

2009 Season Review



Jonathon Bird | News-Messenger

Ross' James Aaron Spencer carries the ball during a scrimmage last year. The Little Giants and Spencer, a Division I special mention pick last season, returned to the practice field Monday.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Gridiron return

Ross, SJCC among teams back on practice fields for two-a-days

BY JEFF ARENZ

Sports writer

FREMONT — Fremont Ross and St. Joseph Central Catholic football players hit the practice fields Monday for the first session of two-a-day training camps.

Ross coaches Derek Kidwell his SJCC counterpart Todd Drusbac reported both teams were injury-free on Day 1.

FREMONT ROSS

Kidwell is guiding a team that has gone through the football motions without pads for much of the summer. The Little Giants

won 7-on-7 tournaments at Kenton and Fremont and need a change of pace.

"It was a typical first day," Kidwell said. "Our varsity kids were rather bored because we were doing this kind of practice during our football camp last week. The majority of our varsity kids are anxious to get shoulder pads on, turn the tempo up a little bit and get more physical."

Kidwell said the biggest battles for playing time are brewing on the Little Giants offensive and defensive lines.

"On offense, our right guard position has three guys (Brad Beck, Jerome Conley and

Cory Barron) rotating in and out," Kidwell said. "We have four or five guys (Rob Heberling, Trent Stout, Aaron Gonzalez, Shane Durnwald and Nick Parrish) rotating in and out on our defensive line, but I know we're going to use a lot of different guys there anyway."

Kidwell said Heberling has moved onto the defensive line after seeing time at linebacker last season. Stout, a sophomore, and Parrish are vying for time, while Gonzalez, a senior, returns after suffering a

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BRIEFLY FROM 5A

hand injury. Durnwald is a returning starter.

As the football season begins, Kidwell would like to see the focus of the Little Giants remain in tact.

“The concerns right now are having some kids lose their focus because camps make for long days and it gets monotonous on the practice field,” Kidwell said. “It’s the start of a three-week camp and there’s no light at the end of the tunnel. We have a veteran group of seniors who can stay focused and it’s their job to be keep everyone else focused so that we get better as a team each day.”

The leadership will come seniors Cody Foos (quarterback), James Aaron Spencer (running back) and Brett Mierke (safety and wide receiver), who all received Division I All-Ohio special mention in 2008. Other key players include wide receivers and defensive backs Justin Hines and Greg Brown and running back and outside linebacker Tylor Trautwein.

Conferences starting high school football games earlier

BY VINCE GUERRIERI

Staff writer

Fremont Ross High School football coach Derek Kidwell said it doesn't matter when games are played.

The Little Giants, like many other area teams, play football games at 7:30 p.m., but they'll play one game this season at 7 p.m. — when they head to Toledo to play Whitmer on Sept. 4.

"All we do is hop on a bus 40 minutes earlier," Kidwell said. "I don't think it matters with kids. Once the competition starts, they'll perform."

But the competition is starting earlier. The Toledo City League starts its night football games at 7 p.m., and several other leagues have followed suit this year. Games that once started at 8 p.m. have been pushed forward to ac-

commodate the new wide-open offenses that have filtered down to high school football. A lot of passing means the clock stops more often, and games are longer.

Ohio High School Athletic Association guidelines say only that regular-season football games cannot start after 11 p.m. Tim

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Fremont Ross's Tylor Trautwein runs the ball against Whitmer during the 2008 season. More football games could be played in daylight this year, as several area conferences have switched their start times to 7 p.m. from 7:30 p.m.
NM file photo

EARLY FROM A1

Stried, director of information services for the OHSAA, said there is no plan to change that.

There is a policy in place for playoff games, however. They start at 7:30 p.m. on Friday and 7 p.m. on Saturday, unless there are no lights at the host field. In that case, games are played Saturday afternoon.

When Fremont Ross was in the Buckeye Central Conference, they started games at 8 p.m. That was largely because of the travel time involved in what was jokingly referred to as "The Lear Jet Conference," which included Newark, Lancaster and Zanesville. After the Little Giants moved into the Great Lakes League in 1991, start times were moved to 7:30 p.m.

The Sandusky Bay Conference played its games at 8 p.m. until the mid-1980s. Conference secretary and treasurer Stan Stewart said start times were pushed to 7:30 p.m. based on requests from local media. Administrators also thought making the games earlier was a good idea.

"They thought it was a better idea to start games earlier and get out of there," Stewart said.

Stewart noticed some games were taking longer, which was the impetus for moving back to 7 p.m. starts.

The Blanchard Valley Conference — encompassing 10 schools in Hancock and Putnam counties — will start games at 7 p.m. this season. Commissioner Dean Butler, also the athletic director at Liberty-Benton, said offenses with more passing — and thus, more first downs and incomplete passes, both of which stop the game clock — are taking over. That makes games longer.

"We're going to a passing-style of game now," Butler said. "Games weren't over with until 10:30 at night. By mov-

ing things up to 7, we're going to get done at a more reasonable hour."

There was a need in Toledo to switch to earlier starts, but for an entirely different reason. Fights at some games led the City League to play afternoon games, Toledo Public Schools Athletic Director Ed Scrutinins said. When they resumed playing on Friday nights, they made the games start at 7 p.m.

"We did an earlier start to get the game over quicker to get the kids home earlier and out of the streets earlier," said Scrutinins, also the commissioner of the City League.

Butler said this isn't the first time the league has looked at starting games earlier, but this is the first time they were sold on it. The nine schools in the conference unanimously approved the switch.

"It's something I tried to pursue quite a few years ago," Butler said. "At that time, they didn't want to do it because they didn't feel there was any need to."

That's the situation the Suburban Lakes League is in now. The seven-team league — whose fate is uncertain because of schools moving in and out of the conference — starts games at 7:30, and it doesn't seem that will change.

"It came up in a meeting last year and there was no interest, at least at this point, to move it up," league Commissioner Jim Yeager said. "We're going to play at 7:30 p.m. in the foreseeable future. Of course, it'll be looked at if more leagues move their times up."

When the Northwest Ohio Athletic League — the oldest high school athletic conference in the state — voted to switch to 7 p.m. starts this season, they found another problem: Getting referees.

The change voided 215 contracts with officiating crews the league had already signed. The crews signed new contracts, but the problem

of getting officials for a 7 p.m. start time is one of the reasons the SBC hasn't changed game times.

Officials are required to be at the field at least an hour before games start. Larry Morrison, commissioner of the Northern Lakes League — and former commissioner of the Great Lakes League — said that the league's referees, all in the Toledo area, were thrilled when the NLL announced it would start its games at 7 p.m. this year.

But when referees come from Cleveland, Toledo or Mansfield — as they do in the SBC, Stewart said — the travel time might keep them from officiating a 7 p.m. game.

Baumgartner said another reason the NWOAL made the switch was to accommodate junior varsity start times. Typically, junior varsity games are played the morning after varsity games, and some players would play both varsity and JV. They would come home around midnight after a game, and then have to get to a 10 a.m. game the next day.

But will it stop at 7 p.m.? Will the length of games prompt a change to 6 p.m.?

Area administrators think not. Butler thinks 7 p.m. can make games end earlier, without putting too much of a crimp on fans' schedule for the day.

"There's no reason people can't go home, get a bite to eat, get cleaned up and get to the game," Butler said.

Morrison, whose league

unanimously approved the switch to 7 p.m. starts, thinks this will be the end of the issue.

"I don't think it'll go much earlier than that," he said.

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FREMONT ROSS

Coaching families clash in opener

BY JEFF ARENZ

Sports writer

FREMONT — When Fremont Ross and Toledo Start open the OHSAA football season Friday night at Don Paul Stadium, a rivalry between coaching families will be renewed.

Little Giants coach Derek Kidwell and Spartans coach Pat Gucciardo Jr. are the sons of former Fostoria coach Dick Kidwell and former Toledo Whitmer coach Pat Gucciardo Sr., who battled one another in the Great Lakes League.

"When Whitmer came into the GLL, they were one of the powerhouse teams up in Toledo," Kidwell said. "Coach Gucciardo was a living legend up there. He got (the Panthers) into the state semifinals several times. It's kind of weird that my dad was coaching against Pat Sr., then, and, now, I'm coaching against Pat Jr."

Current coaches Kidwell and Gucciardo also have another connection.

"I was so young when our dads coached against each other that doesn't really come into play for us as coaches now," Gucciardo said. "Derek and I played football together at Bowling Green State. We were both quarterbacks, and I got to know him for a short time there. I'm proud that Derek is a Falcon."

Kickoff for this Week 1 non-conference game is 7:30 p.m.

Against Start, Ross cornerbacks Justin Hines and Greg Brown and safety Brett Mierke will be tested early.

"We're a passing team, and we've always been a passing

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ROSS FROM B1

team," Gucciardo said. "We run Steve Spurrier's 'Fun 'n' Gun' offense and our kids have put up a lot of good numbers. We've never had a problem scoring or moving the football. We just have to be consistent, not turn the ball over at key times and play good defense."

Gucciardo said the Spartans' offense has averaged 30 points a game for the last eight seasons. In 2008, Start scored 25.9 points per game, including a 61-0 pummeling of Toledo Woodward and a 42-0 thrashing of Toledo Libbey in consecutive weeks.

Senior quarterback Aaron Newman is the triggerman Spartans' offense. His targets are senior wide receivers Devon Price, Tyreen Crape, Rodney Ross, Devan Stafford and senior tight end Chris Jackson.

"We have to control the ball and keep Ross's offense off the field. Getting the ball to Devon Price will be a key for us — either with screen passes, with deep balls or reverses," Gucciardo said.

Kidwell has circled Price as a weapon the Ross defense must take away from

the Spartans.

"Devon is a phenomenal athlete because he's a play-maker all over the field," Kidwell said. "We have to aware of him, wherever he is at all times. We know that we have our hands full. But if we come out with a good offensive gameplan, we should be able to score."

The Little Giants averaged 31.4 points a game with quarterback Cody Foos at the helm. He returns as a senior for his third season under center. His wide receivers include Hines, Mierke and Brown, who can also carry the ball out of the Ross backfield. Nate Barnard suits up when the Little Giants employ a tight end.

"We have to make Ross make a few mistakes," Gucciardo said. "They can definitely move the ball. With what the Little Giants do in the spread offense, they do very well. We need to keep

things in front of us, force a couple turnovers and make them work the ball down-field."

Kidwell said the Little Giants' offensive line will have a key role.

"A lot of it will come down to our offensive line giving us max protection because Start's defense likes to penetrate gaps and blitz," Kidwell said. "Cody needs to get us out of bad plays and into good ones. And Start's secondary likes to play man-to-man coverage and that makes us get excited when teams play that way."

Senior running back James Aaron Spencer is expected to handle most of the Ross carries with Tylor Trautwein, a physical back, and Devonte Woods, a speed burner, giving the Little Giants' ground attack a change of pace.

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"They can definitely move the ball. With what the Little Giants do in the spread offense, they do very well."

PAT GUCCIARDO JR.
Cardinal Stritch coach

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ■ WEEK 1



Jonathon Bird | News-Messenger

Fremont Ross' Greg Brown breaks the tackle of Toledo Start's Marcus McGowen. Photo by Doug Hise.

FREMONT ROSS 24, TOLEDO START 7

Little Giants D comes up big

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports Writer

FREMONT — While the Fremont Ross offense stalled, the Little Giants' defense rose to the occasion.

Linebacker J.J. Moreno had an interception that set up a Ross touchdown and defensive

tackle Rob Heberling fell on a fumble in the end zone for another Little Giants TD.

Their efforts led to a 24-7 Fremont Ross victory against Toledo Start in a season-opening non-conference game Friday at Don Paul Stadium.

"Defense is our philosophy,"

Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "We're not going to allow an offense to dictate what we do. We have to line up by formations, but we're going to be aggressive. We're not going to let a quarterback sit back in the pocket and survey the field, because we're going to bring people off the

edge at him."

The Ross defense forced Start to punt nine times and sacked Spartans quarterbacks Aaron Newman and Rob Giles six times.

With the game tied at 7, Moreno stepped in front of a

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High School Football

LITTLE GIANTS FROM B1

Newman pass inside the Start 35-yard line with 1:57 left before halftime. Five plays later, Victor Layton's 25-yard field goal gave Ross a 10-7 at intermission.

With the Little Giants (1-0) leading 10-7 at halftime, Start (0-1) ran three third-quarter plays before punting. On its ensuing drive, the Ross offense was stopped near midfield, where Mike Showman's 39-yard punt and the Spartans' penalty for an illegal block during the return placed Start at its own 10-yard line.

In the span of eight seconds, Ross increased its lead to 17-7. Linebacker Rueben Saldivar came off the right edge to sack Newman, who fumbled the ball on first down. Heberling, who saw the ball hit the turf after it bounced off his knee, came out of a pile of Little Giants with the ball after it had rolled into the end zone.

"I had a call to fire on a blitz," Saldivar said. "I know (Start's Deonte) Rozier is a good running back, but he was a little tired and I was able to get around him. Then, I saw (Newman's) back to me. I blindsided him and knocked the ball out."

Ross defenders raced to the end zone.

"We just all fell on it and I came out of the pile with the ball in my hands," Heberling said. "I grabbed it and took off running."

James Aaron Spencer helped Ross seal the victory in the fourth quarter with a 35-yard touchdown run with 4:52 left.

He finished the game with 21 carries and 150 yards.

Spencer ignited the Little Giants' ground game, which out-rushed the Spartans 197-26.

But Start drew first blood.

Devon Price handed the Spartans a 7-0 lead at the 6:11 mark of the first quarter, catching a 37-yard touchdown pass from Newman after Little Giants' cornerback Greg Brown nearly had a two-handed interception that slipped out of his hands and into the hands of Price.

Newman was 9-of-21 for 126 yards, while Giles added a 3-of-5 effort for 33 yards.

