

Little Giants get new boss

Pendry inherits best soccer team in Fremont Ross history

By **MICHAEL BOSI**
Staff writer

For someone who's in a position he's always envied, new Fremont Ross boys soccer coach Jeffrey Pendry is in a somewhat unenviable position.

With Ross coming off its most successful season ever — a 12-6 campaign that didn't end until the second round of the state tournament — Pendry is charged with carrying the momentum former coach Jon Detwiler sparked.

Detwiler stepped down last spring with the intention of furthering his education and caring for his newborn son.

Now Pendry is the newest addition to a Ross squad that



PENDRY

bounds with anticipation for the coming season.

"I had been told there was a lot of talent here," said Pendry, who played soccer at Southview High in Sylvania and continued through college.

If strength can be found in numbers, then the Little Giants should have a fabulous group of juniors, who have been playing together since third or fourth grade.

Goalie Michael Hickey stands out, among others.

"He's a heck of a player," said Pendry. "He should definitely be playing somewhere in college next year."

With junior sweeper Andy Smith anchoring the defense, Pendry will look to what should be a solid fullback line that could include seniors Owen Sorg, Corey Sterling and Jacob Sterling, as well as sophomore John

McCord, to keep things in control.

They will play behind a junior halfback line of Mike Simonton, Nik Wearsch and Matt Holbrook.

Several questions remain as to the starting forward position. Junior Ben Huss, who led the junior varsity team with 17 goals last year, should figure prominently in the attack.

In addition, juniors Amy Smith and Brian Thomson and seniors Andy Humberger and Hans Schmidlin are vying for fulltime spots.

Senior backup goalie Kris Myers, senior halfback Kevin Jackson and junior defender Kyle Fisher also figure to see playing time as Ross tries to fill the void left by Jason Strayer's graduation.

While the juniors have the numbers advantage, Pendry expects the seniors to push the

team in the right direction. "Any senior that's on the field I expect them to lead the kids, obviously, because they have been with the program the longest," said Pendry.

Again, the Little Giants are gunning for Great Lakes League power Findlay, which finished the state runner-up.

"Obviously, they can play with (Findlay) and hold their own on the field," said Pendry, "and I'd like to think that (the Little Giants) are going to be even better than they were last year."

Pendry has nine days until the season opener with Maumee to mold his squad to his liking. His players seem to have taken an immediate liking to him.

"We like him a lot," said Amy Smith.

"He's cool. I personally like the fact that he plays with us so we can watch his example."

■ **Fremont Ross's soccer team** lost 3-0 at **Findlay Thursday**.

"We looked pretty decent at 0-0 at halftime," assistant coach Nathan Sorg said, "then we had a few mental lapses."

The Little Giants (0-2 overall, 0-1 GLL) play Toledo Whitmer at home Tuesday.

Ross erupts for seven goals

Little Giants win first game

By **MICHAEL BOSI**
Staff writer

After two games and nothing to show but a pair of losses, the Fremont Ross soccer team reached deep into the playbook for a new game plan:

Goalscoring.

"That's a no-brainer," Ross coach Jeff Pendry said after his team exploded for a 7-1 Great Lakes League victory over Whitmer at home Tuesday.

Ross fell by identical 3-0 scores to Maumee in the season-opener and to state runner-up Findlay in the second game before winning Pendry's first game as Little Giants head coach.

"The first game of the year — not to excuse how they played — there were first-game jitters maybe," said Pendry. "Second game, that was obviously the toughest team we'll play all year, so I fully expected the team to play a heck of a lot better only because Whitmer is not on the same level as Findlay."

