

Ross has new sideline fixture

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Fremont Ross makes it look like child's play.

Girls basketball manager Ruby Smith bought Martin at Walmart for \$12.

Martin is a plastic baby. He often spends the night in manager Ella Smith's car.

Still, the girls take excellent care of him in general. Wearing an 'unfinished business' shirt, Martin seems in many ways like a member of the team.

He goes to all the Little Giants games, even the boys. He's even had a seat on the girls bench.

"He arrived one day," Ross coach Juan Vela said. "It was one of those things that sticks. Martin has been a great support. If someone is having a bad day, he cheers them up. He's the ultimate utility player. Whatever we ask, he does.

"He never complains."

In fact, he's spoiled. Martin's neck was adorned with a net after Ross defeated Oregon Clay for a sectional crown with a running clock at Genoa. Vela wore the basketball wreath for just a moment, before it was Martin's.

The Little Giants (17-3) play the winner between Sylvania Northview and Bowling Green at 5:30 p.m. Thursday at Lake.

It's a good thing Martin isn't a real baby. A few missed shots sometimes lead to harsh words for Martin's ears and he's even been dislodged from his perch, frustration the culprit.

Freshman Mia Durnwald pierced Martin's ear with a little bling. Sophomore Abby Cahill is Martin's aunt.

He's bald, but has a drawn-on hair line. 'Martin' is written on his head, presumably in purple.

"He's like our mascot," sophomore Carma Johnson said. "Something else to bond over.

Early in the season, one of the Little Giants — likely Destiny Robinson — drove to the basket. Ross was excited she 'rocked the baby,' or put a defender



Martin MATTHEW HORN

to sleep.

Martin was retrieved, if not summoned, for the first time. Now, consider him adopted.

"If he didn't show up, the kids would

be devastated," assistant Eddie Baptista said. "They love him. They take care of him. He's like a member of the

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family.”

Lyndi Wolf is also a varsity baby. She saw Ross varsity win a sectional crown with keen interest last season.

“I watched them at district and wanted to play with that team and help that team any way I can,” she said.

She scored 11 points, including one 3-

pointer against Clay. She averages 7.8 points and 3.2 rebounds per game.

She can collect a defensive rebound and bring the ball up the floor, at 6-foot-2.

“She shoots the ball well,” Vela said.

“She has length on defense and she contests shots. She plays basketball. She does what we ask. She likes to compete. I’m glad she’s a freshman.”

Vela saw her handle the ball in transition.

“We knew she had some skills,” Vela

said. “This summer, I knew she’d help us. How she could shoot. We knew of her. You always wonder how that game will translate as a varsity freshman. The main thing is how well she gelled.”

Wolf wasn’t sure what it would look like earning trust and feeling trusted. She does both.

“I’ve surprised myself a little,” she said. “This team has helped me in every way they can. The coaches. I’m comfortable.”

She already has a head start on her

next phase.

“The mentality, everyone is stronger,” she said. “Being in the weight room helps. I still have to get to that point. Stronger.”

Fremont against the world. Martin will be there.

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