After being intercepted two times in his first three passing attempts and three times in the game, Cody Foos completed 6-of-14 passes for 57 yards and a touchdown.

"I think, when Cody was hit on the first play of the game, that was a pretty hard hit," Kidwell said. "I don't know if he gathered his bearings after that play. He was having trouble breathing and he said he was seeing dots."

As Ross trailed 7-0 with 2:15 left before halftime, Mikel Stanley caught a 24-yard TD strike from Foos as the Little Giants tied the score. Foos had a 43 percent completion rate after missing his first four passing attempts.

Hank Oswald intercepted a Foos pass and recovered a fumble by Spencer. Price and Rodney Ross also made interceptions for Start.

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ■ WEEK 2

Ross, Whitmer looking to pass test

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports writer

FREMONT — The Fremont Ross and Toledo Whitmer football teams are using their Week 2 clash as a early-season measuring-stick.

Both the Little Giants (1-0) and the Panthers (1-0) carry high expectations coming into Friday's

7 p.m. kickoff at Whitmer Stadium, where a lot of computer playoff points could be on the line.

"I know its early in the year, but I think this game could have a playoff atmosphere," Whitmer coach Joe Palka said. "Both teams

SEE ROSS | B2

CHALLENGE ISSUED TO LITTLE GIANTS FANS

FREMONT — Fremont Ross football fans have been issued a challenge.

When the Little Giants meet Toledo Whitmer on Friday at Whitmer Stadium, fans attending the game are asked to bring canned goods in the WTOL-11 TV News and Charlie's Dodge Pack-A-Pickup Challenge, which supports the Toledo Seagate Food Bank.

"We should kick in with our support because it's the right thing to do," Fremont Ross athletic director Art Bucci said. "Canned goods are not that expensive. Please step up and support the food pantry because it benefits those who are less fortunate."

The school with the most food collected by halftime will become eligible to receive a \$500 scholarship at the end of the football season.

Staff reports



Doug Hise | News-Messenger correspondent

Fremont Ross ball carrier James Aaron Spencer looks for yardage in last week's 24-7 win over Toledo Start.

ROSS FROM B1

have a chance to have great years and it will be game that will show us the level we're both at right now."

Ross quarterback Cody Foos is looking to rebound from a 6-of-14 passing effort in Week 1, when he threw for 57 yards, a TD and three interceptions.

"Cody has been sore, but he's practiced all week and hasn't missed anything," Kidwell said. "He leads by example and he'll be anxious to go Friday night. With the competitor that Cody is, anytime that he has a bad game, he's eager to prove himself."

Foos has wide receivers Greg Brown, Justin Hines, Brett Mierke and Mikel Stanley at his disposal. The Panthers will counter by rushing defensive ends Kenny Hayes, a 6-foot-5, 240-pound junior who committed to Ohio State on Tuesday, and Chris Wormley, a 6-5, 250-pound sophomore.

"I think our wideouts are a little ahead of Whitmer's secondary right now, but the Panthers have a great defensive line," Kidwell said. "Their rush ends are very impressive with both of them being big, tall, lanky kids. Our offensive tackles — Trevor Trimble and John Paxson — have to play extremely well for us to have a chance to be successful on offense. They have to protect our quarterback when we throw the ball and give James Aaron Spencer avenues when we run the ball."

Spencer ran 21 times for 150 yards during a 24-7 Ross win over Toledo Start on Friday.

Quarterback Joe Missler accounted for 246 yards (112 yards rushing and 134 on 5-of-10 passing) during Whitmer's 35-7 win over Tiffin Columbian on Friday. The Panthers had 405 yards from scrimmage and held the Tornadoes to 195 yards.

"We strive to throw the ball as much as we run it and would love to have equal yardage in both areas," Palka said. "What usually happens is we'll take what the defense is giving us. We're a spread team that will line up in power formations, run some option and are just trying to find the right plays that will really hurt the opposing defense."

The Little Giants held a 254-185 yardage edge against Start. The Ross defense forced nine punts, produced six sacks, intercepted a pass that set up a TD and recovered a fumble for another score.

"Whitmer is a spread team like we are, but counter and keep the ball in the hands of the quarterback," Kidwell said. "The Panthers have some big, physical running backs and their offensive line does a real nice job of getting out on linebackers. We want to keep (Missler) contained by not letting him rip off any long runs. They've shown a little inconsistency in their passing game. But, I'm sure, they have worked on that this week."

Micah Merritt added 73 yards on 13 carries while Teryl Merrihew piled up 76 yards on 12 carries for Whitmer in Week 1.

Palka said Whitmer has not had a lot of success against Ross.

"I'm impressed with the speed and the physicalness of Ross's secondary," Palka said. "That is as good of a secondary that we're going to see. The Little Giants are not big on the defensive line, but I expect their movement to be a real challenge. Their linebackers — Tylor Trautwein is really athletic and active and Nate Barnard is a real physical kid who is a great run-stopper — have caught our attention."

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ■ WEEK 2



Jonathon Bird | News-Messenger

Fremont Ross ball carrier Tylor Trautwein slips past the tackle of Toledo Whitmer's Corey Compton en route to a 7-yard touchdown run during the second quarter of Friday night's game.

TOLEDO WHITMER 29, FREMONT ROSS 25

Little Giants come up short

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports Writer

TOLEDO — In the span of 56 seconds midway through the fourth quarter Friday, Toledo Whitmer sealed a 29-25 non-conference football win over Fremont Ross at Whitmer Stadium.

With the Little Giants leading 25-22 with 6½ minutes left, quarterback Joe Missler marched the Panthers downfield in only three plays, covering 54 yards for the game-winning score.

Missler's 14-yard pass to Tevin Boykins set up the Whitmer QB's 38-yard TD run as 5:41 remained.

Fremont Ross coach Derek Kidwell believed Missler had help on his run.

"They didn't call holding on (Missler's)

long run," Kidwell said.

Missler threw for 107 yards on 5-of-7 passing and added 94 yards on carries for Whitmer. Teryl Mershon ran 17 times for 109 yards to lead all rushers.

"I'm extremely proud of our kids because they gave us everything they had," Kidwell said. "We knew (Whitmer) is a big, physical team and they just laid on top of our defense. We don't have the biggest defense right now, but they gave us everything."

The Panthers' TD came after the Little Giants used a 14-play, 82-yard scoring drive that was capped by quarterback Cody Foos' 11-yard slant pass to Greg Brown that gave Ross a 25-22 lead with 6:37 left.

Foos was 10-of-21 for 168 yards with a TD and an interception. James Aaron Spencer added 166 yards on 25 carries, in-

cluding a 64-yard TD run that put Ross ahead 18-7 with 4:33 left before halftime.

"We challenged our offensive line after last week's game, and they really responded," Kidwell said. "I just told our team that teams improve the most from Week 1 to Week 2. Granted, we didn't come out with a victory, but we improved."

Whitmer coach Joe Palka was impressed with the Little Giants.

"Ross controlled the play (at that point)," Palka said. "I thought we were fortunate to be down by three at halftime. It was our goal to hang close and try to win it at the end. Even though we were able to do that, Fremont Ross didn't do anything to lose this. Fremont Ross has a great football team."

SEE GIANTS I B2

GIANTS FROM B1

When Foos tried to rally the Little Giants, he was intercepted by Mark Meyers after the ball was tipped by Ross' Tylor Trautwein.

"We had chances to win it, but our kickoff team really hurt us," Kidwell said. "(Whitmer) had a ton of yardage in returns. We have to keep the pinned deep. I tell our kids all of the time that we have to win two of three phases. We didn't win the special teams battle, and I don't think we won the defensive battle for four quarters."

Trautwein added a 7-yard TD run in the second quarter as the Little Giants grabbed a 12-0 lead.

"We have to make a play," Kidwell said. "We put our playmakers in position and he has to come up with that. He's caught that ball all summer."

Ross took a 6-0 lead in the first quarter after a 1-yard run by Foos. The play happened after the Little Giants recovered the first of the Panthers' two muffed punt returns.

"We adjusted a few things, like changing our formations that we ran from," Palka said. "We just tried to take advantage of where (the Ross defenders) weren't. Defensively, we played a little better in the second half because our best players were not playing that well in the first half."

The Panthers' defense remained consistent.

"We didn't give up many huge plays that went for touchdowns," Palka said. "They had some big runs and some big passes but, for the most part (Fremont Ross) had to earn what it got."

Trailing 12-0 in the second quarter, Micah Merritt scored TDs on runs of 2 and 1 yards as Whitmer rallied for a 18-15 deficit at the half.

Missler added a 10-yard TD strike to Mike Pfaff in the third quarter as Whitmer took its first lead at 22-18.

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Toledo Whitmer 29, Fremont Ross 25

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| Fremont Ross | 6 | 12 | 0 | 7 | — | 25 |
| Whitmer | 0 | 15 | 7 | 7 | — | 29 |

First Quarter

FRHS — C. Foos 1 Yard Run (Kick Failed)

Second Quarter

FRHS — T. Trautwein 7 Yard Run (Run Failed)

WHS — M. Merritt 2 Yard Run (A. SWEENEY Kick)

FRHS — J. Spencer 64 Yard Run (Pass Failed)

WHS — M. Merritt 1 Yard Run (J. MISSLER Run)

Third Quarter

WHS — M. PFAFF 10 Yard Pass from J. MISSLER (A. SWEENEY Kick)

Fourth Quarter

FRHS — G. Brown 11 Yard Pass from C. Foos (V. Layton Kick)

| | F | W |
|---------------|---------|--------|
| First downs | 0 | 0 |
| Rushes-yards | 48-261 | 44-238 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 10-21-1 | 7-9-0 |
| Passing yards | 168 | 164 |

RUSHING: F—Brown 4-22, Foos 15-30, Spencer 25-166, Trautwein 3-30, Woods 1-13, .

PASSING: F—Foos 10-21-1-168, .

RECEIVING: F—Brown 3-64, Damman 2-28, Hines 2-17, Mierke 1-20, Renfer 1-15, Spencer 1-5.

Wide receiver injury to affect line up

BY JEFF ARENZ

Sports writer

FREMONT — Fremont Ross wide receiver/cornerback Greg Brown suffered a painful injury when the Little Giants line up against Tiffin Columbian on Friday night at Don Paul Stadium.

Ross coach Derek Kidwell announced Wednesday that Justin Hines, another starter at wide receiver and at cornerback for the Little Giants, could miss as many as six weeks after suffering a broken arm.

"Without Justin, we have a start coming up that's off the field," Kidwell said. "We have to replace what he does for us because he's so good. It's out of our control. I hate to see an injury to a senior that is as gifted and has worked as hard as Justin. It gives someone an opportunity to step up, get playing experience and make the best of a bad situation."

Kickoff for this non-conference football rivalry game is set for 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 12.

Brown, a junior who has verbally committed to attend Michigan, leads the Little Giants with five catches for 96 yards and one touchdown. Hines has three receptions for 24 yards, while running back James Spencer (10 carries, 41 yards) has three grabs for seven yards. H Brown draws double-teams from the Tornadoes' defense. Brett Brown (1 reception, 29 yards), Kyle Brown (2-28), Mikal Stanley (1-19, 1 TD) and Skylar Refner (1-15) must step up to fill the void.

Columbian coach Steve Gilbert has circled Brown as a Little Giant of the week.

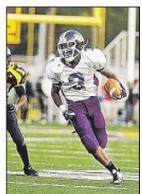
"The big thing is that we need to find out how they're going to cover us," Gilbert said. "We're going to go with a lot of three and four wide receivers. We want to find out where Brown is playing on both sides of the because that's going to be crucial."

Still, Ross has another weapon it can employ. Spencer is averaging 158 yards per game with a rushing effort of 150 and 166 yards, respectively, this season.

"We have to be sound in our running game and we have to dictate the tempo," Gilbert said. "The biggest change in the last two weeks is Ross' ability to run the football. It makes their offense much more dangerous because they can run and pass."

When the Little Giants use their passing attack, quarterback Cody Price is 16-of-35 for 215 yards with three touchdowns and four interceptions. He has also ran for another TD. Tommies' quarterback Ryan Tiller, running back Tyler Ward and wide receiver/kick returner Derek Kneeskern are players Ross is looking to hold in check.

SEE FOOTBALL I B2



Jonathan Bird | News-Messenger
Fremont Ross High School's Greg Brown turns the corner for a gain during the second quarter of a football game against Toledo Whittier on Sept. 4.

FOOTBALL FROM B1

"Our defense has to reward itself by getting off the field after third down by allowing our special teams to make a donation to the game and getting our offense on the field," Kidwell said. "While we're on defense, we have to watch out for Kneeskern, who is an outstanding football player, for Ward, who had a very good game against Madison and is very scatty, and we have to take care of getting to the quarterback (Tittle)."

During a 39-23 home win over Mansfield Madison on Friday, Kneeskern ran back a kickoff 99 yards for a first-quarter TD after the Rams took a 7-0 lead. Ward scored three touchdowns (two rushing, one receiving) versus the Rams while running seven times for 140 yards.

Tittle is 12-of-22 for 229 yards with three touchdowns and three interceptions this season. Ward adds 10 carries for 151 yards and three TDs (two rushing, one receiving) while Kneeskern has made three catches for 120 yards and two touchdowns.

Columbian could also be without several players — linemen Eric Brown (shoulder) and Cole McClung (dislocated elbow), Caden Chapman (torn anterior cruciate ligament), Ryan Koerper (torn anterior cruciate ligament) and Kimp Patillo (shoulder) — who are nursing injuries.

Ross, which won last year's game 28-6 at Frost-Kalnow Stadium in Tiffin, leads the all-time series against Columbian 35-17-2.

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ■ WEEK 3



Brenda Soule | News-Messenger correspondent

Fremont Ross ball carrier Greg Brown gets outside during Friday night's game against Tiffin Columbian.

