

2021 Season Review

SPORTS



Adam Hrynciw hauls in a catch for a two-point conversion to give Ross a 37-36 victory over Tiffin Columbian. DOUG HISE

Ross' Hrynciw breaks out with huge catch

Matthew Horn
Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Anthony Vann and Bryson Hammer quickly established themselves as passing targets for Fremont Ross quarterback Kaden Holmes.

Junior Adam Hrynciw was steady, but he was overlooked at times because of his classmates, along with Spencer Price last season. There's no overlooking a game-winning conversion catch Friday in a 37-36 victory over Tiffin Columbian.

Hrynciw was always confident he'd produce when called on. He intends to follow his break-out performance with more of the same.

Ross scored the first 14 points Friday, before allowing the next 36.

"We believe," Little Giants coach Chad Long said. "This is a good group who believe in what we're doing and each other and the program. We have a

lot of experience. They never quit and they never gave up being a Little Giant.

"The last month, we've had alumni here talking about what it means to be a Little Giant. They're old enough to understand they're playing for alumni. No matter how bad things are, we still have a chance if we have the football last."

Ross fell to Toledo St. John's and Toledo St. Francis by three points each in consecutive weeks, despite scoring 88 combined points. St. John's quarterback Brady Lichtenberg led his team to a comeback win in Fremont, which likely cost Holmes first-team status in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

"He has experience now," Long said. "He's poised. He's an upper-classman now and he made plays when we needed."

The message is always the same for Ross. Vann waves it proudly.

"Fremont against the world," Long said. "It's the same. We carry that flag.

We always have our backs to the wall. We always have to prove ourselves. We lost to St. John's and St. Francis last year. We won a huge game Friday against a great program."

Labronze Barnett caught a 19-yard touchdown pass to set up Hrynciw's conversion catch with no time on the clock. Hrynciw's conversion came on a broken play as Holmes rolled out the opposite way of the call.

Vann missed the play because of extreme fatigue from the heat.

"We don't run two-point plays like those twice a week to not put it to use," Long said.

Long knew Ross would go for two before the final drive. Before the game even.

Hayden Lehmann passed for 400 yards and lost to Findlay after the Little Giants tied the game to force overtime.

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Hrynciw

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Lehmann rushed for a conversion score as Ross beat Findlay 43-42 at home in 2018.

"I like to dictate the fate of our outcome," Long said. "We lost in overtime because we kicked it. You could do this and that could happen. All the unknowns. Why? We had the momentum. It was what we needed to do."

Hrynciw told Holmes he'd be ready off script. He's never made a bigger play.

"I don't think I have, yet, but of course there's more plays to come," he said. "The play wasn't supposed to go to me. I trust my teammates. A two-point conversion catch to win a game is something else. As a kid, you dream of a game-winning catch with no time left."

"When it's a reality it's amazing."

Hrynciw stepped up against St. Francis and in a win over Anthony Wayne as a sophomore. He carved in 26 catches, but he wanted to put himself in position to have more impact as a junior.

"In the offseason I worked with my

teammates," he said. "I got stronger and we developed chemistry. None of it was alone. We grow as a team. My teammates are great athletes. I moved from outside to the slot."

"Whatever got me on the field for varsity. We want to win bad. My individual goals are set aside for the team. I love my team. We want to win for each other."

Which does nothing to diminish Hrynciw's hunger.

"Chewy's the most consistent player we have on the team," Long said. "He has a work ethic no one can match. The kid comes to work every day and he knows the offense. He's quiet, but he did many things that were unnoticed with [the other three receivers]."

"What he's doing is not a surprise. It's more what's expected. He's good and he has the intangibles. He was overlooked."

Ross erased a 22-point deficit and scored 23 straight points of its own. It had a defensive score and kickoff return for a touchdown called back by penalty.

"The score doesn't reflect how well we played," Long said. "But we fumbled [leading to a score]. They recovered a kickoff. It was 14-0. You have to finish teams off. We need more consistency."

However, resilience is what we got.

"Everyone in Northwest Ohio knows we have a high-powered offense and you can't count us out."

Holmes rushed in from 18 yards for a 36-22 deficit in the fourth quarter. Elijah Simms caught a 14-yard touchdown for a 36-29 margin with 5:02 remaining.

"If you're down 22, you might think the game's over," Hrynciw said. "We just played. The defense got some stops and we scored a couple times. The momentum built and we realized we were going to do this."

Holmes passed for 300 yards and rushed for 133 on the ground. He had two short scoring runs as the Little Giants led 14-0 early in the second quarter.

Still, Holmes failed to get his feet set sprinting out and short-armed a few throws.

"He was off, believe it or not," Long said. "He missed some throws uncharacteristically. There were quite a few drops. It wasn't his best game throwing, but he can kill you with his legs. When it came crunch time, he performed."

"He played within the system. These kids want to be the best team in Fremont history. We'll take any win, but

they're not satisfied. We need consistent play all four quarters."

Hrynciw and Simms each dropped a touchdown. Holmes failed to set his feet and short-armed a few throws.

"He missed a touchdown, which is very uncommon for him to drop anything," Long said. "We'll stay the grind and continue doing what we do. He's our most consistent receiver, which says a lot with the kids on the team."

"He'll sacrifice his body and do anything you ask. At any given time, you step up and make a play. Everybody knows each game it could be different. Simms made a heck of a catch. He had a drop. Kids will step up and make plays when needed."

Ross wants to win the TRAC and collect wins in the postseason.

"We're ready," Hrynciw said. "We're greedy. We've had a lot taken from us. The three-point losses to St. John's and St. Francis. The 1-9 season. We need something. We want more. We'll give it our all. We'll take it week by week and go win."

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Ross wants to send message with win over Sandusky

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There was a buzz surrounding Fremont Ross in 2018, before it lost its opener to Springfield and finished with five wins.

The Little Giants are again generating talk of big potential. It's only been two weeks, but momentum is real.

Sandusky (2-0), which has five straight wins against Ross, visits Friday. The Little Giants lost the matchup by a one-possession margin in three of the losses, including a 36-30 setback last year.

"It's time to end it," Ross coach Chad Long said of the stretch. "It's been a great rivalry for 100-some years. The kids know the game is played for your city. Bragging rights. This whole year is different. With Charles Woodson coming back, they don't want to let him down.

"It's week to week. This is another one keeping us from a championship. The kids want that for Fremont."

Ross was 5-6 during the pandemic season. It was arguably a fantastic year, with wins over Anthony Wayne and Toledo Whitmer.

It scored plenty of points and had a chance to beat Toledo St. John's and Toledo St. Francis. It was a great template to learn important lessons as a team.

"The buzz was this summer," Long said. "We're young. We have the best talent in Northwest Ohio at the skill positions. We're an exciting team to watch. When you have the best quarterback in Ohio, anything can happen."

Jeffery Barnett and Russ Yeast were talented athletes. The group is even more impressive as a whole this season.

"This is the most complete team we've had in nine years," Long said. "We have playmakers all over the field on offense and defense. It's the biggest line we've had. The biggest difference is

their determination and they're good practice players.

"It's a vibe. There's a belief and they work hard. It's a mindset. For the team. It's different than any other year I've been at Fremont."

Bryson Hammer caught two touchdown passes from Kaden Holmes and Holmes caught a scoring pass from Anthony Vann as Ross beat Toledo Start 34-6 last week. Labronze Barnett added a touchdown on the ground.

Johan Silva kicked a 45-yard field goal that had about 10 extra yards under it and another from 35. Vann had three catches negated by penalty that would have been touchdowns.

"We were able to do a little of everything," Long said. "The defense played well, getting pressure. We started with a safety. The defensive line controlled the line. We did what we wanted to do on offense."

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Football

Continued from Page 1B

Holmes rushed for three scores and tossed two touchdown passes in a 37-36 win over Tiffin Columbian to open the season.

Ross led 14-0, before scoring 23 straight points in Week 1. It led 31-0 last week.

“There’s a buzz,” Long said. “Columbian will be one of the best three teams we’ll face. The kids know not to get a big head. The focus is on getting better each week.”



Fremont Ross Athletics

September 4, 2021 · 🌐

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Vann's the Man in Fremont Ross' 47-18 win over Sandusky. Vann collected 5 passes for 138 yards and a touchdown. Defensively Vann did his best Charles Woodson imitation with two interceptions.

<https://www.littlegiantathletics.com/.../vann-is-the-man.../>

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Ross coach Chad Long. MATTHEW HORN

Woodson on sideline for Ross victory

Matthew Horn
Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

There were finally indications of a return to normalcy, although the pandemic is obviously far from over.

On any night, however, Friday was far from normal for Fremont Ross.

A sellout crowd saw a statue unveiled for alum Charles Woodson, who is now in the Professional Football Hall of Fame.

September 3 was designated Charles Woodson Day by the mayor.

