

GIRLS TENNIS SEASON PREVIEW: SINGLES BATTLE MAKE LADY GIANTS A BETTER TEAM

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Aug 10, 2017 | [Girls Tennis](#)



FREMONT – As the girls’ tennis season gets going, few, if any, teams should be as battle-tested in their singles ranks as Fremont Ross. Or deeper, for that matter. Throughout the preseason, the Lady Giants’ singles depth chart has been in a continuous state of flux, but that’s not necessarily a bad thing. The uncertainty at singles stems from a three-way competition in which no one has been able to make a definitive claim to No. 1, 2, or 3 singles.

Lily Abdoo, Gillian Gallagher, and Olivia Henry have been taking turns in practice this summer, defeating one another and making coach Lisa Wolfe’s job difficult. Still, it’s a good problem to have.

“In my singles lineup, I have to play my best at No. 1, 2, and 3, which, any given day, may switch,” Wolfe said. “They can have challenges throughout the season to get that No. 1 spot so that you may see a continuing rotation at No.1, but it’s going to be legit.”

Gallagher, a junior, played at No. 1 singles last year and finished fifth in the TRAC tournament, while Henry, a senior and last season’s No. 2, also finished fifth in her bracket in the TRAC. Abdoo is making the switch to singles player after playing No. 1 doubles a year ago, where she and Kaity Kelly took fourth in the TRAC.

Playing against each other so frequently, and possessing similar skill levels, the trio are continuously helping one another improve as the season opens.

"I think we've definitely strengthened each other, since we're so close," Gallagher said. "We've played each other so much this season, to see who can beat who, and every day it changes. I was one single last year, and I would love to be again, but I know we're all fighting for that spot."

Abdoo said part of the reason for the back-and-forth is that each player has a specific skill set that requires the others to improve in key areas.

"Gillian is very good with slices," Abdoo said. "Olivia is very consistent; she very rarely ever messes up, which is very annoying when playing against. They're both very good with serves.

"Personally, I like being up at the net, because I was a doubles player," she added. "So we all have different strengths and weaknesses, and usually the matches go on forever."

In addition to the singles lineup being up in the air, so too is the doubles portion of the team. Wolfe said the squad has been experimenting with various personnel groups to decide which combinations give the Lady Giants their best doubles lineup.

"They have to be able to jive together and have to want to play together," Wolfe said. "You may be a great singles player, but not have great doubles knowledge. You have to know how to play doubles."

With so much competition throughout the lineup, Wolfe said the team's overall success this season could hinge on how supportive the girls are of each other, without harboring hard feelings over who was placed where.

Henry, however, doesn't believe such animosities will be an issue.

"You want to be put where you can play," Henry said. "I would never want to play first singles if I couldn't handle the pressure and my opponent was being the better player they are. You need to appreciate where you're put, either first, second or third, because you're playing to your potential."

The tennis team hosts Clyde today at 4:30

Girls tennis

The Lady Giants took on a pair of TRAC foes this week, as well as crosstown rival St. Joseph Central Catholic.



Gillian Gallagher



Lily Abdoo

Tuesday, Ross lost a 3-2 decision to Oregon Clay. The Lady Giants won both doubles matches as Gillian Gallagher and Lily Abdoos rolled in straight sets at No.1 doubles, 6-0, 6-2, while the No. 2 doubles team of Sophia Biggins and Berlin Swaisgood won a three-set thriller, 6-7 (5-7), 7-6 (7-5), 7-5.

On Wednesday, Ross cruised to a 4-1 win over the Crimson Streaks. Swaisgood picked up the win at No. 1 singles, 6-3, 6-0, and Vivyanna Esquivel won by default at third singles.

Gallagher and Abdoos won every game in their No. 1 doubles win, 6-0, 6-0, while Biggins teamed with Alexis Huff for a 6-4, 6-1 win at No. 2 doubles.