FREMONT ROSS 49, TIFFIN COLUMBIAN 35

Little Giants win shootout

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports Writer

FREMONT — Fremont Ross was able to overcome injuries and nonconference rival Tiffin Columbian 49-35 on Friday at Don Paul Stadium.

The Little Giants, who played without running back James Aaron Spencer, and wide receiver and cornerbacks Justin Hines, benefited from large contributions from Greg Brown and Devante Woods.

Brown caught touchdown passes of 39 and 29 yards while finishing with three grabs for 98 yards. Woods ran for three TDs, including an 80-yard scamper in the second quarter and runs of 5 and 2 yards in the fourth quarter.

"Greg is so versatile that he can hurt an opposing team in so many different ways and we're going to take advantage of that," Fremont Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "We were excited to see Tyler Trautwein run the ball, but he went down with an injury during our first series. We tell our kids to step up and seize the moment, and Devante did that."

According to Kidwell, Spencer sat out with tenderness in his ankle. Hines could be sidelined for five more weeks after suffering a broken arm.

Tied 14-14 in the second quarter, the Little Giants gained momentum after Aaron Gonzales recovered Derek Kneeskern's fumble at the Ross 40. Quarterback Cody Foos responded by leading a five-play, 60-yard drive in final 65 seconds of the first half that culminated in a 39-yard TD strike to Brown.

"I feel like I always have to step up," said Brown, who has verbally committed to attend Michigan in fall 2010. "If I step up, then there's a good chance we're going to win." Ross had a 7-6 lead after the first 12 minutes, but was being outplayed by the Tornadoes, who held a 32-38 edge in total plays and a 22-11 advantage in first downs in the game.

Kneeskern hauled in the first of two touchdown catches on a 43-yard pass from Ryan Tittle at the 7:34 mark of the first quarter, but missed the point-after kick. Tittle threw four TD strikes and piled up 332 yards on 25-of-36 passing, but was the

victim of Travis Maynard's 85-yard interception return for a touchdown about 5½ minutes later. Victor Layton's kick gave the Little Giants a 7-6 lead at the 1:50 mark.

After Kneeskern's 38-yard field goal attempt hit the right upright early in the second quarter, Woods ran 80 yards for a touchdown on Ross's next play as 10:58 remained in the first half.

But the Tornadoes proved to be resilient throughout the game.

Running back Tyler Ward did most of the work as Columbian went on a 14-play, 75-yard scoring drive on its next series. His 14-yard TD run came before Tittle connected with Austin Bentz on a 2-point conversion pass that knotted the game at 14 with 5:47 left before halftime.

That was until Foos and Brown untied the contest with 2 seconds left in the first half. "I challenged our varsity team at half-time," Kidwell said. "As a coaching staff, we weren't pleased and we had no business leading 21-14 at half. I told our team to go

SEE GIANTS | B2

GIANTS FROM B1

out there in the second half and win personal man-to-man battles. And for the most part, we did that."

The game went back-and-forth throughout the third quarter as both teams each scored twice in the final three minutes of the period.

The Tornadoes forced a 21-all tie when Jordan Coger caught a 17-yard pass from Tittle at the 2:47 mark. But Ross answered 90 seconds later on Foos' second TD pass to Brown.

With 46 seconds left in the third quarter, Tittle and Kneeskern hooked up for a 70-yard touchdown. But Foos countered that with a pass to Mikel Stanley that put the Little Giants on the Columbian 1-yard line. On the next play, the Ross quarterback ran into the end zone for a 35-28 Little Giants lead.

"We had six starters out, but our young kids stepped up by playing a great game," Columbian coach Steve Gilbert said. "I'm really proud of the effort. We just came up a little short on the scoreboard."

Foos ended up with 198 yards on 7-of-11 passing.

Tittle's last TD pass went to Jordan Price for 17 yards with 11:09 left. But Brown gave Ross a 64-yard kickoff return before Woods scored from 5 yards out only 27 seconds later.

The Little Giants won the battle of return yardage 216-78.

Woods sealed the Ross victory with a 2-yard TD run with 4:40 left.

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Fremont Ross 49, Tiffin Columbian 35

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|----|---|---|----|
| Tiffin Columbian | 6 | 8 | 14 | 7 | — | 35 |
|------------------|---|---|----|---|---|----|

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|----|----|----|---|----|
| Fremont Ross | 7 | 14 | 14 | 14 | — | 49 |
|--------------|---|----|----|----|---|----|

■ First Quarter:

TC—Derek Kneeskern 43 pass from Ryan Tittle (kick failed), 7:34.

FR—Travis Maynard 85 interception return (Victor Layton kick), 1:50.

■ Second Quarter:

FR—Devante Woods 80 run (Layton kick), 10:58.

TC—Tyler Ward 14 run (Austin Bentz pass from Tittle), 5:47.

FR—Greg Brown 39 pass from Cody Foos (Layton kick), 0:02.

■ Third Quarter:

TC—Jordan Coger 17 pass from Tittle (Kneeskern kick), 2:47.

FR—Brown 29 pass from Foos (Layton kick), 1:17.

TC—Kneeskern 70 pass from Tittle (Kneeskern kick), 0:46.

FR—Foos 1 run (Layton kick), 0:15.

■ Fourth Quarter:

TC—Price 37 pass from Tittle (Kneeskern kick), 11:09.

FR—Wood 5 run (kick blocked), 10:42.

FR—Woods 2 run (Brown kick), 4:40.

| TEAM STATS | TC | FR |
|-----------------------|---------|--------|
| First downs..... | 22 | 11 |
| Total Net Yards | 496 | 435 |
| Rushes-yards..... | 41-162 | 27-247 |
| Passing | 334 | 198 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 26-41-2 | 7-11-0 |
| Fumbles-Lost..... | 0-0 | 0-0 |

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

■ **Rushing:** TC—Tyler Ward 22-113, Ryan Tittle 19-49. FR—Devante Woods 12-187, Tylor Trautwein 4-13, Greg Brown 3-29.

■ **Passing:** TC—Ryan Tittle 25-36-332-4-1, Nate Burns 1-5-2-0-1. FR—Cody Foos 7-11-18-2-0.

■ **Receiving:** TC—Derek Kneeskern 7-149, Jesse Hernandez 6-70, Jordan Coger 5-49, Mike Lee 2-11, Jordan Price 2-44, Austin Bentz 1-9, Tyler Ward 3-3. FR—Greg Brown 3-98, Mikel Stanley 2-96, Skylar Reffner 1-6, Brett Mierke 1-(-2).

RECORDS: Tiffin Columbian 1-2, Fremont Ross 2-1.

FOOTBALL ■ FREMONT ROSS TAKES ON CLEVELAND BENEDICTINE

Little Giants try to right themselves in lopsided series

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports writer

FREMONT — Cleveland Benedictine has been able to do what few football teams have done against Fremont Ross — dominate the Little Giants.

Heading into a Week 4 matchup at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Don Paul Stadium, Ross coach Derek Kidwell believes the Little Giants must overcome a mental block to be successful.

"It's a lopsided (series) that has become a mental game (for us)," Kidwell said. "Our kids have to clear their heads and go out and play football. The last couple of years, I think we've had football players as good as they have had. But it's not a rivalry until we start beating them."

Benedictine and Ross have met 15 times on the gridiron since 1980 with the Bengals holding a 13-2 advantage in the series. The Little Giants, who were blanked 12-0 in last year's game, posted a 34-28 win in 2006 and a 16-6 victory in 1983.

In both the 1983 and the 2006 seasons, Ross qualified for the OHSAA state playoffs.

From what Kidwell has seen of the Bengals this season, Benedictine is bringing a different type of team to Fremont.

"They are a very young team," Kidwell said. "This is the youngest Benedictine team we have seen. They don't have the proven running backs they have had in the past, and their



Brenda Soule | News-Messenger correspondent

Fremont Ross quarterback Cody Foos gets wrapped up by a Tiffin Columbian defender during Friday's game at Don Paul Stadium.

SEE ROSS | B2

ROSS FROM B1

quarterback is a little smaller. Benedictine has gone to the shotgun, but they are still a power-running team."

Some other weapons the Bengals can employ are wide receiver and linebacker Mike Roberts (6-foot-4, 224 pounds, sophomore), wide receiver and linebacker Matt Wenzel (5-11, 157, senior), linebacker and center Adam Patterson (6-0, 250, senior).

The Little Giants rank second in the Greater Buckeye Conference while giving up 241 yards a game. But Kidwell would like to see more from Ross defenders.

"Our defense has to improve," Kidwell said. "We have to get off the field on third down, and we have to make stops when opportunities are there for us."

In the absence of running backs James Aaron Spencer and Tylor Trautwein, Devante Woods ran free for 187 yards and three touchdowns. Quarterback Cody Foos, who is 24-of-47 for 420 yards with four touchdowns and four interceptions, leads the league in passing yards. Wideout

and cornerback Greg Brown tops the conference in scoring (24 points) and receiving yards (211).

"On offense, we have to continue to get better," Kidwell said. "Our offensive line has played well the last two weeks. I was pleased with the way Devante Woods ran the ball and with the way Cody Foos played. We need to build on those two positives and keep moving in the right direction."

Trevor Trimble, Nate Chudzinski, John Paxson, Jerome Conley, Brad Beck, Cody Curry and Cory Barron have played roles on the Little Giants' offensive line in 2009.

According to Kidwell, Spencer practiced this week and is expected to be in uniform Friday night. The status of Trautwein, who went down with an ankle injury against the Tornadoes on Ross's first series, will be a game-time decision.

Spencer, who leads the GBC with 301 yards rushing, was sidelined with a tender ankle during the Little Giants' 49-35 victory over Tiffin Columbian on Friday.

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OVERTIME
FREMONT ROSS **28**
BENEDICTINE **21**

Little Giants survive in OT

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports Writer

FREMONT — Defensive back Skylar Reffner and linebacker Travis Maynard ensured a Fremont Ross victory against Cleveland Benedictine on Friday night at Don Paul Stadium.

Reffner tipped a pass that Benedictine quarterback Ty Wilcosky intended for wideout Tim Kendig in the left corner of the end zone into the hands of Maynard as the Little Giants rallied to stun the Bengals 28-21 in overtime.

"I just knew Benedictine was going to run a deep pattern," Reffner said. "They ran an out route and I just broke on the ball, tipped it and Travis made a great play."

Maynard was excited to be in position to seal only the Little Giants' third win over the Bengals in 16 tries.

"After I caught the ball, I knew that I had to get out of the end zone for the referees to blow the whistle for the game to be over," said Maynard, who made his second interception in as many weeks. "I just took off out of the

SURVIVE FROM B1

end zone and it was great."

As Maynard stood as his locker after the game, he drew a huge smile as his teammates chanted over-and-over, "Travis! Travis!"

Ross quarterback Cody Foos hooked up with wideout Mikel Stanley for a 20-yard TD strike on the first play of overtime that broke a 21-all tie and gave the Little Giants their first lead of the game.

Victor Layton's PAT attempt — like each of the three that preceded it — was good as Ross took a 28-21 edge.

The Bengals generated a first down on their overtime possession before Demetric Banks ran for no gain, Wilcosky threw an incompletion and before his pass to Joe McKinley was nullified by a holding call. On the next play, Wilcosky was intercepted.

"We didn't capitalize on our opportunities when we had good field position," Cleveland Benedictine coach Art Bortnick said. "We had a touchdown taken away by a penalty and a missed field goal after it (in the first half). A couple of times we were in the red zone, we didn't get any points."

The Bengals were also the victims of 10 penalties for 81 yards while the Little Giants were penalized twice for 10 yards.

But before Ross was able to preserve its victory, the Little Giants had to rally from a 21-7 fourth-quarter deficit.

Winning the battle of field position with 11:09 left, Foos engineered a 6-play, 32-yard drive that netted the first of his two touchdown passes. Greg Brown hauled in Foos' 6-yard touchdown toss 2½ minutes later.

Getting defensive in the fourth quarter, the Little Giants stopped the next two Benedictine drives inside the Bengals' territory. As 5:11 remained, Foos and running back James Aaron Spencer were the catalysts of Ross possession that consisted of 20 plays, gained 78 yards and chewed up 4:46 off the clock. The result was a 4-yard touchdown run for Spencer, who scored with 27 seconds left to forge a 21-all tie.

"This is part of getting over the hump," Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "We beat a team that's had our number, especially when it didn't look good in the third quarter. We faced a lot of adversity and I thought our defense did a good job of getting stops and giving our offense opportunities."

The Bengals struck first to take a 7-0 lead after William Cloud caught Wilcosky's 11-yard touchdown pass with 5:49 left in the first quarter.

But Ross didn't waste much time answering.

Foos' 44-yard pass to Brown put the Little Giants on the Benedictine 4-yard line, from where Spencer carried the ball into the end zone on the next play. In only 88 seconds, Ross scored to make it a 7-all tie.

But the Bengals added TDs in the second and third quarters to take a 21-7 lead. After Adam Patterson intercepted Foos in the second quarter, Benedictine drove to the Little Giants' 36, where Wilcox and Kendig connected for a TD strike with 54 second left in the first half.

SEE SURVIVE I B2

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Fremont Ross 28, Benedictine 21 (OT)

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|----|---|------|
| Benedictine | 7 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 | — 21 |
| Fremont Ross | 7 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 7 | — 28 |

■ First Quarter:

CB — William Cloud 11 pass from Ty Wilcosky (Justin Bonchek kick), 5:49.
FR — James Aaron Spencer 4 run (Victor Layton kick), 4:21.

■ Second Quarter:

CB — Tim Kendig 36 pass from Ty Wilcosky (Justin Bonchek kick), 0:54.

■ Third Quarter:

CB — Bryan Lacey 64 run (Justin Bonchek kick), 8:50.

■ Fourth Quarter:

FR — Greg Brown 6 pass from Cody Foos (Victor Layton kick), 8:39.

FR — James Aaron Spencer 4 run (Victor Layton kick), 0:27.