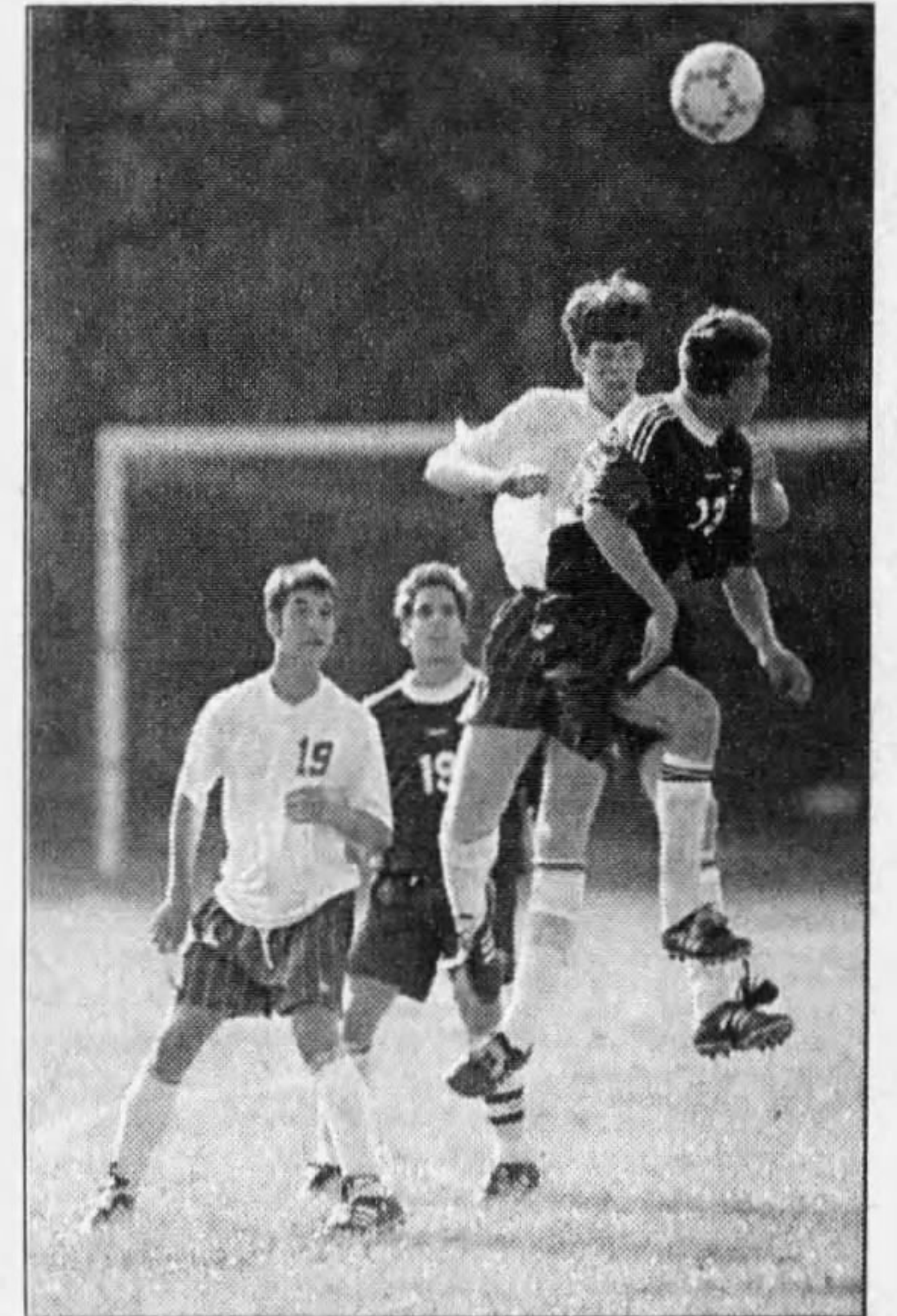
Little Giants Craig Copley, Brian Thompson and Mike Simonton each had a goal and an assist Tuesday.

Ross controlled the first half and led by a pair after the first 40 minutes. Thompson scored in the 13th minute.