Thursday, hosting league power Notre Dame, the Lady Giants suffered a 4-1 defeat, with Gallagher and Abdoos' 7-5, 7-5 win at No. 1 doubles as Ross' lone bright spot for the day.

The Lady Giants' record now stands at 10-4 overall and 3-3 in TRAC. Ross hosts the Michaels Memorial Doubles Invitational on Saturday, beginning at 9 a.m.

Oregon Clay 3, Fremont Ross 2 – Tuesday

No. 1 singles: M. Arquette (OC) def. Lillie Swinehart, 6-0, 6-0

No. 2 singles: T. Gallaher (OC) def. Emma Jahns, 6-1, 6-0

No. 3 singles: K. Arquette (OC) def. Vivyanna Esquivel, 6-3, 6-3

No. 1 doubles: Gillian Gallagher/Lily Abdoos (FR) def. M. Burgess/L. Wells, 6-0, 6-2

No. 2 doubles: Sophia Biggins/Berlin Swaisgood (FR) def. L. Mahler/J. Stringham, 6-7 (5-7), 7-6 (7-5), 7-5

Fremont Ross 4, St. Joseph Central Catholic 1 – Wednesday

No. 1 singles: Berlin Swaisgood (FR) def. Gloria Rhinehart, 6-3, 6-0

No. 2 singles: Olivia Eshleman (SJCC) def. Emma Jahns, 6-2, 6-0

No. 3 singles: Vivyanna Esquivel (FR) wins by default

No. 1 doubles: Gillian Gallagher/Lily Abdoos (FR) def. Erin Borer/Hannah Shell, 6-0, 6-0

No. 2 doubles: Sophia Biggins/Alexis Huff (FR) def. Hannah Haubert/Shayla Steinberger, 6-4, 6-1

Notre Dame Academy 4, Fremont Ross 1 – Thursday

No. 1 singles: C.C. Patton (ND) def. Lillie Swinehart, 6-0, 6-0

No. 2 singles: Olivia Assenmacher (ND) def. Emma Jahns, 6-0, 6-0

No. 3 singles: Julia Loeb (ND) def. Vivyanna Esquivel, 6-1, 6-2

No. 1 doubles: Gillian Gallagher/Lily Abdoos (FR) def. Grace Bennett/Tierney Sturgeon, 7-5, 7-5

No. 2 doubles: Gretchen Smither/Erin Sturgeon (ND) def. Sophia Biggins/Berlin Swaisgood, 6-1, 6-2

Fremont Ross record: 10-4 overall, 3-3 TRAC

TENNIS

Fremont Ross 5, Tiffin Columbian 0

Gillian Gallagher (No. 1 singles), Lily Abdoe (No. 3) and Natalie Brown and Jurni Kidd (No. 2 doubles) each won Monday without dropping a game for Ross.

Olivia Henry (No. 2 singles) and Berlin Swaisgood and Sophia Biggins also won in straight sets for the Little Giants (4-1).

TENNIS

Fremont Ross 4, Bowling Green 1

Gillian Gallagher (No. 1 singles) and Lily Abdoe (No. 3) didn't drop a game for Ross.

Olivia Henry (No. 2) lost one game and Natalie Brown and Jurni Kidd (No. 2 doubles) also won in straight sets for the Little Giants (5-1).

Tennis

Fremont Ross 5, Toledo Whitmer 0

Gillian Gallagher and Lily Abdo (No. 1 doubles) and Jurni Kidd and Sophia Biggins (No. 2) didn't drop a game for Ross.

Olivia Henry (No. 1 singles), Mallory Hutton (No. 2) and Berlin Swaisgood (No. 3) also won in straight sets for the Little Giants (6-1).

SPORTS

HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS

Ross' Wolfe reaches 200 wins against St. Ursula

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Fremont Ross coach Lisa Wolfe reached a career milestone this week by vanquishing a nemesis.

Wolfe earned the 200th victory of her career by topping visiting St. Ursula 3-2 on Tuesday.