■ Overtime:

FR — Mikel Stanley 20 pass from Cody Foos (Victor Layton kick).

| TEAM STATS | CB | FR |
|-----------------------|-------|------|
| First downs..... | 16 | 16 |
| Penalties-Yards | 10-81 | 2-10 |

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

■ **Rushing:** CB— Bryan Lacey 18-143, Demetric Banks 9-39, Ty Wilcosky 16-27, Matt Wenzel 1-(minus-3). FR—James Aaron Spencer 21-79, Greg Brown 3-13, Cody Foos 8-8, Devante Woods 3-2.

■ **Passing:** CB— Ty Wilcosky 8-18-96-2-1. FR— Cody Foos 14-27-161-2-2.

■ **Receiving:**

CB— Tim Kendig 3-49, Mike Roberts 2-23, William Cloud 2-13, Bryan Lacey 1-1. FR— Greg Brown 5-86, Devante Woods 1-10, Chris McCallister 2-11, Kyle Damman 2-7, Skylar Reffner 1-9, Mikel Stanley.

Ross faces Michigan powerhouse

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports writer

FREMONT — When the Fremont Ross football schedule was unveiled this season, few fans of the Little Giants knew anything about Week 5 opponent Bloomfield Hills, Mich., Lahser.

In previous years, Ross played Lorain Southview during Week 5. But after that series was not renewed, the Little Giants went looking for a fifth non-conference opponent. Ross found the Lahser Knights.

"We have scouted Lahser twice in Michigan," Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "We feel like we have two good scouting looks at them and we have exchanged film with them. It's not anything that is unfamiliar."

On Friday, the Little Giants (3-1) and the Knights (2-2) will square off in the first gridiron meeting between the two teams. Kickoff is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. at Don Paul Stadium.

The city of Bloomfield Hills is 30 miles northwest of Detroit. Lahser's trip to Fremont on Friday will cover 115 miles.

"The biggest challenge here is to play against a team that you would never typically play," said Lahser coach Dan Loria. "It's exciting to see something different. The whole process of us coming down to Fremont on Thursday night, staying over and getting prepared to play a football game in front of a big crowd will be a challenge."

The Knights compete in the Oakland Activities Association Blue Division. With an enrollment of 946 students, Lahser is considered to be a Division II school by the OHSAA, according to assistant commissioner Henry Zaborniak Jr. Should Ross win Friday night, the Little Giants will receive 5½ first-level computer points.

In Michigan, the Knights play nine regular-season games. Since Lahser is the smallest school in its conference, eight of the Knights' nine opponents have enrollments that are the same size as Division I schools in Ohio.

According to Zaborniak, if Ross overcomes Lahser, the Little Giants will also be awarded 6 second-level points for each victory the Knights have against Division I-equivalent schools in Michigan this season.

In his ninth season, Loria has guided the Knights to a 67-27 record. Lahser has won five conference titles (2002-2005, 2008) and has appeared in Michigan's state semifinals three times (2002, 2005, 2008) under Loria.

"The atmosphere we have here in Ohio is a lot different than the way they play football in Michigan," Kidwell said. "We

SEE POWERHOUSE I B8

POWERHOUSE FROM B1

have our music (from the band) being played loud and our fans right up on the field. I think it might be an intimidating factor at the onset, but it's going to be our job to take the punch to (Lahser) early."

Key offensive players for the Knights include quarterback Terrence Haynes, running back Nicholas Woods-Gibbey and wide receivers Jacob Hatchett, Christopher Brown and Brandon Rump.

Lahser defenders include linebackers Drew Stokas and Tiaan De Nysschen, who are both three-year starters, defensive lineman Emery Phillips and linebacker Nick Roth.

Kidwell said he's found Lahser in 48 different offensive formations.

"They have real good size," Kidwell said. "They have very athletic, skilled kids with Haynes being

very elusive. Defensive, they give teams multiple-set looks (5-2, 4-2, 4-3). Their perimeter guys aren't the same caliber of the defenses we have seen. On film, it doesn't appear that they have covered too many spread teams."

The Little Giants will counter with three Greater Buckeye Conference statistical leaders — quarterback

Cody Foos (38-of-74 for 580 yards with 6 TDs and 6 INTs), running back James Aaron Spencer (63 carries,



FOOS



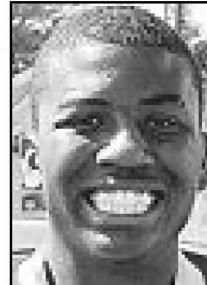
SPENCER

382 yards, 4 TDs) and wide receiver Greg Brown (15 catches, 308 yards, 5 TDs).

Brown and Spencer rank second and fourth, respectively, in the GBC scoring race. Mike Showman heads into Week 5 as the second-best punter in the league at 36.4 yards per game.

Linebackers Travis Maynard (two) and J.J. Moreno and safety Brett Mierke have made interceptions this season for Ross.

The Little Giants lead the league in total offense with 340.5 yards per game and are second in total defense with 256.5 yards per game.



BROWN

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ■ WEEK 5



Doug Hise | News-Messenger correspondent

Fremont Ross ball carrier Greg Browns is hit by Bloomfield Hills Lahser's Nick Roth during Friday night's game.

ROSS 22, BLOOMFIELD HILLS LAHSER 14

Little Giants hold on

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports Writer

FREMONT — For three quarters, the Fremont Ross defense was in total control.

But before the Little Giants preserved a 22-14 nonconference win over Bloomfield Hills Lahser, Ross defenders had to patch the holes the Knights created during a furious fourth quarter rally Friday night at Don Paul Stadium.

Terrence Haynes Jr. and Nicholas Woods-

Gibby ran for touchdowns of 8 and 2 yards, respectively, in the final 6½ minutes and Nick Roth recovered Lahser's onside kick with 1:56 left that gave the Knights a chance to drive for the tying score.

"We have to learn how to finish a game by playing four consistent football quarters," Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "Our defense played outstanding for three quarters, but then they went into shutdown mode in the fourth quarter. We didn't stop

Lahser when we needed to stop them and we just don't have a killer instinct right now. If we don't develop a killer instinct, teams are going to hang around and one of them might bite us."

As the Knights prepared to kick the ball away, Lahser's special teams unit shifted four players to the near sideline and left Roth as the only player lined up on the far

SEE GIANTS I B2

GIANTS FROM B1

sideline. Cody Henderson kicked the ball toward the far sideline, where Roth pounced on it at the Ross 44.

With the Lahser offense back on the field for its third drive of the final period, the Little Giants moved the Knights five yards closer to the end zone after committing a penalty for illegal substitution. On first-and-5 from the Little Giants' 39, Bobby Brandon overthrew the ball down the far sideline as Jacob Hatchett was left wide open. After a run for no gain and an incomplete pass, Haynes, Lahser's starting quarterback, tried the same pass with Hatchett, who saw the ball go through his hands.

"That wasn't the way we wanted to end the game," said Ross safety Brett Mierke, who intercepted the Knights' quarterbacks three times. "I think that we thought that we had (Lahser) put away and we let them come back a little bit. That's not how we're supposed to play defense."

Lahser coach Dan Loria was proud of his team's ability to rally.

"Our kids were extremely focused and extremely confident," Loria said. "No matter what happens on the field, we expect our kids, no matter the score, to be in the lead or have a chance to come from behind. And we almost did it again."

The Little Giants took a 10-0 lead during a 10-point second quarter.

Victor Layton capped an 8-play, 58-yard Ross drive by hitting a 27-yard field goal on the first play of the second quarter. The Little Giants led 3-0 after their defense forced Lahser to punt on its first three possessions.

Mierke stopped the Knights next drive with his first interception on pass thrown by Brandon to the Ross 12. After a 14-yard return and a Lahser penalty for a late hit, the Little Giants had the ball on their own 41.

Cody Foos engineered a Ross drive that saw him convert on third-and-9 at the Little Giants' 42 with a 10-yard pass to Mikel Stanley. But the big blow came after Lahser declined a Ross penalty for having an illegal man downfield.

Instead of pushing the Ross offense back 10 yards, the Knights forced Foos to pass on third-and-11 from the Lahser 29. His strike went James Aaron Spencer, who hauled in a 29-yard TD pass with 4:36 left in the first half.

"It was great to get those picks because it helped the offense get some points," Mierke said.

The Little Giants clung to a 10-0 halftime lead.

In second half, the Ross defense stayed strong. When Lasher drove into the red zone for the first time during the third quarter, Travis Maynard tackled Luke Dauch, who was attempting to pass during a faked field goal.

On the Knights next drive, Mierke stepped in front of a Haynes pass.

Spencer, who led all rushers with 119 yards on 20 carries, helped Ross turn the Lahser turnover into points. His 45-yard TD at the 2:06 mark capped a 7-play, 69-yard drive that handed the Little Giants a 16-0 lead.

A Lahser penalty for roughing the snapper on fourth-and-9 Ross 32 nullified Mike Showman's 54-yard punt and allowed Ross to keep it's possession alive.

But Mierke wasn't done terrorizing the Knights (2-3 overall). His third interception came on Lasher's next play from scrimmage. Foos, who was 15-of-23 for 176 yards, gave Ross a 22-0 lead after running for a 30-yard TD on fourth-and-2 with 11:19 left.

Ross (4-1 overall) opens its Greater Buckeye Conference schedule Friday, when the Little Giants host Findlay.

Fremont Ross 22, Bloomfield Lahser 14

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|----|---|-----------|-------------|
| Bloomfield Lahser | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | — 14 |
| Fremont Ross | 0 | 10 | 6 | 6 | — 22 |

■ Second Quarter

FRHS — V. Layton 27 Yard Field Goal

FRHS — J. Spencer 29 Yard Pass from C. Foos
(V. Layton Kick)

■ Third Quarter

FRHS — J. Spencer 45 Yard Run (Kick Failed)

■ Fourth Quarter

FRHS — C. Foos 30 Yard Run (Kick Failed)

BLHS — T. Haynes 2 Yard Run (C. Henderson
Kick)

BLHS — N. Woods Gibby 8 Yard Run (C.
Henderson Kick)

| | B | F |
|---------------|----------|----------|
| First downs | 0 | 0 |
| Rushes-yards | 42-56 | 33-181 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 9-22-3 | 15-23-1 |
| Passing yards | 138 | 176 |

RUSHING: B — Brandon 1-7, Dauch 1-12,
Haynes 17-0, Gibby 21-66, .

PASSING: B—Brandon 2-5-2-45, Dauch 1-1-0-
19, Haynes 6-15-1-74, Woods Gibby 0-1-0-0, .

RECEIVING: B—Dauch 2-28, Emery 2-25,
Hatchett 2-42, Roth 1-19, Stokas 1-20, Woods
Gibby 1-4, .

Fremont Ross faces Findlay

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports writer

FREMONT — As Findlay and Fremont Ross begin the Greater Buckeye Conference football season, both squads are eyeing a league championship.

The Trojans (1-4), the defending conference titlists, and the Little Giants (4-1), the favorite to claim this year's crown, meet at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Don Paul Stadium as Ross celebrates its 2009 Homecoming.

Little Giants coach Derek Kidwell knows his team will not have any trouble focusing on Findlay.

"Our kids and our programs respect each other, but there isn't any love lost between us," Kidwell said. "We remember walking off the field last year feeling defeated and knowing that we lost some of our goals. We will be ready to go Friday."

After 86 meetings, the Little Giants hold a 52-31-3 advantage

in the all-time series with Findlay. But this game has become a decent rivalry in recent years.

"For Ross and for us, the league race gives us an opportunity to regroup after playing against some good nonconference schedules," Trojans coach Mark Ritzler said. "We have to put our first five games behind us because winning the GBC is based on what we do right now. With all of Fremont's returning players, they are thought of as the (GBC) favorites ... as well they should be. We were able to pull it out last year and we would like to defend that title."

Findlay has played a rough nonconference schedule again this season. The Trojans have lost to Toledo St. John's Jesuit (28-9), Toledo St. Francis DeSales (14-7), Cincinnati Bishop Moeller (49-7) and Columbus St. Francis DeSales (56-26). Findlay's only win was a 24-7 decision against Upper Arlington.

Bishop Moeller (5-0) is ranked No. 3 in the latest Division I poll while Toledo St. Francis DeSales (5-0) is rated No. 5 in Division II.

In 2008, the Trojans were 1-4 before running the GBC table to capture an undefeated league championship during a 6-4 season.

Kidwell would like to see the Little Giants play with more consistency, but has seen Ross improve in many areas.

"It's been an inconsistent season but, luckily for us, we have playmakers that make plays that put points up on the scoreboard," Kidwell said. "By no means have we been consistent. But our defense is getting better, our younger guys are getting on the field and growing into their positions and our special teams coverage has improved."

Still, the Little Giants lead the GBC in total offense at 340.5 yards per game and stand second in the league in total defense at 256.5 yards per game.

On Friday, a consistent rushing attack could propel Ross to victory.

"(Findlay) has struggled to stop the run and we're going to see if that holds true," Kidwell said. "We're going to give them a heavy dose of Aaron Spencer, Cody Foos, Greg Brown and Tyler Trautwein. We want to run the ball to see if it will set up some passing opportunities."

The Trojans have allowed 255 yards per game against the run and have yielded 348.25 total yards per game this season. They will be facing a Little Giants' rushing offense that averages 195 yards per game and is led by Spencer, who leads the GBC with 502 yards and five touchdowns on the ground.

Foos, who has rushed for 124 yards and three TDs, guides a passing attack that has completed 53 of 99 attempts for 753

SEE FOOTBALL | C5

FOOTBALL FROM C1

yards with seven touchdowns and seven interceptions. Brown has been Foos' best wideout after hauling in 16 catches for 308 yards and five TDs. In recent weeks, Mikel Stanley (12 catches, 180 yards, 1 TD) and Kyle Damman (8 catches, 113 yards, 0 TDs) have also emerged as targets.

