

Ross wins on Moran 3-pointer

By **BOB MARKER**
Staff writer

WILLARD — Shane Moran didn't score a point until points counted most Tuesday night.

His 3-point baskets in the final 24 seconds wiped out a five-point deficit and gave Fremont Ross a 68-67 victory over Ashland in the first round of a Division I boys sectional basketball tournament.

"That's a nice win for our kids," Ross coach Frank Gioffre said. "They could have packed it in when we were down 67-62."

Ross (6-15) will pack instead for a return trip to Willard High School to take on Sandusky (16-4) for the sectional title at 6:30 p.m. Friday.

In a 1993 sectional final, Ashland defeated Ross 45-44 on a last-second tip-in.



MORAN



LATHER

This time, Moran's 3-pointer from the right of the foul circle swished through with nine seconds remaining.

"Our kids never quit," Gioffre said. "Shane Moran hit those big threes, David Gibbs came in and hit another and Mike Lather really picked us up. We needed a

spark and he gave it to us. He took charge of the game."

Lather scored 12 points, including a trio of three-point baskets, the first of the season for him.

The Little Giants made 9 of 26 3-points attempts, offsetting Ashland's 23-of-28 free throw performance. The Arrows made 15 of 16 foul shots in the fourth quarter — as Ross swapped foul shots for field goals — before missing their last two.

"Ross hit some big-time shots," Ashland coach Jody Peters said. "I don't think we did a good job of stepping out and challenging their 3-point shooters, but they hit the shots they needed to coming down the stretch."

Charles Woodson, the leading scorer for Ross, was ejected with 4:24 to play for punching Ash-

land's Mark Timmons, after being knocked to the floor following a tip-in.

"I think when our kids saw Charles go out...they did not want to lose," Gioffre said.

Ross trailed 32-26 at halftime but took a 40-39 lead midway through the third quarter. The lead changed hands or was tied nine times after that.

The Little Giants led 47-41 lead after three quarters, but the Arrows caught Ross at 49 and 51 on baskets by Timmons. Woodson put Ross up 53-51, tipping in Chad Root's miss for the last of his 23 points before leaving.

Baskets by Root and Gary Rakes gave Ross a 57-54 advantage with 2:45 remaining, but Karl Singleton's 3-pointer pulled Ashland even and the Arrows

surrounded Root's two free throws with eight straight foul shots for a 65-59 lead with 53 seconds to play.

After Gibbs' 3-pointer from the deep right corner and a timeout, Jeff Gierhart's two foul shots with 42 seconds to go gave Ashland its final points.

Gierhart missed the front end of a one-and-one 10 seconds later, setting the stage for Moran's heroics. His first 3-pointer cut it to 67-65, and his second followed another Gierhart miss at the line.

Ashland, after a timeout with six second left, got off a shot by Singleton but the ball bounced off the back of the rim.

"That ball looked like it was going in," Gioffre said. "Thank goodness it bounded out."