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Mistakes cost Little Giants

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FREMONT -- When Fremont Ross needed to step up and get its offense going the most on Friday mistakes cost them a shot at a win in the final quarter.

Findlay, up 38-36 entering the final quarter, outscored the Little Giants 13-5 on the way to a 51-41 win in Greater Buckeye Conference play.

Zach Elbin had four of his game-high 15 points in the final stanza for the Trojans (4-1, 1-1) who held Ross scoreless till 1:05 remained in the game. A Greg Smith bucket in the paint for the Little Giants finally broke the drought as Findlay scored the quarter's first 10 points.

"We went on a long dry spell with not being able to execute the way we wanted," Ross coach Mark Gedeon said of the final quarter. "That's something we've even been battling in practice too -- trying to get five players to focus on their responsibilities on each and every possession."

Clay Paul hit a 3-pointer just 23 seconds into the fourth to give Findlay a 41-36 edge. That would be the only scoring, though, until Elbin got a lay-up in the paint with 4:11 left, as Ross missed shot after shot and had some bad turnovers. The Little Giants were just 3-for-11 from the field, while the Trojans went 3-for-6 and 5-for-7 at the foul line.

"I thought we had some good hustle plays to create turnovers there," Findlay coach Jim Rucki said. "We pressed once and (Ross) came down on a 2-on-1 and the next thing I know, Kyle Boyd is coming out with the ball because he had sprinted from behind to get it."

"I think we also spread the floor out and made (Ross) work defensively, which is tough to do and then make shots at the other end."

Findlay's run came after the Little Giants battled back from a 29-21 deficit at halftime to tie the game at 33 all in the third quarter. Two Allen Lewis buckets down low and the first 3-pointer of the game for Ross by Kenny Penn cut the lead to 31-28 with 3:43 left in the quarter.

Skylar Reffner then went coast-to-coast for lay-in off a Findlay turnover to cut it to one, before Marcus Dayringer tied the game with 1:07 left after a Brock Ammons bucket for the Trojans.

"I thought we were very fortunate to be just down by eight at halftime," Gedeon said. "Knowing that our execution was not where it needed to be."

"We had some pretty poor rotations in the first half where we gave up some lay-ups inside and gave up some uncontested threes and it was very frustrating to see."

Following Dayringer's 3-pointer that tied the game for Ross, he would immediately be hit with a technical foul coming back down the court. Paul sank both free throws to start a five-point run for Findlay that swung the momentum in their favor just before Penn hit a three at the buzzer to cut the lead to two.

Penn's 3-pointer was gave him only eight points for the game, as he finished with a team-best 10 points, but was guarded well all night by Findlay's Grant Birchmeier

"I thought Grant (Birchmeier) did a tremendous job on Penn," Rucki said. "He's a really good player, he can also get to the rim and Grant did a nice job of staying in front of him."

The only points Ross got in the first half were in the paint or on the foul line, as they had 12 points down low and were 9-for-10 at the line. They finished the game 9-for-11 at the line, while the Trojans were 13-of-19.

"We need that good inside-outside game," Gedeon said. "We can't just win it from the free throw line or we can't just win it from the 3-point line. We need to have that balance."

Findlay led 14-11 after one quarter and went a 10-2 run in the final 4:12 of the first half to open its halftime lead. Elbin had 11 points in the opening half, as Findlay shot 10-for-22 in the opening half and 16-for-36 for the game. Ross was 6-of-14 and 15 -for-34 respectively. The Little Giants won the rebounding battle 22-17, but had 21 turnovers to 18 for the Trojans.

"Overall, this was a pretty good performance by us," Rucki said. "We've not played well here (at Ross) and even when we've had really good teams and won here -- we haven't always played well. Tonight we seemed to have a little better flow offensively."

Findlay also came away with a 32-28 win in the JV game. Boston Ballmer had a game-high 14 points for the Trojans, while Dylan Starks had eight points for Ross.