The Trojans have regrouped from losing a talented senior class in 2008 with a younger line-up this season.

Senior Michael Alexander has 159 yards rushing and one TD on 40 carries this season while sophomore Ben Kupferberg adds 165 yards and one TD on 46 carries. With an average of 96.75 yards rushing and an average of 185.25 total yards, Findlay ranks last in the GBC in both categories.

"We have shown to be a run-first team," Ritzler said. "When we have been able to run the ball well, we're going to keep it on the ground. If we have to throw the ball, we would like to do it 10 or

15 times a game."

Sophomore quarterback Matt Price has completed 12-of-21 passes for 85 yards with no touchdowns and three interceptions. Senior Zach Crawford has hauled in 25 receptions for 208 yards and two TDs and junior Cody Ramsey adds 14 catches for 138 yards and two TDs.

E-mail Jeff Arenz at jarenz@gannett.com.

Com

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ■ WEEK 6



Doug Hise | News-Messenger correspondent

Ross' Tylor Trautwein stiff-arms Findlay's Eric Schanbl during a second-quarter kickoff return Friday night in Fremont.

FINDLAY 43, ROSS 40 (3OT)

Little Giants bounced in triple-overtime thriller

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports Writer

FREMONT — The Findlay Trojans left Don Paul Stadium on Friday night with more than a Greater Buckeye Conference victory.

For the second straight season, Findlay (2-4, 1-0) left Fremont Ross (4-2, 0-1) and its fans in shock after defeating the Little Giants 43-40 in triple overtime.

Matt Spragg's fifth touchdown pass went for 20 yards to Cody Ramsey, who made his third TD grab of the game, on the first play of the Trojans' final possession. It came during the third extra drive for each team after Victory Layton made his fourth field goal of the contest — from 28 yards — to hand the Little Giants a 43-37 lead.

"(This loss) hurts because this was a great high school football game and that some-

one has to come up on the short end of the stick," Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "Two years in a row, it has been us."

Findlay coach Mark Ritzler gave credit to his assistant coaches for their play calling.

"Our assistant coaches said, 'Let's go for it,'" Ritzler said. "We were very close to going for a 2-point conversion at the end of regulation, but we thought we may have had an advantage in the kicking game. The assistant coaches made a lot of great calls."

In the extra sessions, the Trojans ran eight times on their first nine plays with Alex Henry, who had 79 yards on 23 carries, before Spragg connected with a TD to Ramsey for the second time in the game.

Tied at 31 after regulation, the game turned into a battle of field goals. Findlay kicker Eric Schaeble connected on field goals from 20 yards in overtime and 28

yards in double overtime after hitting a 31-yarder in the third quarter and missing from 27 yards 4:05 into the second half.

"Eric has a back injury that gives him pain every time he kicks," Findlay coach Mark Ritzler said. "He's hurt but he's been stepped up for us."

For the Little Giants, who missed the 2008 OHSAA postseason with an 8-2 record, their second loss of 2009 was tough to swallow.

"There are no excuses and you have to give Findlay credit," Kidwell said. "They took a big step toward winning the GBC tonight. It's a tough pill to swallow because I think we have a pretty good football team. We just haven't played up to expectations this season."

Spragg was 21-of-40 for 368 yards with

SEE THRILLER I B8

THRILLER FROM B1

TD passes going to Henry (25 yards, second quarter), Ramsey (65 yards, second quarter; 32 yards, fourth quarter and 20 yards, triple overtime) and Brock Romantic (7 yards, fourth quarter).

"He's struggled at times this year," Ritzler said of Spragg. "He's a new player at that position and we may have seen a kid grow up here in a big game."

The Little Giants had a 3-0 lead after Layton hit a 33-yard field goal at the 8:26 mark of the first quarter.

Ross extended its lead to 24-14 at halftime after quarterback Cody Foos ran for a 3-yard TD and James Aaron Spencer scampered 6 yards for another touchdown in the second quarter. But the Little Giants big blow came when Foos threw a 66-yard TD strike to Greg Brown (8 catches, 121 yards) during a 74-second, second-period scoring frenzy as 3:37 remained in the first half.

Two plays and 52 seconds later Spragg hit Ramsey for a 66-yard TD strike before Tylor Trautwein's 79-yard kickoff return set up Spencer's 6-yard TD with 2:27 left in the first half.

Schaible's 31-yard, third-quarter field goal cut the Findlay deficit to 24-17.

With 6:18 left in regulation, Spragg's second TD pass to Ramsey gave the Trojans a 24-all tie before Brett Mierke hauled in a 25-yard touchdown pass from

Foos, his second TD strike of the game.

But in the final 34 seconds of regulation, the Trojans used an 8-play, 59-yard drive that was capped by Spragg's 7-yard scoring pass to Romantic.

"I'll take the blame for this loss because I didn't have our kids prepared well enough," Kidwell said. "I shouldn't have went for it on fourth-and-1 at midfield. I had confidence in the offensive line and they didn't come through."

With 9:37 left in the game, the Little Giants failed to convert a first down on fourth-and-1 at the Findlay 45, where Trautwein was stuffed for a 2-yard loss.

But Kidwell was disappointed in the Ross defense.

"We have a sign that we hit before we leave the locker room that says, 'Defense wins championships,'" Kidwell said.

"We can't give up 43 points and expect to be a championship-caliber team."

Ritzler said his players showed more confidence than their coach.

"It seemed like the entire time that our kids had the look in their eyes that they felt confident that they were going to win in the second half and overtime," Ritzler said. "They looked more confident than I was. They just knew it."

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Findlay 43, Ross 40 (3OT)

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|----|
| Findlay | 0 | 14 | 3 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 6 | — | 43 |
| Ross | 3 | 21 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 3 | — | 40 |

First Quarter

FR Victor Layton 33 Field goal.

Second Quarter

F Alex Henry 25 yd pass from Matt Spragg (Eric Schaible kick).

FR Cody Foos 3 yd run (Layton kick).

FR Greg Brown 66 yd pass from Foos (Layton kick).

F Cody Ramsey 65 yd pass from Spragg (Schaible kick).

FR James Aaron Spencer 6 yd run (Layton kick).

Third Quarter

F Eric Schaible 31 yd field goal.

Fourth Quarter

F Ramsey 32 yd pass from Spragg (Schaible kick).

FR Brett Mierke 25 yd pass from Foos (Layton kick).

F Brock Romantic 7 yd pass from Spragg (Schaible kick).

Overtime

FR Victor Layton 34 yd field goal.

F Eric Schaible 30 yd field goal.

F Eric Schaible 28 yd field goal.

FR Victor Layton 37 yd field goal.

FR Victor Layton 28 yd field goal.

F Ramsey 20 yd pass from Spragg.

| | F | F |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| First downs | N 23 | 15 |
| Rushes-yards | 48-146 | 33-123 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 21-40-0 | 11-28-0 |
| Passing yards | 368 | 164 |
| Fumbles-lost | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Punts-avg | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Penalties-yards | 8-87 | 6-40 |

RUSHING: F—Alexander 14-32, Henry 23-79, Kupferberg 7-29, Spragg 5-6, F—Foos 12-33, Spencer 18-83, Trautwein 2-4, Woods 1-8.

PASSING: F—Spragg 21-40-0-368, F—Foos 11-28-0-164.

RECEIVING: F—Blunk 3-75, Henry 5-73, Kupferberg 1-4, Ramsey 7-144, Romantic 4-60, Spragg 1-12, F—Brown 8-121, Mierke 3-43.

Fremont Ross football makes changes, takes on Marion Harding Friday

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports writer

FREMONT — Heading into Week 7, the Fremont Ross Little Giants are looking to make improvements in all phases for the final four weeks of the football season.

"I think our focus needs to be on us," Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "We have to get better and, to correct some of our issues that we have internally, we had a team meeting on Monday. I believe we have addressed the issues and that our kids will come out and play inspired football."

The first opportunity for the Little Giants (4-2, 0-1) to test the impact of their changes will be Friday, when Ross travels to play Marion Harding at 7:30 p.m. in a Greater Buckeye Conference contest.

"We need to pay more attention to detail and fundamentals. ... We're going back to basics because a lot of the errors we've had are uncharacteristic, inexcusable and they're hurting our team."

DEREK KIDWELL
Fremont Ross football coach

"We need to pay more attention to detail and fundamentals," Kidwell said. "The kids have to do things the way they are coached to do. We're going back to basics because a lot of the errors we've had are uncharacteristic, inexcusable and they're hurting our team."

The postseason hopes of the

Little Giants were dealt a serious blow Friday, when GBC rival Findlay defeated Ross 43-40 in triple overtime at Don Paul Stadium.

In 2008, an 8-2 record eliminated the Little Giants from playoff contention in Division I Region 2 by 0.725 computer points. Like last season, Ross will need its

opponents to provide second-level points to make the postseason, even if the Little Giants win their final four games.

But first, the Little Giants have to take care of their own business. And before Ross can be considered a playoff contender, the team must adjust a defense that allowed Findlay to accumulate 514 yards of total offense, including 368 yards passing, in Week 6.

"It all comes down to the fact that our kids have to make plays," Kidwell said.

Ross's leading playmakers on offense have been quarterback Cody Foos (64-of-127, 918 yards, 9 TDs, 7 INTs), running back James Aaron Spencer (102 carries, 584 yards, 6 TDs) and wideout Greg Brown (24 catches, 430 yards, 7 TDs).

"Fremont Ross always had an explosive offense, led by Foos, who can put them in right places and manage the offense," Harding coach Heath Hinton said.

On Friday, the Little Giants will deal with Harding (2-4, 0-1), which has doubled its win total from last season. The Presidents, blanked 41-0 by Napoleon at home on Friday, have victories against Newark (33-22) and Lorain Admiral King (18-14) in 2009.

But the Little Giants will be facing a Harding offense that gained 149 yards versus Napoleon (5-1).

"We've been able to throw effectively and that has helped our running game," Hinton said. "Dominique Ayers has been able

SEE ROSS I B6

ROSS FROM B1

to do some big play stuff for us."

Ayers, who has run for 350 yards and four TDs on 59 carries this season, was limited to 16 yards on 13 rushing attempts against the Wildcats. Quarterback Asher Rumble, who ran for 24 yards and threw for 80 more, has completed 47-of-108 passes for 613 yards with two touchdowns and five interceptions. Wideout Eric Gilmore has hauled in 12 passes for 95 yards and two TDs.

Kidwell knows his kids have to execute in all phases of the game, if Ross ex-

pects to be successful.

"We're not concerned with Marion right now," Kidwell said. "We know that they're a power-running team, but we haven't addressed what they do defen-

sively because we're making it about what we're doing offensively and how we come out and attack defenses."

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ■ WEEK 7



Ed Borland | CentralOhio.com

Fremont Ross running back James Spencer sheds the tackle of Marion Harding President Tyler Haas during Friday's game at Harding High School.

MARION HARDING 21, FREMONT ROSS 0

Presidents veto Little Giants

BY BOB PUTMAN
CentralOhio.com

MARION — Fremont Ross coach Derek Kidwell refused to let the weather conditions be an excuse for a second straight Little Giant loss.

Marion Harding scored touchdowns on its first possession of each half and went on to a 21-0 rain-drenched Greater Buckeye Conference victory Friday night at Harding Stadium.

"Harding played in the same elements we did," Kidwell said. "Give Harding a ton of credit, defending their field and playing smart football."

A week ago in a 41-0 loss to Napoleon, Harding (3-4 overall, 1-1 GBC) turned the ball over five times. But the Presidents did not commit a turnover in much worse conditions and even collected two Fremont Ross miscues.

Kidwell felt pretty good about his team's situation at the end of the half, trailing 7-0.

But Harding took the second half kickoff and marched down the field. The Presidents overcame three penalties during a 72-yard drive that concluded with a six-yard run by Aaron Gabriel on the seventh play of the drive. Thomas Adamson kicked the point

after and Harding led 14-0.

A big play in the drive was a short pass from Asher Rumble to Chris Ryle that turned into a 47-yard gain, aided by a block from Tyler Haas, that put the Presidents all the way down to the Fremont 17.

"I felt pretty good at the end of the half," Kidwell said. "But we couldn't get our defense off the field and let them score on the first possession of the second half. With the elements we knew it would be tough to get two scores. That score let them play more relaxed."

SEE ROSS I B6

ROSS FROM B1

But Fremont (4-3, 0-2) came right back after the Harding score and held the ball for more than six minutes.

Running several times with wide receiver Greg Brown taking the snap in a Wildcat formation, the Little Giants went from their own 10 to the Harding 38.

Brown, who by a coaching decision was held out of the first half, bolted 13 yards to put the ball on the Presidents 38.

The Harding defense stiffened there, limiting Fremont to just six yards on the next four plays, giving the ball back to its offense.

Harding then scored the clincher four plays later as Dominique Ayers scampered 57 yards on a sweep to the right. Adamson was true with the PAT for a 21-0 cushion.

Fremont didn't get into Harding territory the rest of the game and Harding closed out the upset.

"We are going to see what type of leaders we have the last three games," Kidwell said. "We expect them to come out and be excited to play every week."

Fremont rushed for 201 yards, led by James Spencer with 94 yards on 14 carries. But Cody Foos was just 4 of 18 passing for 39 yards.

Marion Harding 21, Fremont Ross 0

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|----|------|
| Fremont Ross | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0—0 |
| Marion Harding | 7 | 0 | 14 | 0—21 |

First Quarter

MHHS - A. Rumble 1 Yard Run (T. Adamson Kick)

Third Quarter

MHHS - A. Gabriel 6 Yard Run (T. Adamson Kick)

MHHS - D. Ayers 57 Yard Run (T. Adamson Kick)

| | F | M |
|-----------------|--------|--------|
| First downs | 0 | 0 |
| Rushes-yards | 44-201 | 42-188 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 4-18-1 | 3-7-0 |
| Passing yards | 39 | 117 |
| Fumbles-lost | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Punts-avg | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Penalties-yards | 0-0 | 0-0 |

RUSHING: F—Brown 5-24, Foos 22-64, Mierke 1-3, Spencer 14-95, Trautwein 2-15, M—Ayers 16-102, Gabriel 7-7, Montgomery 1-2, Rumble 11-40, Ryle 6-37.