Then, the Little Giants snapped a five-game losing skid to Sandusky with a 47-18 victory. They remained unbeaten, while overcoming a blunder that characterized the setbacks.

"When you know you have a crowd like that, that shows up proud of Fremont — to have the Goat back — we had to win," Ross coach Chad Long said.

Anthony Vann caught a 46-yard touchdown pass from Kaden Holmes for

an early advantage. The Little Giants, however, allowed Sandusky to return a kickoff 96 yards for its second lead.

"I'm home," Woodson said. "It feels good to be home. Being here in Fremont, I remember the times I was able to walk out on this field in front of the hometown fans and play this wonderful game. Watching this younger generation play the game is the highlight for me."

Unlike years past, it was not a harbinger. Holmes busted a scoring run 70 yards up the sideline and Adam Hrynciw caught a 31-yard touchdown for a 21-12 lead early in the second quarter.

"Chewy," Holmes said of the top highlight in a vast reel. "I didn't realize he was going to get it. He got underneath it and made the play."

The Little Giants stuffed Sandusky on three straight goal-to-go snaps, including a tackle for a 2-yard loss from Labronze Barnett. Elijah Simms then collected a blocked field goal and returned it to the Blue Streaks' 45.

Hrynciw capped the ensuing drive with a 36-yard touchdown reception for a 28-12 margin at the half.

"They did it this way, pulling, preparing all week," Long said. "We over-shifted and they drove on us. We made an adjustment and dominated in the trenches."

Bryson Hammer added a 46-yard catch and run touchdown, before Holmes scored twice on the ground. Simms had a third-down catch to extend one of the drives.

"This is our rival," Holmes said. "It's the first time beating our rival in five years."

It felt like a time capsule in more ways than one.

"It was different because so many people doubt you," Vann said. "More than ever, the city is on our side. In middle school, I watched Sandusky beat Fremont. This is not normal."

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Vs Oregon Clay preview

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Fremont Ross coach Chad Long is thrilled to have a normal schedule this season.

He's still apprehensive when it comes to the pandemic. And a typical schedule means all seven opponents from the always vaunted Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

Bring it on.

"It's still scary with everything going on," he said. "We're proactive. We'll wear masks. We can't afford to miss games. At school is when it's scary. Our kids have invested a lot of time and it's scary to know one slip can cost the kids."

"We'll do everything in our power to make sure the kids can play. We're laser focused. We have a lot to prove. They want to be the best team to ever come out of Fremont."

Ross played 11 games last season, winning five. It won three games in the TRAC and didn't play Toledo Central Catholic.

Long isn't scrambling to schedule unfamiliar opponents. Things feel rather comfortable.

"I can't tell you the last time we were 3-0 into conference games," Long said. "There's excitement. Our kids are modest. Level headed. We're ready for anything. We won't overlook anybody. We've got some kids dinged up."

"We go week to week and we don't look ahead. Take care of our bodies, stay humble and prepare for the week. That's happening. We gave them Saturday off but they were here for treatment. In the past, maybe they're not here."

"It's new."

Clay (2-1) visits Ross to open conference play Friday. The Little Giants play host to Toledo St. Francis, before traveling to Findlay.

It's much more favorable than diving right into the TRAC, like last year. Ross beat Clay 35-21 in Week 1.

"The start is the best we could have, knowing the teams we're facing," Long said. "It sets us up with the best situation. We're in there as a contender. Us, Findlay and Central. It's ugly. Whitmer is right there with that running back [Steven McCoy] from St. Francis."

Clay has speed in running back Jordan Pettaway.

"We have to figure them out," Long said. "He hurt us last year. The quarterback [Luke Kolinski] too."

Long is mostly pleased with his team's ability to limit the run through three weeks.

"Our front seven, there hasn't been much of a run game," he said. "Clay likes to run. I'm happy with the defense as a whole. Everyone is doing their job. Our defense has played sound. We've moved guys around to fit us each game and it's been good."

Ross played more than 90 snaps on defense in a 37-36 victory over Tiffin Columbian. It allowed only six points against Toledo Start.

The unit struggled early but regrouped in a 47-18 win over Sandusky.

Long worried about the loss of graduated linebacker Carson Clark for the defense. He was reassured by the return of Elijah Simms and Kalijah Alejandro in the secondary.

"We've had a couple breakdowns in coverage," Long said. "Our front seven is better than we thought. We've eliminated the run. We thought our defensive backs would be a strength. They're both returning starters. They'll bounce back and accept the challenge."

"We can't afford to give up big plays in big games. They'll be fine."

Sandusky was a significant victory for Ross as it rose to the scenario and circumstances. Ross lost five straight games to the Blue Streaks and previous seasons were derailed by early setbacks.

"It was a signature victory for all of us, current and past," Long said of the program. "We won in pretty dominant

fashion. It all starts with Kaden Holmes. His signature win was when he showed Columbian, 'Hey, I'm still here and I've got the ball last.'

"Last week, he stepped up his play. He was accurate. He used his legs. That's the thing, he's such an awesome dual-threat quarterback you aren't going to find around. It sucks with COVID. He was doing this last year, not everyone got to see."

"They heard."

Legendary alum Charles Woodson saw for himself Friday on the sideline.

"He saw a lot in Kaden," Long said. "We're lucky to have him. He's tough. Everything is predicated off Kaden. With the receivers, every game somebody steps up."

The offensive line has been a bright spot for Ross.

"We established the run and pounded it on them," Long said. "We have a lot of size. A lot of mass. Pass protect, our guys are good at that. Can we run the ball? We'll have a bad matchup with the pass, athletes on athletes or a pass rush."

"We need to establish the run. We feel comfortable we can run the ball, are we going to. Our reliable thing has been passing, but we're getting better, not just with Kaden, but our running backs. Holmes runs for 100 yards."

"He's our quarterback. What about our running backs? All of our kids gained confidence. We ran the ball."

Kelandre Jones joined the party against Sandusky. He did most of the work before Holmes capped a scoring drive and finished with 91 yards on 14 carries.

"We were waiting for Kelandre to get going," Long said. "He ran timid early. He found his groove and he's gaining confidence. That happens with young players. He got more snaps in the postseason than he did through the year."

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“Labronze [Barnett] is special to us but he does it differently. [Jones is a] power back. He ran hard. That’s what he brings to the table. He can wear you out.”

Long will be thrilled if that helps keep Holmes healthy and the schedule becomes abnormal for the postseason.

The rest of the schedule for Week 4 follows:

“THE ARM” AND HAMMER SEND THE EAGLES FLYING

by [Bill Bray](#) | Sep 11, 2021 | [Featured News](#), [Football](#)



By Bill Bray

FREMONT – Don Paul Stadium did not quite have the overflowing crowd it had a week ago to honor Charles Woodson, but it certainly had the overflowing scoreboard in favor of Fremont Ross 48-14.

The sensational offense and tremendous defense Ross has displayed the last three weeks have led the Little Giants to their first 4-0 start since 2006.

This was the 30th meeting between the two schools, dating back to 1982. Ross holds a commanding 22-8 series lead. Fremont Ross' biggest win over Clay came in 1994 when the Little Giants, behind the seven-touchdown performance by Charles Woodson, gave Ross a 72-0 win.

Though the score was not quite as lopsided as that night, the performance by Kaden "The Arm" Holmes was on par with Woodson's display. The junior signal caller hurled six touchdown passes. He finished the game with 18 completions on 23 attempts for 274 yards and six scores.

The receiver getting most of Holmes' attention was junior Bryson Hammer, who hauled in eight catches for 144 yards and two scores.

The touchdown parade began with 8:44 remaining in the opening quarter when Holmes found Anthony Vann for a one-yard touchdown pass. The hits just kept on coming. With 2:55 left in the first, Holmes again threw a short pass to Kalijah Alejandro. Silver was good on his first two attempts, and Ross held a 14-0 lead to end the opening stanza.

The Little Giants, while holding the Eagles to one first down in the first half of play, erupted with 34 points scored in the second quarter. Four of the five Ross scores came from the arm of Holmes. Joining the hit parade was Adam Hrynciw, who gathered in two of the Holmes aerials. One from 29 yards at the 11:43 mark

and the other from 24 yards out with 10:39 left in the first half. Bryson Hammer added two more touchdown catches to the stat sheet for Ross. His first reception was good for 22 yards, and his second scoring catch covered 11 yards. The only score for Ross not involving Holmes was on an 11-yard touchdown run by Malakhi Griffin at the 9:10 mark of the second quarter. Johan Silver made six of seven extra points, and the half ended with Ross up 48-0.

With wholesale changes for Ross in the second half, Oregon Clay got on the board. The Eagles' first score came when Donovan Coughlin picked up a Griffin fumble at the 10:35 mark of the third quarter and galloped 45 yards for the score. Clay's second "gimme" touchdown came with 9:11 left in the game with a two-yard run from Logan Werner. Clay's Aiden Dickens made both PAT kicks to wrap up the scoring.