In the 35th minute, Copley beat defender Matt Evener on the left wing, and using forward Hans Schmidlin as a decoy, set up Scott White for a tap-in at the right post.

"We were getting to the ball a lot more," Copley said.

The Panthers (1-3-1, 0-1-1 GLL) found life in the second half, forcing Ross goalie Michael Hickey to come up with his best save, a diving stop of Chris Barringer three minutes in.

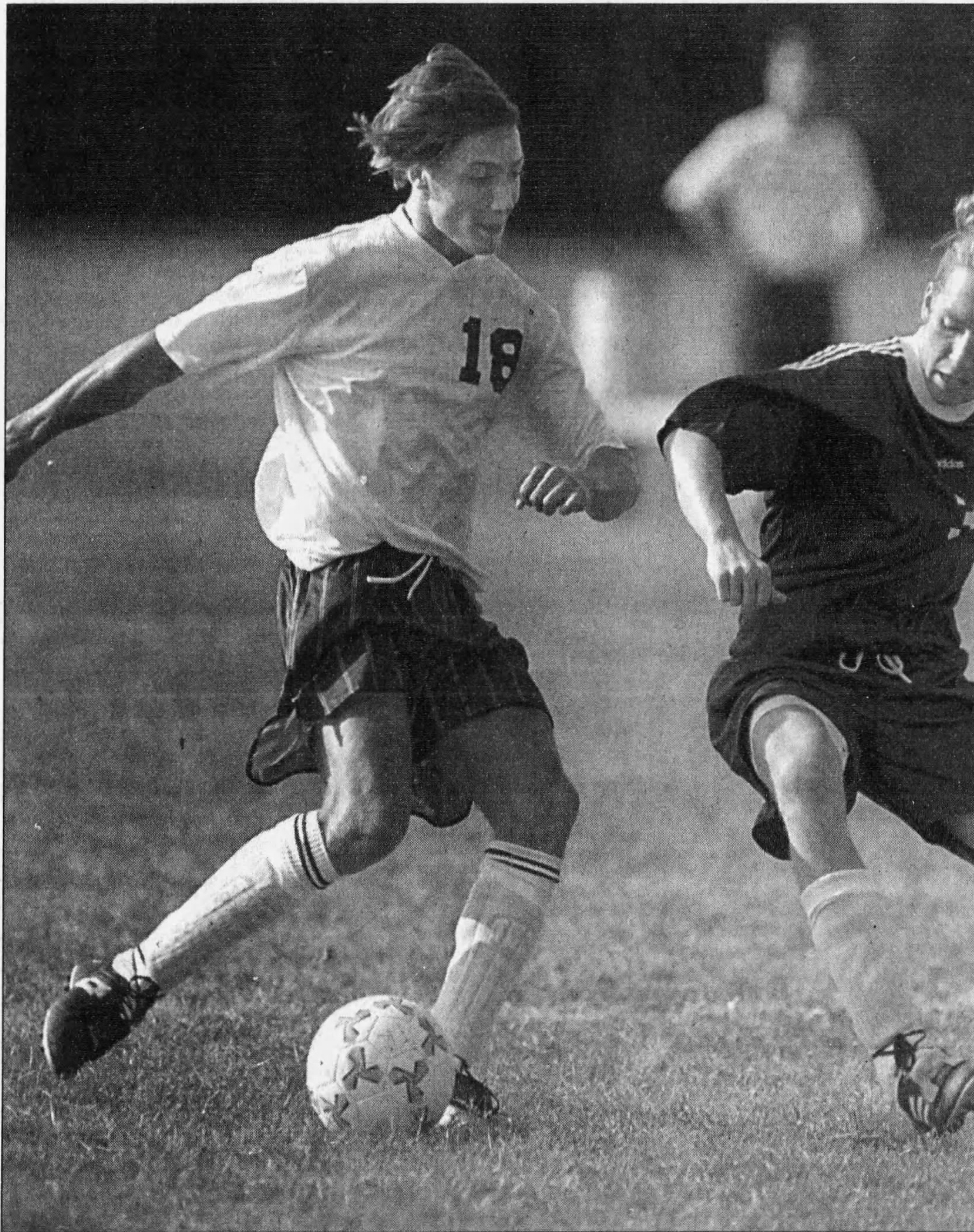


MIKE SIMONTON of Fremont Ross battles Whitmer's Blaesing for a header as Fremont's Corey Sterling and Whitmer's Brian Bigelow watch.