PASSING: F—Foos 4-18-1-39, M—Rumble 3-7-0-117.

RECEIVING: F—Damman 1-24, McCallister 1-6, Spencer 2-9, M—Gilmore 1-50, Rucker 1-19, Ryle 1-48.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ■ FREMONT ROSS (4-3, 0-2 GBC) VS. NAPOLEON (6-1, 2-0)

Ross looks to break losing streak

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports writer

FREMONT — Reeling from a two-game losing streak, the Fremont Ross football team must contend with Division III sixth-ranked Napoleon on Friday at Don Paul Stadium.

Kickoff for this Greater Buckeye Conference game is scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

"There is a lot for us to play for," Ross football coach Derek Kidwell said. "Hopefully, our seniors can give us maximum effort because it's their night. It might be the last time they will get to play in front of their family and friends. It might be the last time they put on the purple and white."

"It's going to be a hard-fought game. Even though (the Napoleon Wildcats) are the smallest school in our league, they always have big wins, and they're always right there in the race for the league championship."

DEREK KIDWELL
Fremont Ross football coach

The Little Giants (4-3 overall, 0-2 GBC) and the Wildcats (6-1, 2-0) have had their share of closely-fought games over the years. Ross holds a slim 9-7 lead in the all-time series, including a 19-13 win at Napoleon in 2008.

"Napoleon is sound in all three

phases of the game," Kidwell said. "They have 10 starters back on defense and quite a few back on offense. It's going to be a hard-fought game. Even though they are the smallest school in our league, they always have big wins, and they're always right there in the race for

the league championship."

Napoleon's Brandon Hummer (524 yards, 7 TDs) leads the best rushing offense in the GBC, which averages 194.6 yards per game and has produced 19 touchdowns in 2009. John Weaver (388 yards, 5 TDs) and Clint Detmer (217 yards, 3 TDs) also carry some of the load for the Wildcats.

They will be going up against a Ross run defense that ranks second in the league at 145.7 yards per game.

Napoleon quarterback Nick Retting has run for more touchdowns (4) than he has thrown (2). He has completed 27-of-55 passes for 209

SEE ROSS I B2

ROSS FROM B1

yards with 2 INTs, but his feet have allowed him to gain 158 yards on 43 carries.

Jordan Fisher (8 catches, 56 yards), Detmer (7 catches, 35 yards, 1 TD) and Cody Bloom (5 catches, 78 yards, 1 TD) are the top targets of Rettig.

At 147.8 yards per game, the Little Giants' pass defense is sixth in the GBC.

Detmer leads the GBC with nine punt returns for 153 yards while Napoleon's Fisher and Detmer have combined for seven kickoff returns for 256 yards to top the league.

The Little Giants will counter with the highest rated GBC offense, which averages 302.7 yards per game. But Ross is facing the best defense in the league as the Wildcats yield 181.0 yards per game.

"We need to come out with some heart and desire," Kidwell said. "There is no excuse to come out flat. This is high school football and (our players) should be ready to play at the start. It hasn't happened that way for us this year. I think if we can get a positive return to start the game or get good coverage on a kickoff, we can build off of that for the rest of the game."

Little Giants' running back James Aaron Spencer tops the GBC with 678 yards on 116 carries while Ross quarterback Cody Foos has completed 68-of-144 passes for 955 yards with 8 TDs and 9 INTs.

Greg Brown, the league leader in receiving yards, has made 24 receptions for 430 yards and 6 TDs.

The top six players in GBC scoring will be featured Friday night. Detmer (first, 49 points), Hummer (42, second) and Weaver (36, third) hail from Napoleon. Spencer (42, second), Brown (36, third) and Victor Layton (36, third) play for Ross.



SPENCER



FOOS



BROWN

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ■ WEEK 8



Doug Hise | News-Messenger correspondent

Cody Foos, of Fremont Ross, is sandwiched by two tacklers during Friday night's Greater Buckeye Conference game against Napoleon.

NAPOLEON 28, ROSS 14

Little Giants fall at home

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports writer

FREMONT — Running back Brandon Hummer carried Napoleon to a 28-14 Greater Buckeye Conference win against Fremont Ross on Friday night at Don Paul Stadium.

Hummer, who had 30 rushing attempts for 182 yards, scored three fourth-quarter touchdowns for the Wildcats, who trailed 14-7 entering the final period.

"All the credit goes to our offensive line, because I didn't have to do any work," Hummer said. "It was all on them for opening up the holes and pushing back the Ross defenders."

Hummer scored on runs of 2, 4 and 6 yards. He was part of a Wildcats rushing attack that outrushed the Little Giants 300-61 and outgained them 341-139 overall.

"We can't keep our defense on the field," Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "In the second half, it was all about execution and our offense was horrible. Our offensive line didn't show up because we let (Napoleon's) defensive linemen get free and we couldn't

sustain anything in our running."

After amassing 113 yards of total offense in the first half, the Little Giants (4-4 overall, 0-3 GBC) were held to 26 yards and punted four times during the final 24 minutes.

The Wildcats (7-1, 3-0) pressured Ross quarterback Cody Foos with defensive lineman Joel Spurgeon, who sacked the Little Giants signal-caller five times in the contest.

"When you struggle to give your running back lanes, you're going to struggle offensively," Kidwell said. "Our offense put our defense in a bad situation in the second half because they were on the field constantly."

With 11:56 left, Hummer capped a 10-play, 51-yard Napoleon drive that ended with a 4-yard TD run and tied the game at 14. On fourth-and-1 at the Ross 12 near the end of the third quarter, he kept the Wildcats' possession alive with an 8-yard run.

After Napoleon forced Ross to punt on its next possession, Hummer and John Weaver, who had 83 yards on 12 carries, guided Napoleon's ground game during a five-play, 52-yard drive. Weaver advanced

the ball to the Ross 14 after running for 9 yards and picking up a Little Giants' personal foul penalty.

Three plays later, Hummer's 2-yard TD run gave the Wildcats a 21-14 lead with 7:52 left. Napoleon extended its lead to 28-14 when Hummer ran around the right end for a 6-yard TD as 2:52 remained.

"One of my college football coaches, Denny Phillips, who was at Bluffton University for about 20 years, was here tonight," Napoleon coach Tory Strock said. "When we came out after the half, I said, 'Coach Phillips, what do you think? Do you think we're okay?' He said, 'Are you kidding me? Your team is tougher.'"

Strock said when he conveyed that conversation to his players, they responded with high intensity.

This season, the Wildcats have outscored their opponents 90-3 in the fourth quarter. Punt returns set up both Ross TDs. Greg Brown's 22-yard return in the first quarter

SEE GIANTS | B2

LITTLE GIANTS FROM B1

put the Little Giants on the Napoleon 41. In two plays, James Aaron Spencer ran for gains of 26 and 15 yards, which put Ross ahead 6-0 just 1:44 into the game.

After the Wildcats' grabbed a 7-6 lead on quarterback Nick Rettig's 15-yard second-quarter run, Tylor Trautwein's 47-yard punt return handed Ross a short field at the Napoleon 28.

Facing a third-and-9 at the Wildcats' 16, Foos passed for 14 yards to Spencer as Ross converted for a first down. The toss set up Spencer's second TD run — this one from 2 yards out — with 40 seconds left before intermission.

The Little Giants led 14-7 at halftime after Foos connected with Spencer for a 2-point conversion. Spencer led the Ross offense with 85 yards on 15 carries. Foos passed for 78 yards on 9-of-16 attempts while Mikel Stanley made four catches for 35 yards.

E-mail Jeff Arenz at
jarenz@gannett.com.

Napoleon 28, Fremont Ross 14

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|----|---|----|
| Napoleon | 0 | 7 | 0 | 21 | — | 28 |
| Fremont Ross | 6 | 8 | 0 | 0 | — | 14 |

First Quarter

Ross James Aaron Spencer 15 yd run (kick failed).

Second Quarter

Napoleon Nick Rettig 15 yd run (kick failed).

Ross Spencer 2 yd run (Spencer pass from Cody Foos)

Fourth Quarter

Napoleon Brandon Hammer 4 yd run (Clint Detmer kick).

Napoleon Hammer 2 yd run (Detmer kick).

Napoleon Hammer 6 yd run (Detmer kick).

| | N | F |
|-----------------|--------|--------|
| First downs | 20 | 7 |
| Rushes-yards | 51-300 | 25-61 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 4-9-0 | 9-16-0 |
| Passing yards | 41 | 78 |
| Fumbles-lost | 1-1 | 3-1 |
| Penalties-yards | 3-37 | 9-78 |

RUSHING: N—Detmer 3-12, Hummer 30-182, Rettig 6-23, Weaver 12-83, F—Brown 1—1, Foos 7—29, Spencer 15-85, Woods 2-6.

PASSING: N—Rettig 4-9-0-41, F—Foos 9-16-0-78.

RECEIVING: N—Bloom 1-25, Fisher 1-4, Weaver 2-12, F—Damman 1-13, McCallister 1-1, Renfer 1-7, Spencer 2-22, Stanley 4-35.

Struggling Ross takes on GBC foe Lima Senior

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports writer

FREMONT — A pair of struggling Greater Buckeye Conference football teams will meet Friday night in Lima.

Fremont Ross (4-4 overall, 0-3 GBC), saddled with its first three losing seasons since 2005, travels to Lima Senior (2-6, 0-3), a team that has dropped four consecutive games this season and has lost six of its last seven contests.

"Our defense hasn't been able to get off the field often this year," Lima Giant coach Derek Kidwell said. "We played a great first half against Napoleon, and they ran it down our throats in the second half. We're just playing bad collectively as a team and we need to get it fixed."

The Wildcats held a 300-61 advantage in rushing against Ross in Week 8.

The losing streak has caused some Ross fans to grumble and speculate about the future within the Little Giants' program. Kidwell believes the best thing for his team is to fight through adversity.

"Fans can buy their tickets and register their complaints, but anything worth fighting for internally is going to stay internal," Kidwell said. "We're not going to make excuses. Everything's not always going to be perfect. We're trying to teach our kids when they're adversity, to face them in the face, they're going to have to fight through it. We're trying to fight through it now."

After a 4-1 start this season, the Ross skid has come entirely in GBC — versus Findlay (33-40), Wauseon (34-41), Napoleon (28-14), Lima Senior (49-14) and 4 (Dayton Meadowdale 38-14), but its losses have come against Cahokia Lincoln (59-7), Millcreek (61-7), Cincinnati La Salle (48-7), Sandusky (47-21), Napoleon (34-7) and Findlay (33-7).

The Little Giants' offense has been held to 14 points the last two weeks and is averaging 25.5 points per game, leaving Kidwell disappointed with the Ross offensive line.

"They just need to stay with their blocks and keep their rules consistent," Kidwell said. "We can't have bad penalties. Small elementary stuff. We don't have big kids. Our kids are giving us maximum effort. They're just making mental errors. Sometimes, it does come down to physical. Our guards can get out strengthened. They've got to block and they play as one unit. They're playing as five individuals, and they should be playing as one unit."

Quarterback Cody Fools has regressed from his statistics in 2008.



FOOLS

He's completed 77-of-166 passes for 1,032 yards, but his touch-down-to-interception ratio has taken a severe hit. In 2009, Fools has 9 TD passes and 8 interceptions after throwing 20 TDs and 5 INTs in 2008 and 15 TDs and 5 INTs in 2007.

"We need better play out of our quarterback," Kidwell said. "He's a three-year starter, and it would help us if he could find receivers and keep us in positive situations. But it's a team game. No one individual can do it. It's a skill. It's on me as a head coach. I'm responsible for it all."

Lima Senior features running back Keithie Laseby (108 carries, 590 yards, 4 TDs), quarterback Andrew Hutchins (47-of-103, 540 yards, 6 TDs) and wideout David Densenberg (14 receptions, 168 yards, 3 TDs). With 74 carries and 184 yards, Hutchins also contributes to the Spartans' ground attack.

"They're the team on the perimeter," Kidwell said. "Our running backs are quick and explosive. We have to stay in our lanes and play the gaps. We're going to try to get our running offense

ROSS FROM B1

kick-started with James Spencer and Tylor Trautwein. Our offensive line has to play well. We think we match up pretty well with them in the interior."

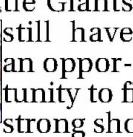
Spencer leads the GBC in rushing yards (763 on 131 carries) and has scored 8 TDs. He is second in the league with 56 points.

Wideout Greg Brown (10 TDs) tops the conference in receiving yards (430 on 24 catches) and has hauled in 6 TD passes.

The Little Giants' offense has been held to 14 points the last two weeks and is averaging 25.5 points per game, leaving Kidwell disappointed with the Ross offensive line.

"They just need to stay with their blocks and keep their rules consistent," Kidwell said. "We can't have bad penalties. Small elementary stuff. We don't have big kids. Our kids are giving us maximum effort. They're just making mental errors. Sometimes, it does come down to physical. Our guards can get out strengthened. They've got to block and they play as one unit. They're playing as five individuals, and they should be playing as one unit."

Quarterback Cody Fools has regressed from his statistics in 2008.



FOOLS

He's completed 77-of-166 passes for 1,032 yards, but his touch-down-to-interception ratio has taken a severe hit. In 2009, Fools has 9 TD passes and 8 interceptions after throwing 20 TDs and 5 INTs in 2008 and 15 TDs and 5 INTs in 2007.