The Little Giant defense was stellar once again. Oregon Clay was held to 150 total yards of offense—47 yards through the air and 103 yards on the ground. Fremont's London Johnson and Jabari Heidelberg were bottling up Clay's running game all night, and linebackers Dean Hetrick and Brayden Guhn had another solid performance for the Ross defense.





Toledo St. Francis Preview.

Matthew Horn

Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Brady Lichtenberg (Toledo St. John's) and Steven McCoy (Toledo St. Francis) helped their respective teams earn three-point victories over Fremont Ross in consecutive games in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference last season.

Lichtenberg continues his career at Cincinnati and McCoy transferred to Toledo Whitmer in the TRAC. Ross would entertain the same level of confidence regardless of their locations as St. Francis visits this week.

Still, the Little Giants' core was comprised of several sophomores last year. The circumstances exemplify the cyclical nature of high school football, as well as the learning curve.

Ross continues on the up slope. It hopes last year's setbacks are the type teams often need to go through to reach their biggest goals.

You do what it takes to avoid a taste that sour again. The Little Giants recovered to beat Tiffin Columbian 37-36 in a

nonconference matchup to open the season.

Different Ross.

"They've learned that youth versus experience, experience wins out and finishes games," Little Giants coach Chad Long said. "Now, we're the experienced team and we're winning games after three years playing together."

"We're going to have some bumpy hills. We'll judge that character later on. It didn't surprise me they came back. They won't quit."

Kaden Holmes tossed four touchdowns and ran for two in the Little Giants' 45-42 setback to St. John's. Ross led 35-16, but Lichtenberg rushed in with the go-ahead touchdown with 1:10 left.

Lichtenberg was first-team All-TRAC over Holmes.

"In the past, it was Lichtenberg," Long said. "Kaden outplayed him, but made some errors down the stretch and Lichtenberg used his experience to win games. Now, we're the experienced group and we've got them for two years."

St. John's intercepted a pass in the

end zone and Ross' final possession stalled just inside Titans territory.

"We'd sputtered in the red zone at times," Long said. "I can't remember the last time we got stopped in the red zone."

Holmes threw for 517 yards and six touchdowns in Ross' 49-46 loss to St. Francis the next week.

"It became an arm contest, with him slinging it all over the place," Long said. "[St. Francis] isn't the same team. They don't have the best running back in the conference any more. St. Francis ran the ball all over us and we passed all over them."

"It was a track meet. Whoever had the ball last was going to win."

Ross moved the ball, but lost a fumble in St. Francis territory to seal the loss.

St. Francis rushed for 19 yards on 24 tries, including 47 yards in a 21-14 victory over Clyde this season. Denim Truss was 20 for 35 passing for 295 yards.

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Football

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Holmes tossed 15 touchdowns, rushed for five and caught another to diversify his four-game portfolio this season.

"Efficiency is the best way to explain it," Long said. "He's running the offense like a fine-oiled machine with composure. He's not pressing to make plays, he's efficient doing it. That's why he sits with 21 touchdowns after four games."

"Kaden knows football. He can do everything."

Ross plays Findlay, St. John's and Lima Senior on the road after St. Francis. It returns home for always-in-the-up-cycle Toledo Central Catholic and finishes the regular season at Whitmer.

They'll see a different Ross on three levels.

"Consistency, expectations and habits," Long said. "We're playing consistently pretty good defense. We expect very good offense. And we're practicing like a winning program. Not a 5-5 program. We're doing things winning programs do."

"It's muscle memory. Our focus and demeanor. They're laser focused. They listen for the details. They expect to be great. They're not going in with a chip on their shoulder, it's confidence. They're doing it at practice and it carries to games."

They utilize whatever resources they can find.

"Film and practice," Long said. "They're film gurus. They pick out things [opponents are] doing or things they're in. They call it out. They read scouting reports. They're invested. I'm not surprised they're 4-0."

Gibsonburg also remains unbeaten. Clyde and Bellevue each won its last three games.

Sandusky Bay Conference Lake and Bay Division teams complete nonconference play this week.

The Week 5 schedule follows:

St. Francis (2-2) at Ross (4-0)

Juniors Bryson Hammer and Anthony Vann had more than 150 yards receiving apiece and Adam Hrynciw consistently moved the chains in the matchup last season. Vann delivered a pancake block and stayed with it to eliminate two more defenders as Hammer ran for a touchdown after a catch last week against Oregon Clay. The defense couldn't get a stop when it must, although Mason Villareal and Brayden



Ross' Bryson Hammer runs with a touchdown catch. MATTHEW HORN

Guhn were pressed into duty at line-backer and never relinquished the roles. St. Francis has yet to score more than 21 points in a game. Ross scored at least 34 points each week. St. Francis plays a tough schedule, including a 36-6 loss to Whitmer last week.

Clyde (3-1) at Toledo Scott (4-0)

Clyde scored at least 29 points and allowed no more than 14 in three straight wins. Scott hasn't scored more than 34 points or allowed more than 22.

Northwood (1-1) at Gibsonburg (4-0)

Gibsonburg hasn't allowed more than 16 points and scored more than 60 twice. Northwood's last two games were canceled because of coronavirus protocol. The Golden Bears lost the matchup 42-22 to start the season last year.

Port Clinton (3-1) at Toledo Rogers (1-2)

Port Clinton rebounded from a 21-20 loss with a 61-12 victory over Toledo Bowsher last week. Port Clinton hasn't allowed more than 21 points the last two weeks. It scored 49 points in a win over Bellevue. Rogers had a game canceled because of coronavirus protocol.

Bowsher (0-4) at Oak Harbor (2-2)

Oak Harbor scored at least 27 points in three games. Its wins are shutouts. Bowsher scored its only 12 points of the season last week and allowed at least 30 points in each game. Oak Harbor responded to a 36-27 setback to Rossford with a 41-0 shutout of Toledo Woodward last week.

Toledo Start (0-4) at Bellevue (3-1)

Bellevue scored at least 44 points in three games. Start hasn't scored more than 18 points. It allowed at least 34 points three times. It lost to Ross, Clyde and St. Francis by two. Bellevue's Will Hager has explosive scores in each game, including rushing, receiving and special teams.

Tiffin Calvert (1-3) at St. Joseph Central Catholic (0-2), Saturday

SJCC canceled games the last two weeks because of coronavirus protocol. It returns with an SBC River Division matchup. Calvert scored no more than 19 points in its losses and allowed at least 28 points each week. SJCC lost the matchup 54-0 in Week 2 last year.

Lake (1-3) at Woodmore (0-4)

Woodmore has yet to score and allowed at least 34 points each week. Woodmore lost the matchup 37-0 last year.

Toronto (2-2) at Lakota (2-2)

Both teams try to avoid a two-game losing streak. Lakota allowed 20 points or fewer three times. It scored no more than 14 in its losses.

Eastwood (4-0) at Genoa (2-2)

Eastwood scored at least 42 points in each game and allowed no more than 19. Genoa allowed no more than 14 points in three games, but it scored no more than 14 in three games as well. Genoa didn't play Eastwood last season because of pandemic scheduling.

Margaretta (0-4) at Hopewell-Loudon (4-0)

Margaretta scored at least 28 points in three games, including an overtime setback to Ottawa Hills last week. The Polar Bears allowed at least 30 points each game. Hopewell-Loudon has yet to allow more than 16 points. Margaretta finally starts play in the SBC River Division. Margaretta lost the matchup 42-21 last season.

Danbury at St. Mary Central Catholic (eight man), Saturday

Danbury won the matchup twice last season as it captured the inaugural Northern 8 Football Conference crown. mhorn@gannett.com
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IT'S THE LITTLE GIANTS BY A FINGER TIP 41-38

by [Bill Bray](#) | Sep 18, 2021 | [Featured News](#), [Football](#)



By Bill Bray

FREMONT – In another ‘instant classic’, the Fremont Ross Little Giants improved their winning streak to 5-0 with a 41-38 TRAC win over Toledo St. Francis. Fremont Ross (5-0, 2-0) broke the deadlock on the scoreboard with 5:54 remaining in the opening quarter with a 24-yard Johan Silver field goal to go ahead 3-0.

Before the end of the quarter, Toledo St. Francis took the lead back at 7-3 with a Denim Truss pass to Myron Conner covering 38 yards. Travis Kenner tacked on the PAT.

After Fremont’s offense was stymied, the Knights took advantage using their top receiver of the night, Trey Talboo. The talented receiver ended the night with 18 receptions and 311 yards, along with four scores. On his first touchdown catch, he hauled in a 43-yard strike from Truss with 11:47 remaining in the first half to put St. Francis up 14-3. Just over a minute later, the Little Giants answered back with a 47-yard strike from Kaden Holmes to Adam Hrynciw at the 10:09 mark. Silver added the extra point, and Ross closed the gap to 14-10.