The Panthers got on the board in the seventh minute of the second half when Nick Bartoo finished a rebound of Brian Bigelow's shot. But Ross's Ben Huss, the leading goal-scorer for the junior varsity team last season, regained his team's two-goal edge with a header off a Thompson centering pass.

With Ross switching to a 4-4-2 attack, Kyle Fisher scored on a 2-on-0 to make it 4-1. Two minutes later, Copley took a feed from Schmidlin at midfield, outraced falling Whitmer keeper Eric Wilczynski (9 saves) and converted an easy tap.

On a direct kick, Nik Wearsch blasted his way through a Whitmer wall for a 6-1 lead, and Simonton finished the scoring by sifting through defenders Erik Maly and Alan Heer and beating backup keeper Troy Berning.



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

BRIAN THOMSON of Fremont Ross gets past Toledo Whitmer senior Matt Blaesing on his way to a goal Tuesday at Ross High School. Thompson, a junior forward, later added an assist. The Little Giants won the Great Lakes League matchup for their first win, 7-1.

Soccer team wins 2nd

News-Messenger reports

The Fremont Ross soccer team defeated Great Lakes League rival Oregon Clay, 6-1, Thursday for its second straight win after starting the season with a pair of losses.

In the first half, Corey Sterling converted a penalty kick for his first goal and Amy Smith (No. 1) scored off an assist from Hans Schmidlin.

In the second half, Brian Thomson scored twice (Nos. 3, 4) with assists from Matt Holbrook and Mike Simon-ton. John McCord then tapped an indirect kick to Simonton, who scored (No. 2) from 20 yards out. Scott White (No. 2) finished the scoring by heading home a cross from Kyle Fisher.

The Little Giants (2-2 overall, 2-1 GLL) outshot the Eagles, 21-1.

HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP

GOLF

Troy Ritchie medaled by shooting a 39 in leading Fremont Ross (9-1) to a 169-188 Great Lakes League victory over Whitmer. Jim Straight shot a 41 for the Little Giants, while Jay Ferrell (44) and Mark Walter (45) followed.

Oak Harbor scored a 14-stroke victory over Clyde (0-8), 162-176, to stay perfect in six Sandusky Bay Conference matches. Andy Jenkins and Mike Kratzer each shot 36s for the Rockets.

At Lakeland Country Club, medalist Josh Williams of Arcadia (12-0) shot a 35 to lead his team to a 148-150 victory over Bettsville (6-1) in non-league action.

SOCCKER

Fremont Ross (4-2, 3-1 GLL) received its second hat trick in as many days as it captured its fourth win in a row, 6-1 over Napoleon. Following Corey Sterling's three-goal performance in Monday's 3-0 win over Sandusky, Brian Thomson notched the trifecta Tuesday.

Hans Schmidlin, Andrew Humberger and Andy Smith added goals for the Little Giants. Michael Hickey turned aside nine shots on goal.^N

SOCCER

Fremont Ross (5-2, 4-1 GLL) scored two second-half goals to come from behind to defeat Bedford, 2-1, in a Great Lakes League game. Ross's Hans Schmidlin and Corey Sterling had second-half goals.

Ross soccer team wins sixth straight

Fremont Ross scored two goals in the final 12 minutes Saturday to hand Defiance a 3-1 high school soccer loss.