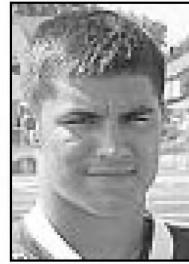
"We need better play out of our quarterback," Kidwell said. "He's a three-year starter, and it would help us if he could find receivers and keep us in positive situations. But it's a team game. No one individual can do it. It's a skill. It's on me as a head coach. I'm responsible for it all."

Lima Senior features running back Keithie Laseby (108 carries, 590 yards, 4 TDs), quarterback Andrew Hutchins (47-of-103, 540 yards, 6 TDs) and wideout David Densenberg (14 receptions, 168 yards, 3 TDs). With 74 carries and 184 yards, Hutchins also contributes to the Spartans' ground attack.

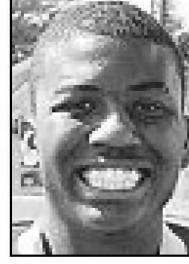
"They're the team on the perimeter," Kidwell said. "Our running backs are quick and explosive. We have to stay in our lanes and play the gaps. We're going to try to get our running offense



SPENCER



TRAUTWEIN



BROWN

The Little Giants still have an opportunity to finish 2009 with a strong showing. After traveling to Lima on Friday, Ross plays at rival Sandusky in Week 10.

"(I want our kids) to play for pride and play for a winning season," Kidwell said. "6-4 is a lot better than 4-6 or 5-5. Hopefully, our kids will take pride in putting on the Fremont jersey."

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SEE ROSS I B6

ROSS 45, LIMA SENIOR 17

Big 2nd half fuels Little Giants

BY JEFF ARENZ
Sports Writer

LIMA — Fremont Ross dominated the second half of a 45-17 Greater Buckeye Conference victory against Lima Senior on Friday.

Leading 14-10 at the start of the third quarter, the Little Giants (5-4, 1-3) scored 24 consecutive points on their first four possessions and forced the Spartans to punt on their first three second-half drives.

Greg Brown and Devante Woods ran for TDs and Victor Layton had a 31-yard field goal in the third quarter as Ross extended its lead to 17 before quarterback Cody Foos opened the

fourth quarter with a 6-yard TD run.

"We played under control and we controlled the line of scrimmage," Little Giants coach Derek Kidwell said. "Our offensive line deserves a lot of credit because they have been beaten up (verbally) by the coaching staff. Cody Foos managed an outstanding game without any turnovers and hit the open receivers when he had to. (James Aaron) Spencer, (Tylor) Trautwein and Devante Woods all ran the ball well. And our defense played well."

SEE GIANTS I B2

LITTLE GIANTS FROM B1

Foos, who ended up throwing for 186 yards on 16-of-23 passing and no interceptions, found Kyle Damman open for a 24-yard TD strike with 30 seconds left before halftime as Ross went ahead for good at 14-10.

Ross outgained Lima Senior 489-288 in total yards and 303-144 in rushing, which Woods aided by running for TDs of 80 yards in the third quarter and 95 yards in the fourth quarter. He ended up with 178 yards on 4 carries.

"We were right where we wanted to be when we came out for the second half," Spartans coach Darnell Collins said. "We thought if we could come out and get a three-and-out on (Ross), that would give us good momentum to take the lead. But the Little Giants went right down and scored."

The scoring onslaught began with Brown, whose 6-yard TD capped an 8-play, 48-yard scoring drive on the Little Giants' first possession of the second half. A 42-yard kickoff return by Woods gave Ross the ball near midfield.

Thinking it was getting the ball back, Lima Senior was shocked to see Brett Mierke pounce on Layton's onside kick with 8 1/2 minutes left in the third quarter. The ensuing Ross possession ended with Layton's 31-yard boot.

"I think our kids responded in the second half," Kidwell said. "The onside kick was a big play. We wanted to get a comfortable lead because we've let some leads slip away from us this year."

The Spartans went three-and-out while Woods ran 80 yards for a TD at the 2:26 mark before Foos engineered a 2-play, 40-yard drive that gobbled up 34 yards on pass to Mierke. The Little Giants quarterback scored from 6 yards out on the next play.

The only drive Lima Senior put together in the second half when quarterback Adrian Hutchins connected for a 58-yard TD pass to Marc Johnson with 5:18 left.

But Woods found another opening with 32 seconds remaining, running 95 yards for his second TD of the game.

Ross had an answer for Lima Senior throughout the first half.

After Casey Reed gave the Spartans a 3-0 lead on a 43-yard field goal — the second-longest in Lima Senior history — with 4:37 left in the first quarter, the Little Giants came back with an 11-play, 54-yard drive.

Foos kept the Ross possession alive by connecting with Chris McCallister for 11 yards on fourth-and-5 at the Spartans' 37 before hitting Mierke for 26 yards on third-and-9 at the Lima Senior 27. Trautwein capped the drive with a 1-yard plunge into the end zone as 11:29 remained in the first half.

Both teams punted on each of their next possessions before the Spartans regained the lead. Hutchins hooked up with David Densberg for 15 yards on third-and-8 at the Little Giants' 49. Keithie LASENBY, who ran 18 times for 133 yards, handled the next three carries, breaking off a 29-yard TD run on third-and-3.

Reed's extra-point kick put Lima Senior ahead 10-7 with 3:13 left in the first half.

But Ross offense executed effectively right before the intermission.

During an 11-play, 59-yard Little Giants' drive, Foos went 6-of-8 with completions to Spencer (twice), Brown, Mikel Stanley, Mierke and Damman, who hauled in a 24-yard TD strike as 30 seconds remained before halftime.

Layton gave Ross a 14-10 advantage with his second of six PATs in the game.

E-mail Jeff Arenz at jarenz@gannett.com.

High School Football

Fremont Ross 45, Lima 17

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|----|----|----|---|----|
| Fremont Ross | 0 | 14 | 17 | 14 | — | 45 |
| Lima | 3 | 7 | 0 | 7 | — | 17 |

First Quarter

LS — Casey Reed FG 43, 4:37.

Second Quarter

FR — Tylor Trautwein 1 run (Victor Layton kick), 11:29.

LS — Keithie LASENBY 29 run (Casey Reed kick), 3:13.

FR — Kyle Damman 24 pass from Cody Foos (Victor Layton kick), 0:30.

Third Quarter

FR — Greg Brown 5 run (Victor Layton kick), 8:31.

FR — Victor Layton 31 FG, 5:34.

FR — Devante Woods 80 run (Victor Layton kick), 2:26.

Fourth Quarter

FR — Cody Foos 6 run (Victor Layton kick), 11:45.

LS — Marc Johnson 58 pass from Adrian Hutchins (Casey Reed kick), 5:18.

FR — Devante Woods 95 run (Victor Layton kick), 0:30.

| | F | L |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| First downs | 17 | 9 |
| Rushes-yards | 36-303 | 32-144 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 16-24-0 | 8-14-1 |
| Passing yards | 186 | 144 |
| Fumbles-lost | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Punts-avg | 3-38 | 6-33 |
| Penalties-yards | 8-65 | 5-22 |

RUSHING: F—Brown 5-35, Foos 9-29, Spencer 10-37, Woods 4-178, L—HUTCHINS 9-6, JACOBS 1-1, JOHNSON 2-11, LASENBY 18-133.

PASSING: F—Foos 16-23-0-186, L—HUTCHINS 7-13-1-140, JOHNSON 1-1-0-4.

RECEIVING: F—Brown 2-10, Damman 2-34, McCallister 1-11, Mierke 4-68, Spencer 6-61, Stanley 1-4, L—DENSENBERG 2-16, JACOBS 2-43, JOHNSON 3-71, LASENBY 1-14.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

WEEK 10 MATCHUPS

Ross, Sandusky rivalry to resume

BY JEFF ARENZ

Sports writer

FREMONT — There is a new twist in the football rivalry between Fremont Ross and Sandusky.

The Little Giants and Blue Streaks meet at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Strobel Field in Sandusky. The game has been designated as a contest in the Great American Rivalry Series.

"This game is deserving, being its the 104th meeting," Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "It's a great rivalry and, hopefully, both teams come out and play up to their expectations. In a rivalry like this, you hope both teams will respect one another by playing clean, hard-nosed football."

The Great American Rivalry Series is sponsored by the United States Marine Corps and iHigh.com. Select schools from around the nation are picked to participate in the series. These schools have had a traditional rivalry, going back many years.

Sandusky leads the all-time series 52-43-8.

According to iHigh.com, The Great American Rivalry Series not only celebrates high school football, it embraces its excitement, traditions and history. A donation is given to the host

SEE ROSS | B2

ROSS FROM B1

team for their football program as well as two college scholarships awarded to a player from each team in the rivalry.

"This is one of the best rivalries in the state, if not the country," Sandusky coach Mike Franklin said. "Everyone is excited and I am grateful that we were able to put this together for this game. This rivalry has a great tradition and it's nice to see the teams come together year after year."

Both teams bring positive momentum into Week 10.

Ross (5-4 overall, 1-3 Greater Buckeye Conference) ended a three-game losing streak with a 45-17 win at Lima Senior last Friday. Despite dropping a 30-0 decision at Napoleon in Week 9, Sandusky (4-5, 3-1) has won four of its last six games.

"Winning cures a lot and our kids felt pretty good leaving Lima on Friday and pretty good during practice this week," Kidwell said. "You can't go back and get what is already gone and we've talked about that. The only thing we can do is learn from it and move on."

On offense, the Little Giants (290.33 yards) and Blue Streaks (258.89) are first and third, respectively, in the GBC.

The Ross attack features running back James Aaron Spencer (140 carries, 802 yards, 8 TDs and 14 catches, 127 yards, 1 TD), quarterback Cody Foos (93-of-183 passing, 1,216 yards, 10 TDs, 8 INTs and 97 carries, 212 yards, 5 TDs) and wideout Greg Brown (26 catches, 440 yards, 6 TDs and 23 carries, 128 yards, 1 TD).

Devante Woods has also emerged in the Little Giants' backfield (31 carries, 408 yards, 5 TDs) while Mikel Stanley (16 catches, 217 yards, 1 TD), Kyle Damman

(12 catches, 181 yards, 1 TD) and Brett Mierke (10 catches, 140 yards, 1 TD) are also threats as receivers.

"Ross has very good specialty players at quarterback (Foos), running back (Spencer) and safety (Mierke)," Franklin said. "Our goal is to stop the big play. We want to make them drive the field. That may be the difference."

Sandusky will counter with quarterback Zak Esposito (87-of-189 passing, 1,171 yards, 12 TDs, 12 INTs and 46 carries, 16 yards, 1 TD), running back Cordney Strickland (149 carries, 663 yards, 5 TDs and 20 catches, 87 yards, 1 TD) and wideout Davion Caston (24 catches, 209 yards, 3 TDs and 20 carries, 98 yards, 0 TDs).

Other key Blue Streaks include Mike Drake (13 catches, 115 yards, 0 TDs) and Tristen Jeffries (10 catches, 257 yards, 3 TDs).

"They're very big on the offensive and defensive lines and they use two tight ends," Kidwell said. "With our undersized defense, we're going to have to shoot our gaps and be on the move. We can't be stationary and we have to make tackles."

On defense, Ross (260.00 yards) and Sandusky (285.44 yards) are second and third, respectively, in the GBC.

The Little Giants are second against the run (129.22 yards) and third against the pass (130.78 yards) in the league while the Blue Streaks are third against the run (154.56 yards) and fourth against the pass (130.89 yards).

Mierke leads Ross defenders with 4 interceptions while Travis Maynard has 2 pick offs in 2009. Damyion Smith tops Sandusky with 3 interceptions and Drake adds 2 pick offs.

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SANDUSKY 30, FREMONT ROSS 0

Little Giants shut out on the road

BY MATT MILLS

News-Messenger
correspondent

SANDUSKY — There was no Greater Buckeye Conference crown at stake for the Fremont Ross football team.

The Little Giants weren't playing for a chance at the playoffs when they took on the Blue Streaks on Friday at Strobel Field. They were playing for pride—and got blanked for the second time this year, losing 30-0 to their archrival.

"We got embarrassed," Fremont Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "We got our butts kicked."

The Blue Streaks (5-5, 4-1) snapped their four-game losing streak against the Little Giants and won a share of the GBC, with Findlay and Napoleon. Ross, meanwhile, finishes 5-5 but just 1-4 in the league.



KIDWELL

Leading the way for the Blue Streaks was Cordney Strickland. Strickland carried the ball 23 times for 158 yards, along with four catches for 77 yards, and one rushing touchdown.

"We knew we had to come out of half and keep working hard," Strickland. "That was not the time to get complacent. We came out and just got it done."

The first quarter came and went with both teams exchanging punts on their first two possessions. Ross ran a fake punt on fourth and two on their own 26-yard line, but was unsuccessful, giving the ball to Sandusky deep in Little Giant territory as the teams switched sides of the field at the end of the fourth quarter.

The Blue Streaks were unable to take advantage of the field position and turned the ball over on downs. After another Ross three-and-out, Sandusky scored the first points of the game on a Brock Cremeen 29-yard field goal.

SEE GIANTS I B8

GIANTS FROM B1

Damyion Smith intercepted Cody Foos late in the second quarter and the Blue Streak offensive line paved the way for Strickland to pound it in to the end zone with no time remaining on the clock to take a 10-0 lead into half time.

"We were up 10-0 on them at halftime last year," said Sandusky coach Mike Franklin. "Our kids came in to the locker room and said they're not letting that happen again."

Fremont drove the field to start the third quarter, but remained scoreless after a field goal sailed wide left. Strickland broke off a 69-yard run on Sandusky's second play from scrimmage in the half. Devin Jenkins ran it in from three yards out to put Sandusky up 17-0.

The Little Giants muffed the ensuing kickoff and Sandusky recovered deep in Little Giant territory. Jenkins again found the end zone late in the third quarter, this time from one yard out.

Unfortunately for the Little Giants, it was deja vu, as Sandusky's following kickoff popped up to the left, allowing the Blue Streaks to recover the ball again. Fremont Ross recovered a kick in the exact same fashion last season against Sandusky, a big break en route to their eventual comeback.