With St. Francis in control and driving in the next series of downs, a Truss pass intended for Conner was picked off by Elijah Simms, and the Little Giant galloped all the way into the St Francis endzone to give Ross the lead back at 17-14 at the 6:02 mark of the quarter. Silver added the extra point.

The Little Giant defense rose to the occasion after a timeout and some words from coach Chad Long. The offense, however, stalled, and Long called on his golden-toed senior, Johan Silver, to boot a 41-yard field goal. Silver did not disappoint his coach as he gave Ross a 20-14 lead with 2:07 remaining in the half.

St. Francis would answer back with two more scores before the half. At the 1:49 mark, it was Talboo again on the receiving end. This time, the touchdown play covered 79 yards, and Kenner added the extra point to put the Knights up 21-20. The Knights ended the half with no time left on the clock as Kenner was good on a 42-yard field goal. The teams went into the locker room with St. Francis up 24-20.

The second half started slowly as there was no scoring until the 4:27 mark of the third quarter, when, who else, Talboo caught a 35-yard touchdown. Kenner's kick gave St. Francis their most significant lead of the night at 31-20. "It was a frustrating game at times," Long said. "Hats off to them, they had a great game plan. A lot of different things that we have never seen. We were able to adjust, and we were lucky to come away with this win because we almost lost this one." Ross had shown in previous games this season that they had the 'never say die' attitude, and it showed again in the third quarter. With 2:13 left in the quarter, Holmes threw a bomb intended for Adam Hrynciw. Had Hrynciw's fingers been shorter, the pass would have dropped incomplete, but fortunately for the talented junior receiver, they were not, and he held on to the ball and completed a 67-yard pass play that put the Little Giants right back in the contest at 31-27 with Silver's PAT. "That was an amazing catch," Long said. "We thought it was going to be overthrown and we saw 'Ciwie' give it all he had. He had to play both ways for us tonight, especially since we went to the nickel defense." "We say that these kids step up when they need to, and that is just one of those things with Ciwie. He's Mr. Clutch. He steps up a lot of times, and he did a fabulous job tonight."

Moving to the fourth period, Ross, at the 10:03 mark, scored with another terrific pass from Holmes to Bryson Hammer. This pass covered 41 yards. Silver again was good on his PAT, and Fremont had the lead at 34-31.

The icing on the game's cake came on a 49-yard sprint by Holmes with 5:22 remaining. Silver again was good on the PAT and Ross completed a run of 21 unanswered points.

To St Francis' credit, they had one more touchdown up their sleeves, and again it was Fremont's nemesis of the game, Talboo. He caught his fourth touchdown pass of the night. Kenner's kick was good, and with 3:03 remaining, the Knights closed the gap to 41-38.

With possession of the ball, Ross was driving and on a fourth-down pass, junior Mason Villareal, who was primarily used on defense on the night, caught the pass and broke a tackle to gain the first down, helping Ross secure the TRAC win. Villareal, a linebacker 99 percent of the time, was the leading tackler for the Little Giants. He finished the night with 7.5 tackles, two solos, and 11 assists. "That kid plays with a lot of heart. Long said of Villareal. "It was just a waggle, but we needed that first down badly to secure the win, and I didn't think he was going to get it. He broke the tackle. He's a hard-working kid, and he deserves everything. That may be the biggest play of the night because then we didn't have to worry about going out and defending Talboo."

Statistically, the Knights' Trey Talboo stole the show at receiver. His receiving helped Denim Truss complete 29 of 42 passes for 422 yards, five touchdowns, and one interception.

For Ross, Kaden Holmes completed 17 of 26 passes for 332 yards with three touchdowns and two interceptions. Holmes was also the leading ball carrier again for Ross with 120 yards on 11 carries and a touchdown. Bryson Hammer and Adam Hrynciw were both over the century mark in receiving. Hammer led the way with 149 yards on nine receptions and a touchdown. Hrynciw had two catches covering 114 yards and two scores.

The other takeaway from this game was the fact that fans saw what are probably two of the best kickers in Northwest Ohio. Johan Silver for Fremont Ross had two clutch field goals. His first was from 24 yards out, and his second was from 41 yards out. St Francis' Travis Kenner also booted a 42-yard field goal. The kickers combined for 19 of the 79 points scored.

Next up, Fremont Ross will invade Donnell Stadium in Findlay on Friday as the two rivals go head-to-head in a key TRAC ball game starting at 7 pm.









Findlay preview article.

Matthew Horn

Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

You might think Fremont Ross coach Chad Long has myriad concerns this week.

The Little Giants won each of their five games. This is obviously a positive development, but you don't want kids to enter the next game assuming it's won with misplaced confidence.

You want the train to keep rolling, but you constantly have to reset a bit.

Ross travels Friday to Findlay (2-3, 0-2) for a matchup in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference. Findlay beat the Little Giants 31-18 last season.

It's an emotional game for both teams based on want-to. Any season.

Plus, Findlay is wounded. It scored six combined points in setbacks to Toledo Central Catholic and Toledo Whitmer to start play in the TRAC.

Long respects Findlay. He's also not worried about any of the above.

"We don't have to say much," Long said. "These kids carry themselves. Kaden Holmes picks up the footballs after practice. Eddie and I have been there. We know what it looks like. They have to stay humble."

"After Saturday film, we're done with that team and it's on to the next. It doesn't take much. They're not looking ahead. They're unselfish. They don't

care about the glory. They're team players."

Long helped Clyde win a state championship as a junior safety in 1995. The Fliers were runners-up the previous year.

Offensive coordinator Eddie Baptista was quarterback for Bellevue's state semifinal in 1996.

They have a different group this season when it comes to talent and mentality, even if the core's been the same for a few years. There hasn't been much to fret about.

"We circled it because it's Week 6," Long said. "This is the only team stopping us from 6-0 and our kids don't like you and you don't like us, and that's OK."

This whole year is about respect. Getting our respect.

"These guys are in the van. We're packing the bus and we're on the road. This is our bus trip gaining our respect for all the boys in Fremont, current and past."

The Trojans beat Anthony Wayne and Bowling Green. It lost to Perrysburg.

"They've played a tough five-game schedule," Long said. "Eleven kids. Give us your best. St. Francis did everything they could. They gave us their best. They threw heavy haymakers. We're going to take big punches from big dudes."

"We'll determine our performance."

See FOOTBALL, Page 3B

Football

Continued from Page 1

We play well or we'll come away with a loss if we don't."

Left tackle Luke Montgomery protects his younger brother, Ryan Montgomery, behind center.

"Findlay will be the biggest line we'll see," Long said. "They've got 6-9, 350 and 6-8, 325. They're huge up front. It's the same line as last year. They'll try running the ball. The [Ben] Ireland receiver is the fastest kid in the conference.

"The freshman quarterback has four offers. Michigan. Tennessee. The other Montgomery has every offer in the country. Alabama. Ohio State. You name it, he has it. Can our speed beat their size up front and can the secondary not give up a big play?

"That's the question."

While dutifully behaving like an underclassman, Holmes continues to put on a show. He has 1,393 yards and 17 touchdowns passing.

He has 473 yards and seven touchdowns on 58 carries.

He completed 17 of 26 passes for 332 yards and three touchdowns against St. Francis. He rushed 11 times for 120 yards, including a 49 yard touchdown to take control.

"He's a kid that just makes plays," Long said. "Smooth. Composed."

Ross wants to capture the first TRAC championship in program history.

"These guys hold themselves to high expectations," Long said. "Winning is everything. We haven't yelled about practice habits. We've been preaching

for years, practice how you play. We're getting that. Even the scout teams.

"Why not us? Why not now? It's our turn. Just like Tiffin [Columbian]. Just like Sandusky. Fremont against the world. This is our time."

The rest of the games for Week 6 follow:

Gibsonburg (5-0, 1-0) at Lakota (3-2, 0-1)

Gibsonburg scored at least 42 points in four games and hasn't allowed more than 18. Lakota scored at least 42 points in its wins and no more than 14 in its losses. Gibsonburg won 41-34 last season.

Perkins (4-1) at Clyde (4-1)

Clyde plays its first game in the Sandusky Bay Conference Lake Division. It won its last four games. The Fliers scored 29 points or more in their four wins and allowed no more than 21 points in any game. Collin Nemitz has 937 yards and 11 touchdowns on 130 carries, with six fumbles. Logan Lesch completed 80 of 107 passes for 1,038 yards and 16 touchdowns, with seven interceptions for Perkins. Drake Venerucci has six touchdown catches. Perkins beat Port Clinton and Huron. Clyde won 41-20 last season.

