

Sectional Girls Basketball Tournaments

Dowell hits game-winners in OT

By **MICHAEL BOSI**
Staff writer

WILLARD — Survival. That's the name of the game once the postseason begins. Dig a nine-point hole, and you're playing with fire. Throw in overtime, and it simply becomes Russian roulette.

Lucky for the Fremont Ross girls basketball team, Emily Dowell was the hand left holding the gun Tuesday night.

The Little Giants needed Dowell's 15 second-half points and two free throws with four seconds left in overtime to down Ashland, 51-50, in their Division I sectional opener.

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| Tuesday | |
| Fremont Ross | 51 |
| Ashland..... | 50 |

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| Saturday | |
| Fremont Ross vs. Mansfield Madison in Div. I Sectional at Willard 6:30 p.m. | |

"I didn't want our season to end. I felt that someone had to take over and I decided that I wanted to," said Dowell, who led Ross with 21 points.

Dowell's heroics, which nullified the 25-point, eight-rebound effort of the Arrows' Stephanie Weber, vaulted Ross (15-6) into Saturday's sectional final against No. 1 Mansfield Madison (14-6) at

Willard High School (6:30 p.m., WFRO).

"We've got our work cut out for us Saturday," coach Sue Wolf said. "They're a pretty darn good team so we better be ready to go."

Turns out last Thursday's thrilling victory at Oregon Clay was equal parts a loss as it was a win for the Little Giants. Although Amy Smith, Ross's leading regular-season scorer, played the entire game to help Ross clinch a tie for the Great Lakes League title, she hit the operating room Tuesday.

That left Wolf to fill a second starting void, along with the one already created eight games ago



DOWELL

by Jami Toeppe's knee injury.

"I don't think that's any reason why we can't continue," said Tonya Elder, who made her first start of the season against

Ashland. "We've stepped it up all year and I think we can continue doing that."

They did. But it took a while. A long while.

In a cavernously quiet Willard gym, Ashland (5-16) opened a 28-19 halftime lead by outscoring

Ross 12-5 in the second quarter. Weber, who had 14 first-half points, scored six straight points to give her team a 24-16 lead.

Senior Michelle Marquette, who finished with 12 points and 10 rebounds, had six of her seven assists in the first half.

"We could have helped ourselves a lot," Wolf said. "We needed to make the adjustment of not playing with Amy out there, and it took us a long time to do it."

For the first 4:32 of the second half, Dowell was unstoppable, scoring five straight points and dishing to a cutting Marcy Rein-