

BOYS BASKETBALL

Ross' early energy fizzles in loss

By Nick Marlow

News-Messenger correspondent

FINDLAY — After eight minutes of play Friday, Ross looked like it was going to pull off the upset over Findlay at Liberty-Benton.

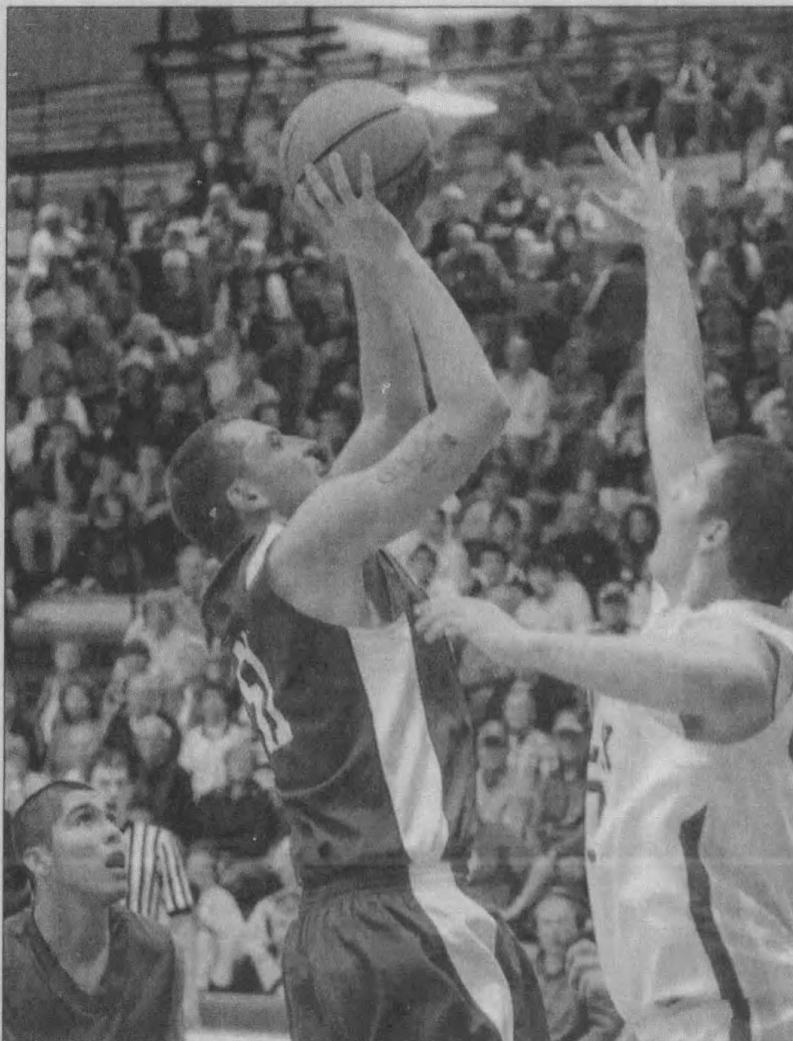
Their game plan was simple: stop 6-foot-11 center C.J. Gettys, and for a while it worked. Ross led by three heading into the second quarter and had complete control of the game.

But, with two Little Giants lying on the North Carolina-Wilmington recruit in the paint each time the Trojans brought the ball up the court, something eventually had to give. The Trojans heated up from the perimeter, and it was all they needed to get the offense rolling toward a 49-29 victory and a Division I sectional crown.

The Trojans (16-5) outscored Ross 39-16 the rest of the way and turned the Little Giants' first-quarter surge into fool's gold.

Gettys would finish with a game-high 15 points after scoring just four in the first half, and guard Boston Ballmer was right at his heels with 13. Ballmer also poured in four of the team's six three-pointers.

While Ross' offense tapered drastically after the first quarter, Skylar Reffner and Jay Carnicom were still able to finish in double digits. In what turned out to be their high school basketball



Fremont Ross' Nick Steacker takes a shot over the reach of Findlay's Austin Gutting during the Division I semi-final at Liberty Benton High School on Friday. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

finale, the seniors finished with (Mark) Gedeon and the other 11 and 10, respectively.

"I just wanted to give Coach

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seniors on my team everything I had," Reffner said. "I didn't want to leave anything out, so I could look in the mirror tomorrow and say I left it all on the court.

"I'd do anything for these guys because they're my teammates, and I love them to death."

After Findlay jumped out to a 5-3 lead, Carnicom scored the next three baskets in an 8-0 run that put Ross (11-11) up 11-8 with 2:11 to go. The Trojans would get it back to three by the horn on Ballmer's first triple and a put-back layup from Gettys.

Reffner and Carnicom combined for 11 of the team's 13 points and Ross held Gettys scoreless until the last minute of the quarter.

And then Findlay awoke.

Adam Twining would start to take advantage of the Little Giants' commitment to defending the paint and scored seven points in the second quarter. And

as Findlay started getting production out of the offense, it served as the pyre from which the defense was set ablaze.

"We weren't getting the ball inside at all and were relying solely on jumpers and fortunately we hit a few," said Findlay head coach Jim Rucki. "We tried to get the ball inside (in the second quarter) and I'm not sure we did much better, but I thought we defended better."

After shooting 6-of-12 in the first quarter, Ross was just 7-of-29 the rest of the game. They were only able to produce four points in the paint in the second and third quarters.

But coach Mark Gedeon was satisfied with the effort.

"My kids are great," he said. "I've said that all year long. They work hard, come to practice, they're responsible.

"Our five seniors I think set the table for that ... They're the ones that are bringing Fremont Ross basketball to what it used to be."

Gettys had five blocks on the night and Joseph Davidson had three.