Edison (2-3) at Port Clinton (4-1)

Port Clinton begins play in the SBC Bay Division. It's always a challenge to prepare for the Chargers' triple-option offense because it's likely the only time you'll see it and you have to do things differently to stop it. Port Clinton scored

FINDLAY BOTTLES UP GIANTS 34-14

by Bill Bray | Sep 25, 2021 | Football



By Bill Bray

FINDLAY – Pitiful, lackluster, effortless, embarrassing is just some of the words used to describing the performance displayed by the Little Giants in the second half of their 34-14 thumping at the hands of the Findlay Trojans Friday night at Donnell Stadium.

The Little Giants (5-1 and 2-1) took on a Findlay team who had won two of their first five contests.

As the game got underway, Findlay struck first with 1:30 gone in the first quarter when Trojan quarterback, Ryan Montgomery ran in from four yards out to give the Trojans the first lead of the night. Their extra point by Trace Robinson was no good.

Ross, starting the game with the same confidence they had displayed the previous five weeks, answered Findlay's score with one of their own as Kaden Holmes connected with Labronze Barnett on a three-yard reception and score at the 2:40 of the first quarter. Ross had, what would prove to be, their only lead of the night after Johan Silver converted the extra point. Ross led 7-6.

But in the second quarter a change in mentality starting to come over the Giants. Thanks to the passing of Montgomery who finished the game 26 of 36 passes for 368 yards and three touchdowns with one interception. Findlay scored twice, one on a Montgomery to Terrion Ross pass that covered six yards at the 4:41 mark. A five-yard strike to Ben Ireland from Montgomery with just :21 left in the

half was their second score of the period. "We're not strong in the defensive secondary," Ross coach Chad Long said. "We thought it was the backbone of our defense coming into this year but actually our front seven have done very well but our back half have just not performed to their abilities at all."

The score was 20-7 in favor of Findlay as the second half started. But it was obvious to some that the Ross team, on the field Friday night, was not the same Ross team that had exhibited fire and passion for the game of football over the last five week.

"No one was wanting to step up to make a play," Long said after the fiasco. "The secondary was playing as soft as could be. The performance out there was just pathetic." When one thinks that Toledo Whitmer beat Findlay 40-6, it is hoped with that being the case, that Ross' brand of football improves over the final four weeks of the season.

In the third quarter Ross closed the Findlay advantage to 20-14 when Holmes hit Adam Hrynciw with a four-yard pitch and catch at the 7:14 mark. That would be the end of the Ross scoring for the night.

The fourth quarter was all Findlay as Montgomery hit Ireland again this time with a 56-yard pass play. The point after was good by Robinson and the Little Giant morale was in the basement. Findlay took advantage tacking on a fifth scoring play of the night when Isaac James sprinted 54 yards for the nightcap. Robinson was good on the PAT again and with 11:46 left The Little Giants had no answers.

"I think it is strictly on effort," Long continued after the contest. "They came with fire and energy, and we had no effort and were as flat as could be. When you don't show up and give effort and energy this is what happens."

The Ross offense, who Long talked about being flat and not putting forth a great effort, had 353 total yards to Findlay's 520.

"We tell these guys every week that opponents are going to give us their very best," Long said. "Our guys, I don't know if they have been reading too many of the clippings or what, but Findlay came at us with their very best and they were able to come away with the victory tonight."

On the ground Ross' totals were, well quite frankly, an embarrassment. Fremont Ross gained 74 rushing yards on 25 carries a 3.0 yard per carry average. That is not the way to win games and that is not Fremont Ross football.

Kaden Holmes, who was not himself through the four quarters of play, connected on 26 of 47 passes for 279 yards with two touchdowns and an interception. Holmes gained 44 yards on 12 carries and Labronze Barnett added 38 yards on 11 carries. On the receiving end, Bryson Hammer caught eight balls for 78 yards, Elijah Simms had five receptions for 75 yards, Adam Hrynciw caught four passes for 53 yards and a touchdown, Anthony Vann had five catches for 42 yards and Barnett had a touchdown and caught four passes for 31 yards. Vann was the leading tackler on the Ross defense with six tackles, four solo tackles, four assists and one tackle for a loss.

Ross is back on the road Friday as they Travel to take on the Toledo St. Johns Titans who have a record of 2-3 and 0-3 in the TRAC.





You can see additional photos by going to the link below

GIANT'S "D" HANG LOSS ON TITANS

by Bill Bray | Oct 2, 2021 | Featured News, Football



By Bill Bray

TOLEDO – After a game and a half of a fluttering offense over the last two weeks, Fremont Ross (6-1, 3-1) put together a solid second half of football to defeat the St. Johns Titans 34-10 in a TRAC battle.

On this night, it wasn't so much about the offensive side of the ball, but more about the outstanding defensive performance turned in by the Little Giants and, more specifically, the Giants' defensive backfield. Over the last six weeks, the question mark has been in the defensive secondary, as the "front seven" has played as solid a brand of defense as the old "wolfpack gang" from the early 1970s. After a solid half by the defense, the offense came to life in the second half. With the second half kickoff, the sea parted, and through it ran Bryson Hammer, who returned the half's opening kickoff 81 yards for a quick Ross score. Hammer's spark was what the offense needed as they scored 17 points in the third period and seven more in the fourth for the team's sixth win in seven tries.

The game started much like the Findlay game from a week ago ended. On the first play from scrimmage, a St John's extended pass play found the ball suddenly on the Fremont Ross four-yard line with the Titans threatening. Three plays later, the Ross defense pushed the Titans' offense "way back" to the eight-yard line, where St. John's was forced to kick a 25-yard field goal and settle for a 3-0 lead at the 10:21 mark.

Fremont's offense, though struggling at times, was able to drive the ball down the field. With 5:47 remaining in the first quarter, Ross broke out on the front, which would prove to be for good, with a four-yard quarterback keeper by Kaden Holmes. Johan Silver added the extra point, and Ross took the 7-3 advantage.

Before the first quarter was over, Silver added a 24-yard field goal at the 4:03 to give Ross a 10-3 lead that held up for the remainder of the first half. The field goal was the result of Kalijah Alejandro's first interception of the game.

The second quarter saw possession changes, with either offense able to put together any sustained drives.

The Ross "D" held St. Johns scoreless until 58 seconds left in the third quarter when Titans quarterback Blake Lichtenberg completed a 25-yard touchdown pass to David Koonce. But the Ross offense had come to life earlier in the quarter. Along with Hammer's heroics, Labronze Barnett rumbled across the line for a two-yard touchdown run at the 7:39 mark, and Silver added his second field goal from 21 yards out with 4:34 remaining to give Fremont a 27-10 advantage as the fourth quarter began.

With Ross comfortably in the lead, Bowen Schoch, one of five Ross backs to touch the ball on offense, dove in from three yards out for the final score of the game with 2:33 remaining.

Statistically, it wasn't an excellent game for Ross, but it was more balanced.

Barnett led the ball carriers with 58 yards on 14 carries and a score. Kaden Holmes added 53 yards on 13 tries, and Malakhi Griffin finished with 49 yards on 11 carries. "Hey, if we can run the ball like that, I am happy with that on offense," a happy Chad Long said after the TRAC victory. "I also give credit to the big guys up front because we had several kids run for positive yardage tonight." Holmes, dealing with pressure from the Titans' defensive front, completed just nine of 26 passes for 122 yards and had two passes intercepted. Kalijah Alejandro had one catch for 37 yards while Elijah Simms hauled down two receptions for 35 yards. "There is a lot of pressure coming at Kaden these last few games," Long said. "Teams are bringing the house at him and going forward, that is what teams are going to be doing against us, is blitz, blitz, blitz."

Defensively, Hammer was a star on that side of the ball as well, ending with seven tackles, five solo tackles, four assists, two sacks, and three tackles for losses. The defensive secondary, in which Hammer was a part, stepped up their game. Alejandro ended the night with two interceptions, and Anthony Vann added a third. Hat's off to the improvement shown by the defensive secondary during the contest. "Our secondary did answer the bell that is for sure," Long added. "We could have had five or six interceptions, but got three. We brought the heat and pressure on Lichtenberg." The Titan quarterback ended up with 20 carries for just 41 yards.

Next up for the Little Giants is their third straight road game as they head down I75 to Lima to take on the Spartans.



ROSS HUMBLER LIMA, 54-21

by Bill Bray | Oct 9, 2021 | Featured News, Football



By Bill Bray

LIMA – House, Lightning, Bronze. Three words that were on the minds of the Ross faithful Friday night as, with a heavy heart, the Little Giants took care of business with their fourth TRAC win and seventh overall.

House. Referring to long time little Giant coach William “House” Jones who passed away this week at the age of 47. The team was hit hard by his loss and wanted this to be the game honoring the coach. “Tonight, the kids wanted to honor House,” coach Chad Long said. “We aren’t playing for House; we are honoring House.” The coaches folding chair that he sat in at games had a presence at the game and a few players even sat in it at different points of the night.

