

**VOLLEYBALL:** Sectional Tournament Draw

# Fremont Ross, Clyde grab top sectional seeds

## Gibsonburg, Old Fort seeded 2nd in Div. IV

*News-Messenger reports*

The Fremont Ross and Clyde volleyball teams picked up No. 1 seeds and first-round byes in sectional tournament draws held Sunday.

The 18-2 Little Giants will meet the winner of Tiffin Columbian and Ashland for a Division I sectional crown Saturday at Columbian High School.

Ross will play the fourth match of the day.

Tournament play begins at 2 p.m. Saturday at all sectional sites.

Clyde (11-8) copped the top seed at the Division II sectional at Eastwood. The Fliers will meet either Port Clinton or Oak Harbor (7-8) in the third match of the day for a sectional crown.

Gibsonburg and Old Fort earned second seeds in Division IV tournament draws.

The Golden Bears (13-4) lost out to top-seeded Northwood (13-6) despite having a better record and winning the head-to-head matchup between the two teams. Gibsonburg will meet either Danbury or Toledo Christian

for a sectional title in the third match Saturday at Bowling Green High School.

The Lady Stockaders got the second seed behind four-time defending state champion Hopewell-Loudon in the Old Fort Sectional. Old Fort (14-4) will face Tiffin Calvert or Fostoria St. Wendelin in the fourth match of the day.

Also at Old Fort, St. Joseph Central Catholic (8-12) will meet Bettsville (1-16) in a first-round match. The winner gets Hopewell-Loudon.

In a Division III sectional at Margareta, the Polar Bears (12-4) face Western Reserve in a first-round match. The win-

ner meets either second-seeded Genoa or Woodmore (6-9). The Comets and Wildcats face off in a first-round match. Lakota (6-8) will battle Edison in the first-round. The winner gets Huron, the state runner-up last season and the top-seeded team this season.

Bellevue (9-8) matches up with Vermilion (4-14) in a first-round match in a Division II sectional at Norwalk. The winner meets top seed Norwalk.

The sectional champions will meet in a district semifinal match at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the sectional sites. The district finals will be held Saturday.

## VOLLEYBALL: Sectional Capsules

### Division I at Tiffin Columbian

**Seeded teams:** 1. Fremont Ross, 2. Sandusky.

**Dark horse:** Tiffin Columbian.

**Players to watch:** Lindsay Cobb, Ross (166 kills, 61 solo blocks, 27 aces); Erin Barr, Ross (135 points, 75 digs); Jessica Fick, Ross (27 aces); Jill Sullivan, Sandusky; Adrienne Pool, Sandusky; Jess Sendelbach, Columbian; Brandie Griffin, Columbian.

**Outlook:** State powerhouse Mansfield Madison is missing from the Columbian Sectional this season, having dropped down to Division II. That leaves Ross as a prohibitive favorite, but the Little Giants (20-2) have reasons to be wary of Tiffin Columbian and Sandusky. The Tornadoes (10-11) play in a tough league that includes Galion and Norwalk, and Ross would have to beat the Blue Streaks for the fourth time this season if they meet in the district final.

**Coach's quote:** "Being the favorite is a switch for us. We're not used to that. But I don't think the kids are paying any attention to where teams are seeded or what their records are. They know they have work to do." — Karrie Gardner, Ross coach.

In Division I, Fremont Ross (20-2) is a top seed and looking for its first sectional title since 1997. The Little Giants are a heavy favorite to win their match against either Ashland or Tiffin Columbian on Saturday and likely earn a district semifinal date against Sandusky, a team Ross has beaten three times this season.

Beating the rival Blue Streaks would send Ross to a district final at Liberty-Benton.

“We keep talking about not doing that, but I’m sure some of them have,” Ross coach Karrie Gardner said when asked about her girls looking down the tournament trail. “They’re excited about where they may be able to go this season.”

Volleyball sectional champs:

Ross ... Clyde ... G'burg ... Old Fort ... Margaretta

# Giants solve Columbian

## Ross takes first crown since '97

By **TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM**  
Sports editor

TIFFIN — Tiffin Columbian entered Saturday's sectional volleyball final with a viable plan of attack against top-seeded Fremont Ross.

Unfortunately for the Tornadoes, they couldn't carry the strategy to



**COBB**

### Division I

its intended conclusion.

Columbian's hitters tipped the ball over the taller Ross blockers instead of spiking into the Little Giants'

hands. That worked well for a good portion of the first game.

But once the Tornadoes got the serve, they faltered, committing eight service errors in the first game and 12 for the match.

That allowed Ross plenty of time to adjust its defense and pound out a 15-10, 15-6 victory, handing the Little Giants their first Division I sectional championship in four years.

Ross (21-2) advances to meet Sandusky at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in a district semifinal at Columbian. The Blue Streaks survived for a 8-15, 15-

9, 15-12 victory over Bowling Green in the first sectional final Saturday.

The Columbian tipping did not surprise the Little Giants, who boast two strong middle blockers in senior Lindsay Cobb and sophomore Seanna Steinle. But the Tornadoes (12-12) did it well, landing five tips in the first game.

That frustrated the Ross blockers. "I like to call it cheap," joked Cobb, who led Ross with nine kills.

See **ROSS, B2**

# Ross heads to district semifinal

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"We knew they would play smart, and they set the tone at the beginning of the first game. We knew what we had to do, and we adjusted to it."

After one complete service rotation, Columbian led 3-1. But the lead could have been much larger. The Tornadoes made four service errors in the first rotation; Ross made only five service errors for the entire match.

"We're going to get tipped against a lot because we have good blocking," Ross coach Karrie Gardner said. "But I thought the kids adjusted to it. Tiffin had a good strategy, but them missing serves definitely helped us stay in the game."

Said Columbian coach Mindy Myers, "Against a team like Fremont Ross, you can't do that. They're an excellent team, and they took advantage of our mistakes."

The Little Giants slowly pulled away in the opener. Consecutive three-point service runs from Sara Steinle and Ceara Barr gave Ross a 9-5 lead. Columbian stayed close, getting to within 13-10, but the Little Giants closed it out on a two-point run by Erin Barr than ended with an ace.

Ross took control in the second game as Columbian tried to hit through Little Giant blocks. Cobb had a kill and a block during a four-point run served up by Jessica Fick, then Seanna Steinle put together three blocks during Cobb's six-point run.

All of a sudden, the Little Giants led 10-1 and the match was over.

"They took us out of our game," Myers said. "We had to play their game. Had we been able to play our game, I think it would have been a closer match. Who knows?"

Erin Barr added seven kills and four points, Seanna Steinle had three kills and five blocks and Fick contributed four kills and seven points for Ross. Ceara Barr dished out 12 assists, and Sara Steinle had five points.

Coupled with the Little Giants' Great Lakes League title, the sectional championship completes Ross's preseason goals. But the players say they're far from satisfied.

"We're not done. We're going to keep fighting hard," Cobb said. "But this completes the goals we set, so we'll set another goal."