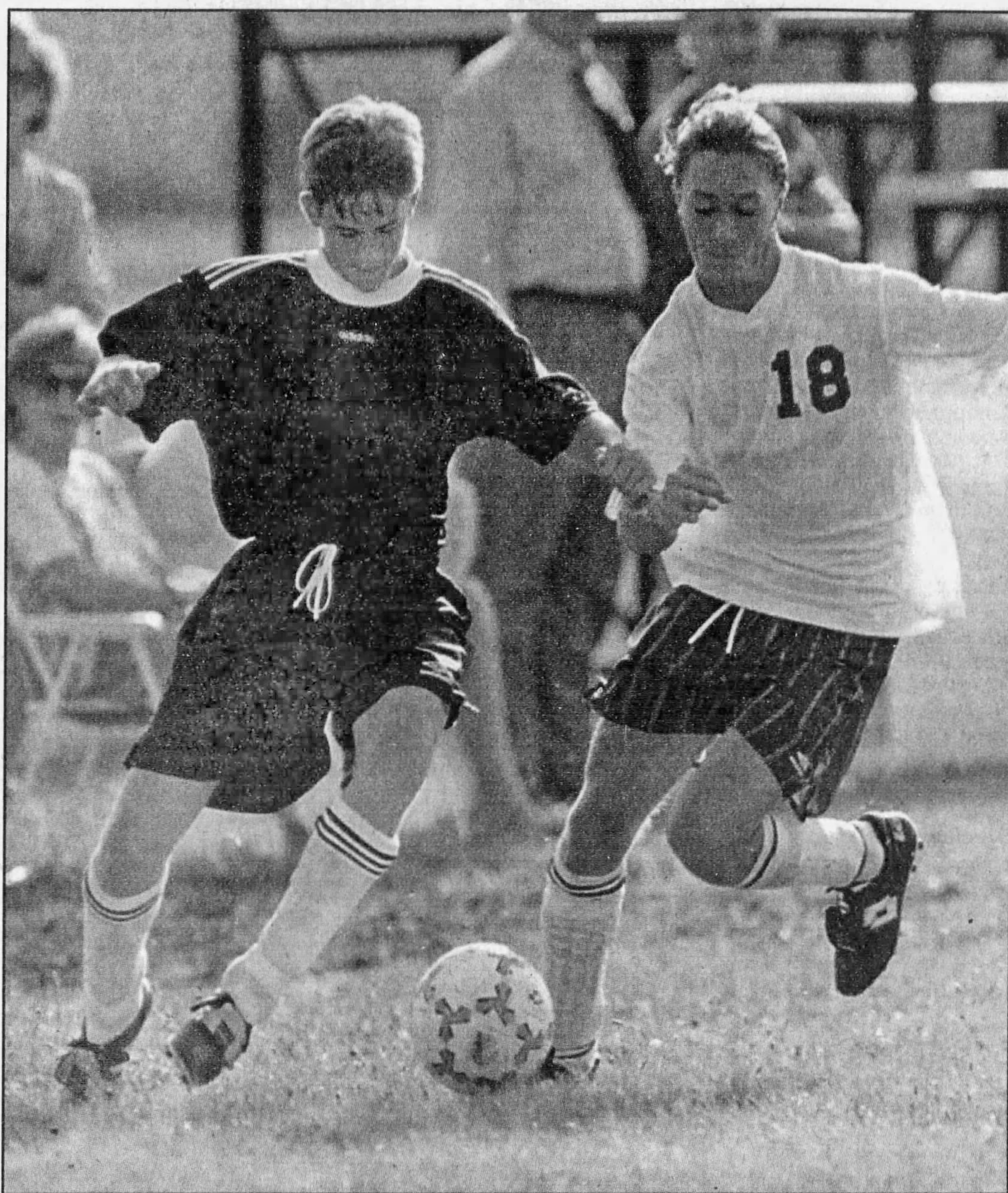
Andrew Humberger scored a first-half goal off an assist from Brian Thomson for the Little Giants (6-2), which won their sixth straight match.

