

# Presidents rally to beat Little Giants

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TIFFIN — For four innings, everything seemed to be going right for the Fremont Ross softball team in their Division I sectional tournament game against Marion Harding.

But a combination of defensive miscues and aggressive Marion bats set up a game-winning opportunity in the final inning for the Presidents, who defeated the Little Giants 4-3 on Saturday at Tiffin University.

With the scored knotted at 3 in the bottom of the seventh, Fremont pitcher Beth Shaffer retired the first two Marion batters on strikes before the Presidents' Jessica Feldman came to the plate.

Feldman, already 0-for-3 in the game, hit a routine grounder to Ross shortstop Suzanne Chudzinski that found its way under Chudzinski's glove as Feldman reached first on the error.

Several pitches later Feldman advanced to second base on a wild pitch, setting up the dramatic game-winning hit.

Marion second basemen Taquiel Byrd hit a 3-2 pitch into center field as Feldman came around to clinch the game for the Presidents (9-13).

"That was a big win for us," said Marion coach Mike Lindsey. "We've struggled lately hitting the ball. That (Byrd's hit) was kind of a surprise because the girls you think are going to come through, don't."

"All nine of our girls are capable of hitting the ball and we've been moving the ball so sooner or later they are going to fall in."

The Little Giants didn't make things quite so easy for Marion early in the contest, taking a 1-0 lead in the

## Ross drops heartbreaker

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second inning. Ashley Long led off by taking first as she was hit by an 0-2 pitch.

After stealing second, Long came home on a bad throw that was trying to catch her stealing third.

In the following inning, the Little Giants tacked on two more runs as Stephanie Stout smacked a single to center to open the inning.

Catcher Jessica White then drew a walk to put runners at first and second. Shaffer moved both runners over on a sacrifice bunt bringing Megan Wasserman to the plate.

Wasserman laid down a bunt and Marion pitcher Megan Rumble decided to chase Stout back to third but Stout slid in safely and White returned to second to load the bases for Cassie Steinberger.

Stout then scored Fremont's second run on a wild pitch by Marion and Wasserman eventually came home on a Marion error as the Little Giants grabbed a 3-0 advantage.

Meanwhile, Shaffer continued to shut down the Presidents as she held them to just one hit over the first four innings.

But the tide began to turn in the fifth as Marion scored its first run as Rumble tagged home after being walked with one out in the inning.

"When you start off and your down 3-0 and we know we don't hit the ball real well anyways there was concern to panic," Lindsey said. "Our defense started to come back and play better the last four innings and they made a few mis-

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—Ross softball coach Mike Gilbert

takes that we took advantage of."

The Presidents then tied the game in bottom of the sixth as Byrd and Lauren McComas singled to start the inning. Brittany McGeorge by reaching first safely on a Fremont error as Byrd hustled home.

"What you saw is typically how we play," said Ross coach Mike Gilbert.

Lisha Holbrook followed by sending a fly ball to center field and McComas tagged and came home safely setting the table for the 7th inning victory.

Shaffer struck out three Presidents on the day.

"I liked the way Beth pitched," Gilbert said. "We just didn't back up her pitching very well."

White, Wasserman, Stout and Katelyn Ruiz all tagged hits for Fremont.

"Katelyn Ruiz stepping it up from jayvee getting a hit," Gilbert said of the girls whose performance stood out. "That was a big hit."

"Stephanie Stout also did a nice job as she probably saved three or four runs with a couple of nice grabs at first base."