Lightning. While Northwest Ohio was having games postponed because of storms, in Central Ohio, lightning was seen off in the distance. The lightning on the field once again belongs to Kaden Holmes. The junior signal caller, along with a few different receivers, threw five touchdown passes. His stats read: 13 completions, 22 attempts, 156 yards, and one interception, to go with his five touchdown tosses.

Bronze. Lebronze Barnett got moving from the running back position. The senior had been shut down much of the season, but in his finest moment, Barnett carried the ball 15 times and gained 90 yards with one touchdown.



The Little Giants (7-1, 4-1) got on the board first with just :28 second off the clock. Holmes connected with Bryson Hammer for a five-yard catch. Johan Silver's kick gave Ross a 7-0 lead. Their lead was short-lived as on the ensuing kickoff, Lima's DJ Clark returned the ball 99 yards to put Lima right back into the contest. Shalom Stout added the extra point, and the score was tied at 7-7.

Ross took the lead back with 8:28 remaining in the first quarter as Labronze Barnett rammed in from the three. Silver's kick made it 14-7. Still in the first quarter, with 5:30 left, Holmes found Adam Hrynciw with a 14-yard strike to increase the Little Giant's lead to 21-7. The final scoring in the first quarter was on a safety as the Lima running back was tackled in his own goal line to improve the Fremont score to 23-7.

Ross scored four times in the second quarter. Kelandre Jones found the end zone at the 10:22. Two different times during the quarter, it was Holmes finding Elijah Simms for scores—the first one with an 11-yard scoring strike and another strike to Simms for 12 yards. Lima answered with an Aiden Howard to Zavion Garner 77-yard bomb. It probably goes without saying that Silver made all the extra points. The scoring quieted way down in the second half. In fact, Ross replaced their regulars with younger players for most of the half. Playing with a running clock, Fremont's final score came with 5:04 remaining in the third quarter when "Super Toe" Silver nailed a 45-yard field goal to increase the Little Giant Lead to 54-14. Lima scored last with 1:49 left in the third period with Aiden Howard plunged in from one yard out.

The win marks the first time since 2010 that Fremont Ross has enjoyed seven wins after eight weeks of the season.

The next two weeks are the biggest weeks of the season for the Little Giants. Friday night they host Toledo Central Catholic a 28-7 win over Toledo Whitmer who is Fremont's week 10 opponent.

Currently Fremont Ross is rated fourth in Division II, region six while Toledo Central Catholic is rated sixth. Toledo Whitmer is rated fifth in Division I, region two. (These rating are prior to Friday night's results).





4TH QUARTER MORALE SWITCH LEADS TO WIN FOR CENTRAL CATHOLIC

by Bill Bray | Oct 16, 2021 | Football



By Bill Bray

FREMONT – Toledo Central Catholic used a fluke play in the fourth period to stop Fremont Ross in their tracks during a key Three River Athletic Conference battle. Heading into the fourth quarter it was anyone's game as Ross had closed the deficit to 20-15 with a Kaden Holmes to Adam Hrynciw 16 yards scoring strike. After trailing 20-8 to end the third period, the toss put the Little Giants right back in the game against their toughest opponent of the season.

But just as the Ross faithful felt like their Giants could get the upset, tragedy struck. With the ball on the 45-yard line of Central Catholic, the Irish's Tywaun Clark threw deep to Sam Lee. The Ross defender, Anthony Vann, saw the play develop and had a great shot at the interception, except the ball was just out of his reach and Lee tipped the ball to his fellow receiver Khaleb Carter who galloped the remaining yards for the touchdown. "That was a momentum changer," coach Chad Long said. "Vann in perfect position going for the interception and it ends up being tipped to Carter. That was a heartbreaker. A great play by Vann, but that ended up being the dagger."

Central Catholic, four minutes later, were in the endzone again with 4:31 remaining in the game as Ross was demoralized from that one play. "Our defense was just on the field way too much in the second half," Long continued. "The last eight minute of the game they just pounded us."

Central Catholic scored on their first possession with a two-yard Chris Edmonds run. Cole Tishler added the extra point and with just over three minutes gone in the opening stanza the Irish had their first lead.

The Ross defense, playing well the entire game, sacked Clark in the endzone for the safety with 5:37 remaining in the quarter to cut the Irish lead to five at 7-2. Gaining possession back immediately following the safety Ross put together a successful drive. With :40 second remaining in the first quarter Holmes sneaked in from one yard out giving Ross their first lead of the contest at 8-7. Most of that drive belonged to Holmes who ended the night with 105 yards on 16 carries. Central Catholic used just over a minute to get on the board again. This time with 11:38 left in the second quarter, Clark showed his speed as he ran for an 18-yard touchdown. Central went for the two-point conversion but it was no good. The Irish led for good with the score at 13-8.

The Irish was again the next to enter endzone territory when Clark found Lee across the middle for a 21-yard touchdown as the 7:30 mark of the second quarter. The score at the half saw Central in command at 20-8.

Statistically, the difference came through the air. Clark was 12 of 18 for 207 yards. Holmes ended the night 19-36 for 116 yards. One touchdown and three interceptions.

Bryson Hammer had another solid game on both sides of the ball. Offensively the fleet junior hauled in 10 passes for 58 yards. On defense Hammer was credited with nine tackle, five solo tackles, eight assists, 1.5 tackles for loss and one interception.

The Little Giants (7-2, 4-2) travel to Toledo Friday to take on the Panthers of Toledo Whitmer (7-2, 5-1).



Ethan Green and Elijah Simms put the hurt on the Toledo Central Catholic quarterback.



Kaden Holmes looks for an open receiver during second half action against Toledo Central Catholic



Brayden Guhn looks on helplessly as Toledo Central Catholic's Khaleb Carter breaks loose for a touchdown. "That was the dagger," coach Chad Long said after the game.

WHITMER WINS 49-21, PLAYOFFS ARE NEXT

by Bill Bray | Oct 23, 2021 | Football



By Bill Bray

TOLEDO – Toledo Whitmer used a pair of kickoff returns in the second half to steal the momentum and sprint away with a 49-14 TRAC win over Fremont Ross. For the second straight week, after a first half of good, steady football, a team blew up in the second half against the Little Giants. At the break, the score was 14-7 in favor of the Panthers. Then came the third quarter. Whitmer had deferred possession to the second half, and it proved costly for the Little Giants. D’Andre Cartlidge stood at his own four-yard line gathering in Johan Silver’s kickoff. Cartlidge made a few moves and was off to the races with a 96-yard kickoff return for the Whitmer touchdown. “Their special teams stole our momentum in the second half. Ross coach Chad Long said. Whitmer scored 28 third-quarter points, and the rout was on.

Ross scored on their first possession of the game as Kaden Holmes passed his way down the field, then ran the final 18 yards for the score. Johan Silver was good on his PAT, and Ross had their only lead of the game at 7-0 with 9:10 remaining in the first quarter.

Whitmer answered right back with a drive of their own that ended with a two-yard run by running back Jaylen Young. Rayan Farhan added the extra point, and the game was tied up with 6:24 left in the quarter.

Whitmer got one more trip to paydirt before the end of the first half when Whitmer’s defensive tackle, looking quarterback, Kevin Hornbeak, sneaked in from one yard out. Farhan was good again with the extra point kick, and with 18 seconds left in the first half, the Panthers took the lead 14-7 at the break.

It was a great TRAC battle up to this point, with both teams performing to a high caliber. Then the second half opening kickoff happened. "Special teams' touchdowns are killing us," coach Chad Long said. "We even switched our kickoff team, but we have kids running down, undisciplined, and breaking down. It is something we must look at and see what we have to do to get better. It's like if we don't kick it in the endzone, then we have a big return on us. Johan (Silver) puts it down to the one, and if I am on special teams, that is what I want to have happen. But we need guys that are going to show heart and make plays on the ball."

Again, it was a momentum breaker for the second straight week for a Ross team that has experienced some real growing pains. With the purple and white confidence running on near empty, Whitmer scored on their next possession on a 10-yard Taron Crawford run at the 6:26 mark of the third period. Farhan again nailed the extra point, and Whitmer was putting this game away with a 28-7 advantage.

When it appeared as if all hope was lost, Holmes fired a 52-yard bomb to Elijah Simms for a Ross score with 4:12 left in the third period. Silver tacked on the extra point and the Giants looked as if they would scratch and claw their way back into the battle. The score read Whitmer 28, Ross 14.

On the ensuing kickoff, however, another special team blunder for Fremont. Silver had a short kickoff to the 37-yard line of Whitmer. Jayden Gibson picked up the bouncing ball and travelled to the right side of the Ross kickoff team and sprinted away for a 63-yard touchdown run. Farhan was good with the point and Whitmer was rolling 35-14. "Two kickoff returns, one on a little dinker sky kick, and sure enough, their Gibson kid picks it up and runs it in for a touchdown, it's unbelievable," a dejected Chad Long said. "It's not what we practice at all. The kids must make plays on special teams. It was crucial tonight."