"Karma can be a mother," said Kidwell.

Greg Brown intercepted a Zak Esposito pass as Sandusky was going in to score, but set up in awful field position assisted Sandusky in forcing Ross to a three-and-out. After retaining possession from Fremont's punt, Sandusky was faced with a third and seven from the Fremont 21-yard line. Esposito rolled out of the pocket to his right, had no one opened and scrambled back to the left. From there he fired the ball all the way across field, finding a wide open Jaron Green who waltzed in to the end zone.

"That ball was intended for Strickland," said Esposito. "Jaron was in the right position and Strickland threw some great blocks to spring him in to the end zone."

The Little Giants mustered up only 92 yards of total offense, while giving up 334.

Sandusky 30, Ross 0

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|----|----|---|---|----|
| Fremont Ross | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — | 0 |
| Sandusky | 0 | 10 | 14 | 6 | — | 30 |

Second Quarter

Sandusky - Brock Cremeen 29 yd field goal.
Sandusky - Cordney Strickland 1 yd run
(Cremeen kick).

Third Quarter

Sandusky - Devin Jenkins 3 yd run (Cremeen kick).

Sandusky - Jenkins 3 yd run (Cremeen kick).

Fourth Quarter

Sandusky - Zak Esposito 21 yd pass to Jaron Green.

| | F | S | N |
|-----------------|--------|--------|---|
| First downs | 7 | 12 | |
| Rushes-yards | 24-58 | 43-215 | |
| Comp-Att-Int | 6-13-1 | 8-15-1 | |
| Passing yards | 34 | 119 | |
| Fumbles-lost | 1-1 | 0-0 | |
| Punts-avg | 0-0 | 0-0 | |
| Penalties-yards | 0-0 | 0-0 | |

RUSHING: F—Spencer 9-19, S—Strickland 23-158.

PASSING: F—Foos 6-13-1-34, S—Esposito 8-15-1-119.

RECEIVING: S—Strickland 4-77.

High School Sports

Awards

Fremont Ross Fall Sports

Football

First Year Letter: Cory Barron, Brandon Collins, Cody Curry, Victor Layton, Tristan Newman, Tahj Price, Mikel Stanley, Devante Woods, Brad Beck, Josiah Britner, Trevor Lull, Travis Maynard, Adam Miranda, JJ Moreno, Tre Rollins, Jermome Conley, Jordan Garcia, Trent Stout.

Trainers: Mariah Olvera, Ashleigh LaCourse, Abbey Kane, Britain Wetzel.

Second Year Letter: Kyle Damman, Chris McAllister, John Paxson, Ruben Saldivar, Phredric Schumacher, Mike Showman, Greg Brown, Jake Hiestand, Nick Parish, Vaughn Schumacher, Tylor Trautwein, Skylar Reffner.

Third Year Letter: Nate Barnard, Nate Chudzinski, Shane Durnwald, Cody Foos, Aaron Gonzalez, Rob Heberling, Justin Hines, Brett Mierke, James Spencer, Trevor Trimble.

Trainer: Jenny Sweeney.

Freshman Certificate: Dmitre Aaron, Kori Campbell, Eddie Chavez, Spencer Conklin, Oakley Contreras, Jalil Dolton, Matthew Egbert, Michael Egbert, Jake Eishen, DeAndre Gates, Damian Hemminger, Cedric Jones, Graham Moor, Nick Novitski, Nate Otermat, Chris Palmer, Damius Peacock, Jovan Pettiford, Miguel Pina, Moe Robinson, Ryan Rollins, Austin Schabel, Drew Starks, Dylan Starks, Nick Streacker, Stephen Tompkins, Brandon Weiker, Tyler Wolf.

GBC All-Academic: Cory Barron, Victor Layton, Kyle Damman, Chris McAllister, John Paxson, Mike Showman, Nate Chudzinski, Shane Durnwald, Cody Foos, Justin Hines, Jenny Sweeney.

GBC Kicker of the Year: Victor Layton.

GBC First Team Defense: Travis Maynard.

GBC Second Team Defense: Shane Durnwald, JJ Moreno.

GBC First Team Offense: James Spencer.

GBC Honorable Mention: Cody Foos, Chris McAllister, Greg Brown, Adam Miranda, Trent Stout.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ■ ALL-CONFERENCE SELECTIONS

Trio of leagues honors best players

News-Messenger reports

FREMONT — Three area football conferences have released their all-conference selections for the 2009 season.

In the Greater Buckeye Conference, five Fremont Ross players garnered recognition after the Little Giants had records of 5-5 overall and 1-4 in league play.

Victor Layton received the award for Kicker of the Year. Running back James Aaron Spencer landed on the All-GBC's first team offense. Linebacker Travis Maynard was selected for the All-GBC's first team defense while tackle Shane Durnwald and linebacker J.J. Moreno received second team defense consideration. Chris McCallister, Cody Foos, Greg Brown, Adam Miranda and Trent Stout picked up honorable mention.

In the Sandusky Bay Conference, players from Clyde (11), Oak Harbor (9), Margaretta (8) and Port Clinton (8) were honored.

The Fliers (6-4, 6-1) had first team offense selections with running back Kade Kramer and guard David Weisz while receiver Kyle Smetzler was a second team offense pick. Lineman Gage Goble and special teamer Jordan Colston were Clyde's first team defense selections. Lineman Alex Ellenger, linebacker Brandon Flores and defensive back Drew Frazier represented the Fliers on the league's second team defense. Gabe Gilbert, Jordan Brown, Mac Wilkerson and Bennett Brown received honorable mention.

The Rockets (4-6, 3-4) had tackle Zach Sandwisch as their only offensive pick, which was on the second team. On defense, linebacker Mike Mallernee was a first team selection while lineman Matt



Ed Borland | Special to the News-Messenger

Fremont Ross' James Aaron Spencer rids himself of a Marion Harding tackler during this season's game in Marion. Spencer, kicker Victor Layton and linebacker Travis Maynard were named first team all-Greater Buckeye Conference.

Klippstein and defensive back Davey Burkett landed on the second team. Jake Scott, D.J. Everett, Steve Young, Jake Grzymkowski and Kyle Mincheff were given honorable mention.

The Polar Bears (2-8, 2-5) had first team defense selections with linebacker Bryce Frederick and defensive back Devon Jones. Lineman Seth Spring was an all-league second team defense pick while tackle Charlie Chesser and receiver Kyle Homerick gained a nod for second team offense. Kaine Kerr, Jim Wiedenheft and Corey Yontz garnered honorable mention.

The Redskins (4-6, 2-5) had receiver Allen Tigner become a unanimous first team offense pick. Running back Richard Harris ended up on the all-

league's second team offense while lineman Tyler Shoemaker gained a nod for second team defense. Eric Reynolds, Derek Colston, Jared Fleming, Josh Graves and Stephen Pastor earned honorable mention.

In the Northern Ohio League, Bellevue (5-5, 4-3) had 10 players recognized.

Quarterback Curtis Watson, wide receiver Miles Foos and center Sean Reineck were first team offense selections.

The second team included tight end Tom McPeak, interior lineman Shawn Zerber and running back Dom DeBlase on offense and lineman Nick Baptista and linebacker Mike Bodyke on defense. Interior lineman Josh Cmar and defensive back Adam Manner received honorable mention.

DIVISION I

Running back James Aaron Spencer and defensive lineman Shane Durnwald were first team for Fremont Ross.

Spencer ran for 814 yards and eight touchdowns.

“I think we all expected a better season out of him, but he had some injuries. He never complained, and played with a lot of guts,” said coach Derek Kidwell.

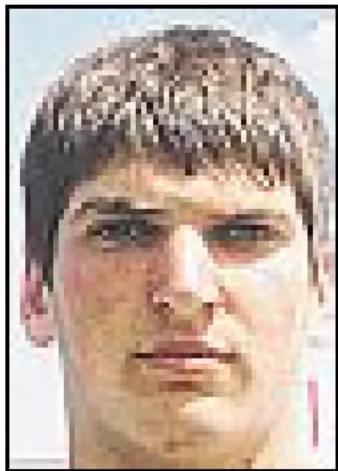
Durnwald had 104 tackles, including eight for a loss.

BOWMAN

“With his size, and playing the interior for three years, I think that just kind of finalizes his career,” Kidwell said.

Receiver Greg Brown, kicker Victor Layton and linebacker Travis Maynard were second team for the Little Giants. Brown and Maynard will return for the Little Giants next year.

“Travis made a lot of plays for us,” Kidwell said. “Greg’s a phenomenal athlete. His numbers would have been better if we were better on offense.”



AP All-Northwest District Team

DIVISION I First Team

■ **Offense:** Ends—Antoine Russell, Tol. Bowsher, 6-foot-0, 190 pounds, senior; Devon Price, Tol. Start, 5-10, 165, sr. Linemen—Andrew Donnal, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 6-7, 280, sr.; Randall Schulter, Tol. St. John's, 6-3, 292, sr.; Anthony Frontine, Tol. Whitmer, 6-2, 250, sr.; Nate McDaniel, Sylvania Southview, 6-0, 280, sr.; Garrett McQueen, 6-2, 285, sr. Quarterback—Joe Missler, Tol. Whitmer, 6-0, 190, sr.. Backs—Jordan Schwerer, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 5-9, 150, sr.; Teryl Mershon, Tol. Whitmer, 6-2, 210, sr.; **Aaron Spencer, Fremont Ross, 5-10, 170, sr.** Kicker—Eric Schaible, Findlay, 6-4, 190, sr.

■ **Defense:** Linemen—Kenny Hayes, Tol. Whitmer, 6-5, 240, jr.; Chris Wormley, Tol. Whitmer, 6-5, 250, soph.; Chris Opp, Findlay, 6-0, 213, sr.; **Shane Durnwald, Fremont Ross, 5-9, 200, sr.** Linebackers—Mike Ackerman, Oregon Clay, 5-10, 215, sr.; Dylan Coleman, Sylvania Southview, 6-0, 205, sr.; Garrett Harvey, Tol. St. John's, 6-1, 218, sr. Backs—Cheatam Norrils, Tol. St. John's, 5-11, 170, jr.; Josh Holzemer, Tol. St. John's, 6-1, 175, sr.; Jimmy Hall, Sylvania Southview, 6-1, 195, sr.; Zach Crawford, Findlay, 6-0, 170, sr.. Punter—Matt Marquette, Perrysburg, 6-2, 180, sr.

■ **Offensive player of the year:** Joe Missler, Tol. Whitmer.

■ **Defensive player of the year:** Kenny Hayes, Tol. Whitmer.

■ **Lineman of the year:** Andrew Donnal, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne.

■ **Coach of the year:** Joe Palka, Tol. Whitmer.

Second Team

■ **Offense:** Ends—Tevin Boykin, Tol. Whitmer, 6-2, 215, sr.; **Greg Brown, Fremont Ross, 6-0, 185, jr.** Linemen—Andy Kujawa, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 6-1, 210, jr.; Chris Reaper, Tol. Whitmer, 6-3, 230, jr.; Patrick Harrington, Sylvania Southview, 6-0, 260, sr.; Zak Van Doottingh, Tol. St. John's, 6-1, 254, sr.; Max Van Meter, Marion Harding, 5-11, 250, sr. Quarterback—Matt Spragg, Findlay, 6-3, 205, jr. Backs—Matt Green, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 5-9, 165, jr.; Mo May, Sylvania Southview, 6-0, 185, sr.; Randall Kennedy, Tol. Whitmer, 6-0, 175, sr. Kicker—Victor Layton, Fremont Ross, 6-0, 150, sr.

■ **Defense:** Linemen—Jack Miller, Tol. St. John's, 6-4, 250, jr.; Michah Carter, Perrysburg, 5-9, 230, soph.; Nick Schrader, Perrysburg, 6-2, 215, sr.; Parish Wimberly, Tol. Start, 5-10, 285, sr. Linebackers—Trevor Smith, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 6-0, 210, sr.; **Travis Maynard, Fremont Ross, 5-10, 150, jr.**; D.J. Pullom, Findlay, 6-2, 183, jr. Backs—Allen Gant, Sylvania Southview, 6-1, 197, soph.; Jacob Noon, Tol. Whitmer, 5-8, 170, sr.; Mike Bridges, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne, 5-11, 175, sr. Punter—Brandon Smith, Tol. St. John's, 5-11, 186, soph.

Honorable mention

Jack Henry, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne; Ryan Bradeberry, Oregon Clay; Dan Noland, Perrysburg; Kevin Carter, Tol. Waite; Zach Dazell, Tol. Whitmer; Corey Compton, Tol. Whitmer; Mike Pfaff, Tol. Whitmer; Drew Stansley, Sylvania Southview; Shane Brown, Tol. Whitmer; Spencer Marker, Sylvania Southview; Mike Allen, Tol. Bowsher; Cameron Florance, Tol. Bowsher; Nate White, Tol. St. John's; Austin Achter, Oregon Clay; Jalen Jones, Tol. Bowsher; Josh Schmitz, Oregon Clay; Troy Huebner, Tol. Bowsher; DeNard Pinckney, Sylvania Southview; Konnor Chuba, Sylvania Southview; Jake Kistner, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne; Asher Rumble, Marion Harding; Eric Gilmore, Marion Harding; Jeff Cole, Findlay; Alex Henry, Findlay; Austin Miller, Findlay; Ben Barrett, Whitehouse Anthony Wayne; Marc Johnson, Lima Senior; Gene Rucker, Marion Harding; Dion Hurley, Lima Senior.

Ross players get all-Ohio special mention

News-Messenger report

Running back Aaron Spencer and defensive lineman Shane Durnwald of Fremont Ross were recognized special mention all-Ohio in Division I on Monday.

Spencer rushed for 814 yards and eight touchdowns.

Durnwald had 104 tackles, including eight for a loss.