

2002 Great Lakes League

Ross caps stellar season at GLL

Team-oriented Little Giants favored to repeat as league champs

By TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM
Sports editor

The girls on the Fremont Ross tennis squad play an individual sport, but they're all about the team.

In the unlikely event they forget that during a match, all they have to do is look down at their hands.

Before each match, the Little Giants paint a single fingernail purple to denote the place they hold in the team's five-point lineup.

When they put their fingers together, it makes a complete hand.

And if they all do their jobs, they walk away with another victory.

"During our match, we

look down at our nails and know it's for the team as well as ourselves," said Erica Wolfe, the team's top singles player.

The senior-laden squad — five of the eight varsity starters are seniors — has done just about everything it set out to accomplish before the season began. It has recorded a 13-4 dual-meet record, the best in coach Lisa Wolfe's seven seasons, and won Ross's own Michaels Tournament for the first time since 1993.

There's just one job left undone. Ross wants to repeat last year's Great Lakes League championship, and it'll get that chance begin-

ning at 10 a.m. today at Sandusky High School.

The Little Giants, who are 5-0 in league dual meets, will be favored to do it again. Erica Wolfe, second singles player Meghan Michaels and the top doubles team of Kelli Goetz and Devon Michaels have 5-0 records in league play. Third singles player Mekenna Smith is 4-1, and the second doubles team of Jill Mackey and Stephanie Clarke is 3-2 in league play.

Erica Wolfe, Smith and Devon Michaels are defending individual league champions.

The GLL repeat has been at the top of the Ross agenda all season.

"We had to tell the team our personal goals and our team goals at the beginning of the season. That was everybody's team goal, to win the GLL," Clarke said.

The Little Giants have spent the week practicing and strengthening their team approach with fun activities.

"They're a very close team," coach Wolfe said. "I just feel a lot of togetherness. ... We've been doing a lot of fun things this week in preparation to remain bonded. We have no matches this week, and I tried to initiate a few things to do as a team. I think it worked."



News-Messenger file photo/Ben French
THE FREMONT ROSS girls tennis team will compete in the Great Lakes League tournament today in Sandusky. Team members include, front row left to right, Mekenna Smith, Erica Wolfe, Stephanie Clarke; second row left to right, Devon Michaels, Kelli Goetz, Jill Mackey and Meghan Michaels.

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Little Giants swing for repeat GLL crown today

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The girls braided their hair and put together outfits to wear to school Friday. On match days, they always carry a tennis ball between classes.

They have even whispered about possibly sweeping all five events today at the GLL.

"I have high hopes for that,"

Meghan Michaels said of the sweep.

"I feel comfortable that we're going to win it," Erica Wolfe said. "At the Michaels (tournament), it was a lot harder teams, and we pulled through that one."

The Ross girls have one more milestone to chase. Erica Wolfe is aiming to claim her 100th career victory. She sits at 97 and will have a chance to win two more at the

GLL. If Wolfe wins both matches Saturday, she'll shoot for No. 100 against St. Joe on Monday.

But even that purely individual goal gets Wolfe talking about the team.

"I don't know what I'd do without the team this year," she said. "I'm usually one of the last ones off the court, and they're always there supporting me, telling me to go for it."

Little Giants eke out 2nd straight title

Michaels girls, Goetz nab individual crowns

News-Messenger reports

SANDUSKY — Findlay made them sweat, but the Fremont Ross Little Giants got their second straight Great Lakes League girls tennis title Saturday at Sandusky High School.

Ross singles player Meghan Michaels and the doubles team of Kelli Goetz and Devon Michaels pulled off individual crowns as Ross tied Findlay with 23 points in the league tournament.

The Little Giants won the GLL championship by virtue of their 5-0 regular-season record against league opponents. The Trojans, who went 4-1 in league play, finished second. Napoleon was third, Clay fourth, Sandusky fifth and Whitmer sixth.

"Meghan and my first doubles team played nearly flawless," Ross head coach Lisa Wolfe said. "They certainly did their job for the team.

"The team as a whole has done it all this year. They have a tremendous record, they won the Sandusky tournament and the Michaels tournament and now the GLL. I'm very happy for us as a team."

Meghan Michaels, Ross's No. 2 singles player, defeated Findlay's Rachel Wallace 7-5, 6-4 in the championship match.

Goetz and Devon Michaels cruised to a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Findlay's Stephanie Mills and Ryan Weiser in the title match.

Although Ross returned all but one player from last year's team, Devon Michaels was the only Little



M. MICHAELS GOETZ

Giant to repeat as an individual champion.

Singles players Erica Wolfe and Mekenna Smith settled for second place this year after winning titles last season.

Erica Wolfe, the No. 1 player, fell 6-2, 3-6, 6-0 to Napoleon's Emily Meyer in the final.

Smith bowed 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 to Findlay's Christine Mersch in the final.

At second doubles, the Ross duo of Jill Mackey and Stephanie Clarke placed third. Mackey and Clarke dropped a 1-6, 6-2, 6-4 decision to Napoleon's Meagan Niese and Eleesa Haase in their opening match. But their 8-5 triumph over Kari Klosinski and Dawn Van Gorder of Clay clinched the team title for the Little Giants.

Erica Wolfe, the two Michaels girls and Goetz were named first team All-GLL, Smith was a second-team selection, and Clarke and Mackey made honorable mention.

Ross hosts St. Joe at 4 p.m. today at Rodger Young Park.



D. MICHAELS