Whitmer added yet another score with 31 seconds remaining in the third quarter as Hornbeak completed another deep pass to Cartlidge for 43 yards. This score put Whitmer way out of reach, 42-14.

Ross did come back with one more consolation touchdown as Holmes found Simms again for an eight-yard touchdown. With 8:49 left in the game, Silver tacked on the PAT, and Ross made it a 42-21 game.

Whitmer scored one more before the final buzzer as Crawford scored his second touchdown of the night on a two-yard run with 1:31 left to make the final 49-21. Now, with the team reeling from two straight losses, it's time for the playoffs, and the Little Giants are part of them for the second straight season. "Well, the last two weeks we didn't lose to splashes," Long said. "Central and Whitmer are two great programs. We will continue coaching and motivating because our offense has been sputtering the last couple of weeks, actually, the last three or four weeks. It's uncharacteristic of our offense to do that. So, we must find ways to get points on the board. We'll be back on the drawing board, trying to figure things out. "

Statistically, Ross's Holmes continues to be the primary offensive weapon for his team. Holmes completed 13 of 24 passes for 154 yards and two touchdowns and one interception. Holmes also led the Ross rushing attack, picking up 94 yards

on 16 carries and one touchdown. Meanwhile, Whitmer had two ball carriers over 100 yards. Whitmer's beefy quarterback, Kevin Hornbeak, finished with 173 yards on 19 carries and one score. Jaylen Young added 122 yards on 17 carries and a score.

Receiving, Fremont's Elijah Simms was the leader with three receptions for 71 yards and two touchdowns. D'Andre Cartlidge had one catch for 43 yards and one touchdown to lead Whitmer.



Kaden Holmes (1) follows Bryson Hammer (9) into the end zone for Fremont's first score of the game



Kaden Holmes (1) is hoisted up by his offensive lineman Ty Ferguson (71) after the first Ross touchdown.



Bryson Hammer (9) makes the stop on Whitmer running back Jaylen Young (21).



Fremont Ross running back Malakhi Griffin breaks away for a big gain.

On a bright note, it is preliminarily projected that Ross will get to host a playoff game. It is believed that seventh-seeded Ross will host 10th-seeded North Royalton in a Division II Region 6 game. The date and time for the two 7-3 teams are yet to be determined. North Royalton is on a two-game win streak, having beaten Wadsworth (28-10) and Brecksville (15-13).

DIVISION II, REGION 6
Highland vs Waite
Avon vs St Francis
Central vs Lakewood
Barberton vs. North Olmstead
Avon Lake vs St Johns
Olmstead Falls vs Valley Forge
North Royalton vs FREMONT ROSS
Anthony Wayne vs Rhodes

LITTLE GIANTS PLACE 16 ON ALL-TRAC TEAMS

by Bill Bray | Nov 2, 2021 | Football

2021 ALL-TRAC SELECTIONS



We're Proud to be Little Giants

16 Fremont Ross Football players were honored by the TRAC coaches for their performances on the field by being voted to First, Second, and Honorable Mention teams. Fremont Ross' "Mr. Everything, Kaden Holmes, was tabbed as "Player of the Year" in the league. Congratulations to Kaden and his Little Giant teammates.

All-Northwest District football teams announced

Staff Report

FINDLAY —The Lima area was well-represented on the 2021 All-Northwest District football team released Wednesday.

Lima Shawnee's Myles Aldrich was co-defensive player of the year in Division III and St. Marys' Dylan Giesge was named top lineman. Wapakoneta's Travis Moyer garnered coach of the year honors.

In Division IV, Van Wert's Cullen Dunn was named top lineman and in Division V, Ottawaland's Tyler Leopold was selected top lineman.

Columbus Grove's AJ Schafer was co-defensive

player of the year in Division VI and Upper Scioto Valley's Connor Sanders was tabbed co-defensive player of the year in Division VII.

The 2021 All-Northwest District football teams, as selected by an Ohio Prep Sportswriters Association media panel from the district.

DIVISION II First team Offense

Ends- Trey Talbot, Toledo St. Francis, 6-3, 200, sr.; Sam Lee, Toledo Central Catholic, 6-6, 220, sr.; Bryson Hammer, Fremont Ross, 5-11, 170, jr.
Linemen-Ethan Green, Fremont Ross, 6-7, 290, sr.; Evan White, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 6-4, 240, sr.; Brent Rombach, Toledo Central Catholic, 6-3, 260, sr.; Jack Bauer, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 6-3, 225, sr.; Mar'leon Adams, Toledo Central Catholic, 6-3, 230, sr.
Backs- Joe Caswell, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 6-0, 205, jr.; Chris Edmonds, Toledo Central Catholic, 5-9, 185, jr.

Quarterback- Kaden Holmes, Fremont Ross, 5-11, 170, jr.
Kicker- Johan Silver, Fremont Ross, 6-1, 160, sr.

First team Defense
Linemen- Dylan Fisher, Toledo Central Catholic, 6-1, 270, sr.; Kyle Pawlicki, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 6-1, 215, sr.; Tyler Jackson, Toledo Central Catholic, 6-0, 260, jr.; **Anthony Mosley, Lima Senior, 6-3, 220, jr.**

Linebackers- Chris Jackson, Toledo Central Catholic, 6-2, 215, sr.; Bryce Kahl, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 5-11, 170, sr.; Nate Friesner, Toledo St. John's, 6-1, 205, sr.; Mason Villarreal, Fremont Ross, 5-10, 220, jr.

Backs- Peyton Reasonover, Toledo Central Catholic, 6-1, 170, sr.; Jeffrey Mold, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 6-1, 175, sr.; Julius Jackson, 6-1, 165, sr.; Kaijah Alejandro, Fremont Ross, 5-10, 145, sr.

Punter- Cole Tishler, Toledo Central Catholic, 5-11, 160, sr.
Offensive Player of the Year- Kaden Holmes, Fremont Ross.

Defensive Player of the Year- Chris Jackson, Toledo Central Catholic.

Lineman of the Year- Ethan Green, Fremont Ross.

Coach of the Year- Greg Dempsey, Toledo Central Catholic.

Second team
Offense
Ends- Josh Lee, Toledo Central Catholic, 6-6, 220, sr.; Evan Ray, Whitehouse

Anthony Wayne, 6-4, 180, sr.
Linemen- Jack Behnfeldt, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 6-0, 220, jr.; Jaiden Cope, Toledo Waite, 6-3, 255, sr.; Caleb Nwoilo, Toledo Bowsher, 6-1, 270, jr.; Terrance Holbert, Toledo Waite, 6-3, 305, jr.

Backs- Jordan Pettaway, Oregon Clay, 5-8, 180, sr.; Travin Horton, Toledo St. Francis, 5-8, 175, soph. Antwain Uils, Toledo Waite, 5-9, 223, sr.

Quarterbacks- Denim Truss, Toledo St. Francis, 6-3, 220, sr.; Ty'Wuan Clark, Toledo Central Catholic, 6-1, 185, jr.

Kicker- Alex Kasee, Sylvania Northview, 6-1, 160, jr.

Second team Defense

Linemen- Jovon Tzyer, Toledo St. Francis, 5-10, 255, sr.; Garrett Pasker, Holland Springfield, 6-2, 260, sr.; Cadence Carswell, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 5-11, 215, soph.

Linebackers- Ty Cobb, Oregon Clay, 6-2, 230, sr.; Ty Grooms, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 5-10, 205, sr.; Chase Saneholtz, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 6-1, 205, sr.

Dante Griffin, Lima Senior, 6-2, 175, sr.

Backs- Braiden Awi, Toledo Central Catholic, 6-0, 170, jr.; **Isiah Furches-Foster, Lima Senior, 6-2, 175, sr.**

Kevin Jordan, Toledo Waite, 5-10, 155, sr.

Punter- Aiden Dickens, Oregon Clay, 6-4, 180, sr.
Honorable mention- Adam Hryniciw, Fremont Ross; London Johnson, Fremont Ross; Bowen Schoch, Fremont Ross;

Elijah Simms, Fremont Ross; Anthony Vann, Fremont Ross; Brandon Langston, Holland Springfield; **Cecil Benton Jr., Lima Senior**; Logan Thor, Sylvania Northview; Aiden Schmidt, Sylvania Northview; Connor Cody, Sylvania Northview;

Kurt Goben, Sylvania Northview; Caleb Rowell, Toledo Bowsher; Lila Dumas, Toledo Bowsher; James Newson, Toledo Bowsher; Elias Triplett, Toledo Bowsher;

Mike Cannings, Toledo Central Catholic; Khaleb Carter, Toledo Central Catholic; Cody Schuberg, Toledo Central Catholic;

Dez Yarger, Toledo Central Catholic; Brian King, Toledo St. Francis; Matty Swift, Toledo St. John's; Justyn Toler,

Toledo St. John's; Jordan Barrett, Toledo Waite; D'Angelo Haynes, Toledo Waite;

Cameron Swiger, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne; Jacob Copley, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne; Seth Rogers, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne; Brandon Hallett, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne; England Allen,

Whitehouse Anthony Wayne; Alex Talbert, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne.