After the Bulldogs tied it at 1-1 early in the second half, Matt Holbrook dribbled through three Defiance defenders and scored an unassisted goal with just over 11 minutes left in the match.

Moments later, Hans Schmidlin added an insurance goal for the Little Giants, with Thomson assisting on the score.

Ross hosts Great Lakes League favorite Findlay on Tuesday at 5 p.m.

Outdueling his foes



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

BRIAN THOMSON (18) of Fremont Ross battles with a Toledo Whitmer player during a Sept. 10 victory.

Aggressiveness a plus for Thomson

By **BRIAN SPIESS**
Sports editor

Fremont Ross soccer fans should consider Brian Thomson's yellow cards to be payment for services rendered.

The cards are issued to players who question officials or make an illegal hit on an opponent and can cost a team the ball or use of a player. Thomson admits his aggressiveness has caused him to get at least one card this season. His teammates say it is at least two or even three, though they are not counting — or complaining.

"If you don't have any aggressiveness on the team, you're not going to win a lot of 50-50 balls," junior Ben Huss said. A 50-50 ball, he said, is when the black-and-white ball is in between opposing players who have an equal shot at getting to it.

"And Brian will usually beat the other guy to the ball," Huss said.

And once he has gotten to the ball, he has been able to do a lot with it. In four Ross wins last week, Thomson scored three goals and assisted on three more, earning The News-Messenger's Athlete of the Week award.

First-year coach Jeffrey Prendy, whose team will play a pivotal rematch against Great Lakes League foe Findlay today at home, said Thomson's aggressiveness helps him in all phases of the game.

"If the ball's there, he's going to go for it," Prendy said, calling Thomson a hustling player with skills. "And it also allows him to

hold onto the ball."

A soccer player since kindergarten, Thomson has only been the one with the ball for a little more than a year. When he was a member of the junior varsity in 1995, coach Ben Hickey convinced him that his best chance to play was at forward. He responded, assisting on more than half of Huss's team-high goals scored.

"I'm just thinking about getting past the defender and not giving up the ball to the other guy," Thomson said Monday as he acknowledged classmates walking past him during an interview in the Purple Pit.

Scores do not come quickly in Thomson's only sport, he said, so he appreciates them more than most athletes.

"Whenever you score a goal, there's a lot more celebration," Thomson said. "It's not like football where you get a touchdown almost every time your team has the ball."

"You get pumped up and play a lot better after a goal," he said.

He has one more year after this at Ross, but that could be the last time he experiences the "pumped up" feeling of scoring, at least in a school team-type setting. The thought of playing collegiately — if attainable — is not alluring.

"If I could get my school paid for a year I'd play, but I wouldn't want to do it for four years," the side-burn wearing student-athlete said, indicating a softer off-the-field persona. "It's too tough, too much time."

Brian Thomson profile

School: Ross
Sport: Soccer
Position: forward

Grade: Junior
Hobbies:

Fishing, hunting (also worked at White Star Park in summer time)

Family: Parents Tom and Diane; sister Sarah, a sophomore at Eastern Michigan; brother Mark, freshman and junior varsity soccer player at Ross.

Quotable: "If I get upset, I become more aggressive."

More athletes:
B2

Findlay earns spot atop standings

By **BRIAN SPIESS**
Sports editor

The Findlay soccer team, ranked seventh in the state, needed more than an hour Tuesday to prove it is the best team in the Great Lakes League.

The Trojans (9-1-1, 6-0 GLL) scored three times in the second half — the last two in a 23-second blitz — to beat Fremont Ross 3-0 in front of about 100 fans at Ross High School. The loss dropped Ross to 6-3, 4-2 in the league. The other GLL loss came Sept. 5 at Findlay by the same three-point margin.