"I'm not sure how many people knew," Wolfe said of her proximity to the achievement. "My husband did. I was 192-114 to start the season. I was thinking I can make 200.

"Talk about perfect timing. I can honestly say we have never beaten St. Ursula."

Berlin Swaisgood took the decisive match 7-5, 6-2 at No. 3 singles.

"It's really special," Swaisgood said. "We all look up to her as a person and coach and leader. Being here to see her so happy was great. I'm so glad to spend my birthday with these girls and to beat St. Ursula on my birthday was amazing.

"I didn't know (the match was key). I was focusing on my court. I wanted to finish it in the second set. My serves were good. I stayed positive."

Ross won eight of its first nine matches, including the first three in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

"The girls are all about each other," Wolfe said. "They get the team concept. It takes three out of five and whatever position I put them in, it's for the good of the team."

Swaisgood is a varsity newcomer. She requested the third-singles slot Tuesday.

"She asked for the spot," Wolfe said. "She said she was feeling it. Berlin played a great match."

Lily Abdo, Olivia Henry and Mallory Hutton each has only one loss this season for Ross. Hutton and Henry fell Tuesday.

Gillian Gallagher and Natalie Brown have two losses apiece for the Little Giants. Gallagher and Abdo (No. 1) and Brown and Sophia Biggins (No. 2) won in straight sets at doubles Tuesday.

"They worked hard in the offseason," Wolfe said. "You can't just pick up the racket August 1st and compete with St. Ursula.

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MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Fremont Ross coach Lisa Wolfe earned the 200th victory of her career Tuesday against St. Ursula.

Ross

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The majority of the varsity kids played all winter. You have to keep a racket in your hands to get better.

“I’m so impressed with their mental game. I’ve seen their talent. They practice hard. When they get on the court, I like to call it that game face. You can’t tell if they’re winning or losing and they’re not defeating themselves.”

Swaigood intended to earn a varsity role this season and loves being part of the group.

“Last year, I was strictly JV,” she said. “This summer, I decided that’s not where I wanted to be. I went to lessons and clinics and worked hard. St. Ursula is one of the best teams we play and they’ve always beat us in the past.

“We all are really close. We’re best friends. We’re like a family.”

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ROUNDUP

Ross topples Findlay on courts

STAFF REPORT

Tennis

Fremont Ross 5, Findlay 0

Olivia Henry (No. 1), Gillian Gallagher (No. 2) and Lily Abdoon won in straight sets at singles for Ross. Gallagher didn't drop a game.

Natalie Brown and Sophia Biggins won in two sets at No. 2 doubles and Berlin Swaisgood and Mallory Hutton won in three sets at No. 1 for the Little Giants (10-1, 4-0).

Clay 3, Fremont Ross 2

Lily Abdo and Gillian Gallagher (No. 1 doubles) won in straight sets for Ross.

Jurni Kidd and Sophia Biggins won in three for the Little Giants (10-2, 4-1).

Tennis

Fremont Ross 3, Sandusky 2: Gillian Gallagher (No. 1) and Olivia Henry (No. 2) dropped only two games apiece at singles for Ross.

Lily Abdo won by default after taking the first nine games at No. 3 for the Little Giants (12-3).

Fremont Ross 5, Huron 0: Mallory Hutton (No. 1), Berlin Swaisgood (No. 2) and Sophia Biggins won in straight sets at singles for Ross.

Olivia Henry and Natalie Brown (No. 2) won in straight sets and Gillian Gallagher and Lily Abdoo won in three at doubles for the Little Giants (13-4).

Fremont Ross 4, Port Clinton 1

Gillian Gallagher (No. 1), Olivia Henry (No. 2) and Mallory Hutton won in straight sets at singles for Ross.

Natalie Brown and Jurni Kidd (No. 2) also won in two sets at doubles for the Little Giants.

Lauren Steyer and Paige Steyer won in straight sets at No. 1 doubles for Port Clinton (9-9, 8-5).