DIVISION III First team Offense

Ends- Myles Bradley, 6-1, 215, sr.; Jack Koepfer, Tiffin Columbian, 5-10, 150, So.;

Isiah Sweeney, Toledo Rogers, 6-0, 170, sr.

Linemen- Leyton Noss, Lexington, 6-2, 235, sr.; Ahman Thomas, Mansfield Senior, 6-3, 280, so.;

Stashu Patterson, St. Marys Memorial, 5-11, 210, sr.; Trevor Houts, Wapakoneta, 5-11, 225, sr.

Backs- Karson Berry, Lexington, 5-10, 185, sr.; Kesean Jackson, Tiffin Columbian, 5-9, 170, sr.

Quarterback- **Braeden Goulet, Wapakoneta, 6-1, 180, sr.**; Brock Hill, Mansfield Senior, 6-0, 190, sr.

Kicker- Sean Putt, Mansfield Senior, 5-10, 165, jr.

Defense
Linemen- Matt Dwyer, Lexington, 6-0, 215, jr.; Devin Smith, Toledo Rogers,

6-1, 320, jr.; **Dylan Giesge, St. Marys Memorial, 6-3, 215, sr.; Carter Fay, Lima Shawnee, 6-5, 215, jr.**

Linebackers- Mekhi Bradley, Mansfield Senior, 6-0, 235, jr.; Brody Conley, Tiffin Columbian, 5-10, 201, sr.; Alex Hoeffel,

Defiance, 5-9, 205, sr.; **Tanner Howell, St. Marys Memorial, 5-11, 185, sr.; Myles Aldrich, Lima Shawnee, 6-0, 195, sr.**

Backs- Elijah Thomas, Sylvania Southview, 5-9, 150, jr.; J'ontay O'Bryant, Mansfield Senior, 6-2, 175, so.; Kadin Schmitz,

Ashland, 6-1, 210, sr.; Gunther Kissell, Tiffin Columbian, 5-11, 168, sr.

Punter- Michael Franklin, Sandusky, 6-0, 195, sr.

Offensive Player of the Year- Myles Bradley, Mansfield Senior.

Co-Defensive Player of the Year- Mekhi Bradley, Mansfield Senior; **Myles Aldrich, Lima Shawnee.**

Lineman of the Year- **Dylan Giesge, St. Marys Memorial.**

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Ross' London Johnson gets a pancake. MATTHEW HORN/FREMONT NEWS-MESSENGER

Little Giants follow quiet cues from Johnson

Matthew Horn

Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

London Johnson takes up a lot of space in the heart of Fremont Ross' program.

Only a massive frame can hold it.

The Little Giants won one game when the offensive lineman, and classmate Ethan Green started as sophomores two years ago.

Ross coach Chad Long and his staff committed to developing, and starting, a talented freshman class at the time. Quarterback Kaden Holmes, among others, got his feet wet early at the varsity level in the challenging Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

The growing pains began to reap rewards as Ross won five of 11 games last season, including three in the TRAC. It beat Toledo Whitmer and non-conference Anthony Wayne.

The Little Giants (8-4) won the most games in Long's tenure this season. They won a postseason game for the second straight season and third time in program history.

They won their first five games and four more games in the TRAC, including Toledo St. Francis and Toledo St. John's. It also topped Tiffin Columbian, San-

dusky and North Royalton.

Things were different this year.

"How we all built a brotherhood," Johnson said.

The team benefited from experience in close games, wins and losses. More experience in the offense and the maturation of physical skills and tools led to consistent execution.

Holmes was honorable mention all-state as a sophomore. He was offensive player of the year in the TRAC this season.

He has 6,029 yards and 70 touchdowns for his career passing. He's less than 200 yards shy of 2,000 on the ground.

Bryson Hammer was first-team All-TRAC at receiver and return specialist, and second-team at defensive back this season. He was second-team all-state as a sophomore last year.

He holds school records for yards and receptions in a career, and receptions in a season.

Classmate Anthony Vann was honorable mention all-state last season after establishing a single-season program record with 12 touchdown catches. Hammer had 11 last season, and he and junior Adam Hrynciw had 10 apiece this year.

Now that Green's high school career

is finished, he's officially Ross football royalty. He continues his career at Cincinnati.

He was first-team All-Ohio on offense and Northwest District lineman of the year last season. He was twice first-team All-TRAC on both sides of the ball.

Johnson joined Green as a starter on defense this season.

"Three-hundred-forty pounds going both ways," Long said. "His dedication and hard work allowed him to do that. He and Ethan [290]."

Johnson was twice second-team All-TRAC at offensive line. He was honorable mention All-Northwest District last season.

"I got more aggressive," he said. "Quicker. I got a lot stronger."

Green and Johnson were huge reasons, literally, Ross averaged more than 30 points this season. The fact it was worth it didn't make it easy.

"What doesn't he do?" Long said of either. "Being a two-way player and never coming off the field. He represents Fremont football in the best fashions. On the field. In the classroom. As a captain."

"His effort is selfless. You won't

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Johnson

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question his heart.”

Johnson doesn't say much. His teammates still looked to him for certain reassurances things can keep rolling.

If London seemed content, everybody felt better. It becomes a responsibility to battle through and always be ready with eyes on you like that.

He did his best to be there and endure. It all meant something to him, and his teammates.



Ross' Brayden Guhn hits Avon's ball carrier. MATTHEW HORN

Guhn trying to improve for Ross

Matthew Horn

Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Fremont Ross defensive linemen Ethan Green, London Johnson, Bowen Schoch and Dean Hetrick are seniors.

They made it difficult for most running backs to generate production on the ground this season. They enabled linebackers Mason Villarreal and Brayden Guhn to track down the ball, often unimpeded.

That was a luxury of course.

"We lose the whole line," Little Giants coach Chad Long said. "Having he and Mason back will be crucial to stopping the run. They'll be a key core to the front seven. Next Little Giant up on the defensive line."

Guhn and Villarreal are juniors. Guhn is 5-foot-11 and weighs 205 pounds and Villarreal is 5-10, 220.

"He and Mason were constantly having linemen on them," Long said. "They'd come off and make a tackle on the running back."

Hetrick made a stop on third down Friday, before Guhn had a tackle shy of the first down after a reception on the next play late in the first half in a 52-26 road setback to Avon in a Division II quarterfinal. Ross trailed only 24-12 after two quarters.

Guhn is tasked with blanketing tight ends as well.

"When they release to catch passes," Long said. "Then he chases a running back from the back side."

He started outside in bandit position the last six games as a sophomore. He's a weak side linebacker now.

He wanted to contend for most tackles on the team.

"I knew I'd start," he said. "I wanted to be a leader."

Guhn separated Tiffin Columbian's quarterback from the ball with a jarring hit in a 37-36 victory to open the season.

"Brayden Roggow was running in," he said. "I smoked him and he fumbled at our 3 or 4."

Kalijah Alejandro recovered the loose ball.

There's a large gym at his house, where he's joined by teammates each Sunday throughout the year.

He doesn't dread training. He adores it.

"Getting better for next season," he said. "I love the offseason. I love working out and getting better. Bigger, faster, stronger. I'm trying to get faster. We're going to be hungry. We have the juniors back. We'll be ready."

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Matthew Horn Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Fremont Ross junior quarterback Kaden Holmes and senior offensive lineman Ethan Green earned first-team all-state recognition in Division II from the Ohio Prep Sportswriters Association.

Holmes program records include touchdown passes in a season (33) and career (70), and 6,029 yards passing. He threw for 2,807 yards, and rushed for 978 yards and 12 scores for a record 3,796 total as a junior.

Green, who will continue his career at Cincinnati, helped Ross generate 34 points per game. He was first team in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference on both sides of the ball.

Little Giants junior receiver Bryson Hammer was named second team All-Ohio. He established single-season program records with 927 yards and 80

receptions, with 10 touchdowns.

He played receiver with a cast on his thumb to finish the season. He was first-team all-conference returning kicks as well.

Senior kicker Johan Silver, junior linebacker Mason Villarreal and senior defensive back Kalijah Alejandro were honorable mention.

Silver kicked two 45-yard field goals and made 7 of 9 tries, including two blocks. He missed two of 48 extra-point kicks and touched back half of 62 kickoffs.

Villarreal had 94 tackles, including 12 for a loss. He added two sacks, two interceptions, broke up two passes and recovered two fumbles.

Alejandro had five interceptions, forced three fumbles and broke up seven passes. He had 40 tackles, including 35 solo.

Division IV