"We played a nice first half," Ross coach Jeffrey Pendry said. "But against that type of a team, or any top 10 team, you can't have a defensive let down."

In the first 40 minutes, neither team got many shots on goal, and the ball remained near the Findlay goal for much of the half.

"We had plenty of opportunities in the first half, but the keeper (Michael Hickey) is a pretty good keeper," Findlay coach Albert Laux said. "We had to hustle up front because the keeper wasn't going to let anything easy go in."

After the intermission, howev-

SOCCER

er, the Trojans were more aggressive. It paid off six minutes into the final half with a "crazy" goal by Findlay's Mark Laux. Following a couple of unsuccessful head-ball attempts, the younger Laux used his head to knock the ball past Hickey into the net.

"That was a crazy goal," coach Laux said. "There was so much confusion. It's anybody's ball ... sometimes you get lucky on goals."

Pendry said players were "all over each other" and the play could have been whistled dead before the tie-breaking score hit the net.

The score remained 1-0 for more than 16 minutes when Findlay's Chad Wanstedt got a breakaway off a Jamie Gearing pass. Left one-on-one with the oncoming Findlay player, Hickey charged out to meet Wanstedt. But Wanstedt made a move to get past Hickey and literally walked with the ball on his way to Findlay's second score.

Twenty-three seconds later, at

the 17:03 mark, Findlay scored again, this time with Josh Dubocq cashing in on a J.R. Runion assist.

Findlay's high ranking in this week's state poll comes just past the midway point of the GLL season. After seeing the competition, the Findlay coach expects a second-place finish from the Little Giants.

"Ross is the No. 2 team in the GLL," Laux said. "They gave us our best two games in the league."

State poll, B2

SOCCKER

Kyle Fisher's first goal of the season, four minutes into the game, stood up as the game-winner as **Fremont Ross** (7-3, 5-2 GLL) blanked Great Lakes League rival **Toledo Whitmer**, 3-0. Corey Sterling connected on his fourth penalty kick and Hans Schmidlin also scored.

SÓCCER

Fremont Ross (8-3 overall, 6-2 GLL) exploded for 10 goals in a shutout over Great Lakes League rival **Oregon Clay**. **Scott White** recorded his third hat trick, scoring all three of his goals in the first 18 minutes of the game. **Corey Sterling**, who had two goals, also scored a goal in the first half, as the Little Giants held a four-goal lead at halftime.

Andrew Humberger and **Nik Wearsh** each had a pair of assists for **Ross**, which outshot **Clay**, 23-2.

Ross ties Napoleon

News-Messenger reports

The Fremont Ross Soccer Team fought its way to a 3-3 tie against Great Lakes League opponent Napoleon Thursday.

After giving up a goal early in the game, the Little Giants were able to get on the scoreboard late in the first half. Goalie Mike Hickey punted the ball the length of the field to Scott White, who was able to score and tie the game at 1-1. In the second half, Fremont Ross scored two quick goals, as White scored his second goal of the night, and Corey Sterling converted a penalty kick for a 3-1 lead. The Wildcats then scored two more goals of their own, and neither team was able to take the lead in the final 15 minutes. Fremont Ross (8-3-1 overall, 6-2-1 GLL) hosts Norwalk Saturday at 11 a.m., the final home game of the season.

LOCAL ROUNDUP

Mary's 15-5, 15-5. The Fliers improve to 13-4 overall and 9-2 in the Sandusky Bay Conference, thanks to a 7-kill, 6-dig performance from Mary Jo Hoffman. Kelly Kwiatkowski served 8 points and had 11 assists, Brianne Norman served 6 points, Chasity Nieset had three kills and 10 digs, Amanda Hoffman hit four kills and Angie Beier added three kills.

Lake defeated Lakota 15-3, 15-12. Amy Beaston and Beth Foos each had 5 points in the losing cause. The Lakota hitting attack was led by Kristin Hakanson with 4 kills and 2 blocks and Erin Howe with 3 kills.

