Kingsborough, though, hit a 15-foot jumper off a turnover to get the Little Giants within five points again.

The Blue Streaks, however, scored the next three points — including a lay-up off a steal by Brown — to go ahead 62-54 with 4:41 left.

See ROSS, B4



News-Messenger/David Distelhorst

FREMONT ROSS'S Aaron Opelt drives past Sandusky's Chris McGee during Wednesday's Division I sectional opener. Ross lost 75-61.

Ross ends 6-15 season with loss to rival Sandusky

Continued From B1

Ross never got within seven points again, partially because of free-throw shooting.

The Little Giants went 3-of-7 from the line down the stretch. In that same span, the Blue Streaks went 7-of-10. They finished 16-of-24 for the game.

"If we could have shot our season average and gotten a break, we could have played possession by possession as opposed to scrambling and trying to get back into it," Gedeon said.

Added sophomore guard Aaron Opelt, who at 2-for-3 was the only Giant to shoot above 50 percent from the line: "I don't know what happened. I can't explain it."

Williams was everything for Sandusky early.

He drained a 3-pointer to put them up 5-0.

After Ross responded and took a 6-5 lead, he made a tough runner in the lane to put the Streaks up for good.

Williams finished with 16 points in the first half as Sandusky took a 42-32 lead.

"He played like he wanted to put the team on his shoulders," Sandusky coach T.J. James said. "He took over the game."

On Wednesday, Williams was a different player than Ross had seen this season.

He scored 13 points in the Streaks' 80-72 victory over the Little Giants in January and he scored a very pedestrian 11 points in the loss at Ross this past Friday.

"I thought he didn't come to the plate like he should have the last time we played them," James said. "I challenged him, and I thought he responded really well to the challenge."

Junior Fred Shearon led the charge for the Little Giants, finishing with 11 points. Opelt

added 10.

Senior Antoine Davis added six points, and classmates Kingsborough and Marquis Reynolds, finished with four and two, respectively.

"It's always tough when you say good-bye to the seniors," Gedeon said.

It was certainly a difficult final year for the trio. In the previous seven seasons, Ross had averaged 16 victories.

"We knew there was going to be a lot of development this season," Gedeon said. "We probably missed some goals along the way. But these kids stayed strong. It would have been very easy for them to just go through the motions."

"I made the promise in the beginning of the year that this team would be better at the end of the year than they were at the beginning of the year," Gedeon continued. "And I think we accomplished that."