"The second game we made a nice run at it but its the same problem we had all season, a lack of consistency

Soccer team wins Parents Day game

The Fremont Ross soccer team celebrated Senior Day and Parents Day by defeating Norwalk 1-0 Saturday. All eight seniors started for the Little Giants, and they provided the only goal needed 20 minutes into the game.

Hans Schmidlin dribbled the ball up the left side of the field and passed it to Andrew Humberger at the top of the penalty box. Humberger then turned to his right and dished the ball off to Scott White, who drilled a shot past the Norwalk goalie for the 1-0 lead.

Fremont goalie Kris Myers and the senior-led defense did the rest, as Myers made 8 saves in goal, including a diving stop of a break-away shot with less than 10 minutes to go in the game.

Seniors participating in their final home game were: Andrew Humberger, Kevin Jackson, Kris Myers, Hans Schmidlin, Owen Sorg, Corey Sterling, Jacob Sterling and Scott White.

Fremont Ross (9-3-1 overall, 6-2-1 GLL) will travel to Bedford Tuesday for a 5 p.m. GLL contest.

Ross ties Bedford

The **Fremont Ross** soccer team played to a scoreless tie against Great Lakes League opponent **Bedford** Tuesday. Goalie Michael Hickey made six saves, as the Little Giants were outshot 6-3. Ross (9-3-2, 6-2-2 GLL) plays its final regular-season game at Tiffin Columbian Thursday (5 p.m.).

Ross soccer team prepares for sectional

The **Fremont Ross** soccer team concluded its regular season by blasting **Tiffin Columbian**, 8-0, Thursday in a non-league game. Brian Thomson and Scott White each scored two goals in the first 15 minutes of the game, while Amy Smith, Andrew Humberger, Kris Myers and Owen Sorg added goals for the Little Giants (10-3-2, 6-2-2 GLL).

White, Hans Schmidlin and Corey Sterling each had one assist. Ross will play in the first round of the Division I sectional tournament against Anthony Wayne Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. at Sylvania Southview High School.

Soccer

GREAT LAKES LEAGUE ALL-LEAGUE SELECTIONS

Coach Of The Year: Albert Laux,
Findlay

Player Of The Year: Mike Tinajero,
Findlay

First Team: Alfredo Rocha, Napoleon, Andy Moorhead, Findlay, Nick Patterson, Findlay, Mike Tinajero, Findlay, Jai Mattox, Bedford, Sean Beavers, Clay, Erik Maly, Whitmer, **Brian Thomson, Fremont, Corey Sterling, Fremont**, Nick Francis, Bedford, Goalie-Ted Wenger, Findlay.

Second Team: David McCloud, Bedford, Jamie Gearing, Findlay, Phillip Nelson, Napoleon, Mike Parker, Whitmer, **Scott White, Fremont**, Chris Barringer, Whitmer, Mark Laux, Findlay, Nick Wearsch, Fremont, Chris Speiser, Napoleon, Chad Wanstedt, Findlay, Goalie-**Michael Hickey, Fremont**.

Honorable Mention: Aaron Flynn, Bedford, Andy Francis, Bedford, Josh Herr, Bedford, Jon Quirk, Bedford, John Fuller, Clay, Phil Jiminez, Clay, Sean Rife, Clay, Pat Shields, Clay, Kurt Dotson, Findlay, Ben Wachter, Findlay, Joe Cindric, Findlay, Josh Dubocq, Findlay, **Andrew Humberger, Fremont, John McCord, Fremont, Mike Simonton, Fremont, Andy Smith, Fremont**, Ragnar Bockleman, Napoleon, Todd Foreman, Napoleon, Andreas Forster, Napoleon, Brian Griffith, Napoleon, Brian Bigelow, Whitmer, Matt Bleasing, Whitmer, Mike Norton, Whitmer, Eric Wilczynski, Whitmer.