

# THE DISTRICT HURDLE IS AGAIN NOT MASTERED

FINDLAY 5, ROSS 1

## Defense at a loss for Ross

Miscues help Trojans eliminate Little Giants

By MATTHEW HORN  
Sports Writer

TIFFIN — Findlay coach Tim Babcock felt fortunate on Thursday.

Fremont Ross basically gave his team the Division I district final.

The Little Giants made three errors in the first inning and two in the sixth and allowed the Trojans their five runs in those frames in a 5-1 loss at Tiffin University.

"The key was scoring three runs in the first," Babcock said. "We put the ball in play and made them make plays. We were fortunate. Getting ahead 5-1 in the sixth took the pressure off."



News-Messenger/David Distelhorst

FINDLAY'S SHANNON Lussier scores while Fremont Ross catcher Jessica White awaits the ball during the Little Giants' 5-1 loss in a Division I district final on Thursday.

Ross (22-6) scored its only run in the top half of the sixth when Stephanie Nagle doubled and scored on a single by Miranda Steinberger.

The Trojans (17-10), though, scored two insurance runs in the bottom half.

The teams split two Greater Buckeye Conference games this season and Babcock said he anticipated an extra-inning affair on Thursday.

"They're an excellent team," Babcock said of the Little Giants. "We're really lucky they made errors early."

The abundant gaffes were out of character for the Giants.

Ross won its district semifinal game on Wednesday by backing Steinberger's no-hitter with several superb plays on defense.

"Coming off a game like last night, this was pretty much a shock," Ross's Shannon Hickey said.

Ross coach Mike Gilbert said: "This time of year it comes down to defense, and we left our gloves at home. When you make three errors in the first, it's a huge shock. It's hard to recover from that, and we didn't do it."

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## Ross hopes to end season on good note today

Continued From B1

Steinberger (16-6) allowed eight hits and walked none in six innings against Findlay. She faced only one batter over the minimum in the second through fifth innings.

"Miranda is pretty much unflappable," Gilbert said. "She never gets upset with her teammates. She beared down a little more after the first. I think she tried to work harder. She takes it personal — 'I let

them hit the ball.' She looks at it as her fault."

The Giants will have one more opportunity to demonstrate their mettle and resolve as they play at Napoleon today with a chance to clinch the GBC outright.

"We play for the league title (today) and we'll see what we're made of," Gilbert said. "We just got knocked out of the tournament. We'll see if we're the type of team that gets up when it's down or stays down."

With eight seniors on the roster,

Gilbert expects the former.

"I'll be very disappointed if they don't come out and play," he said. "We've faced adversity before. I feel they'll come out and play. Without the seniors, we don't get here."

The team has won 22 games this season.

"We've got the second-best record for any team at Ross," Hickey said. "That should put us in the books, and people will remember us for that."

And not for the five errors.

ROSS 2, CLAY 0

## Miranda magic

No-hitter lifts Ross over Clay

By NECK MATHEWS  
Sports Editor

Miranda Steinberger had done enough all year. The senior pitcher racked up 10 victories and helped lead Fremont Ross into a Division I district semifinal with Oregon Clay.

But Little Giants coach Mike Gilbert wasn't satisfied. "She wasn't playing the way she can pitch," Gilbert said.

On Wednesday, Miranda was magical.

Steinberger threw her first career no-hitter as

More prep, Page B5

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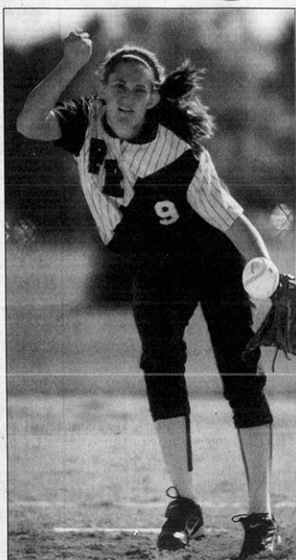
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MIRANDA STEINBERGER tossed her first career no-hitter on Wednesday as Fremont Ross beat Clay 2-0 in a Division I district semifinal. Only a fourth-inning walk spoiled a perfect game for the Little Giant senior. Ross advances to play Findlay in a district final today.

## Dominant defense is key in Steinberger's first no-hitter

Continued From B1

"Ashley was struggling a little bit in the first couple of innings,"

Nicole Marroquin had an RBI fielder's choice in the sixth inning to help Ross avenge last year's three losses — including a setback in the district semifinal — to Clay (13-15).

"It's sweet revenge," Gilbert said.

Thanks to a sweet pitching performance.

Only a fourth-inning walk spoiled a perfect game.

Steinberger improved to 16-5 and notched her seventh shutout — including her second in three postseason games. She lowered her ERA to an impressive 0.72.

Kadie Ondrus — the only Eagle batter to get three balls in a count — drew a fourth-inning walk. She advanced to second on a passed ball, but Steinberger struck out Kate Yerrick and Henney to end the Eagles' only threat.

Steinberger finished with six strikeouts. She threw just 67 pitches, including 46 for strikes.

Recently, Steinberger has struggled to keep her pitches low in the strike zone.

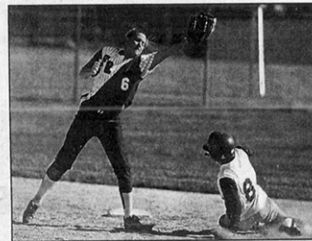
Not against Clay, though.

"We have really been working on that," Gilbert said.

"We've been videotaping her. In the last week, her and I have really worked on getting her pitches down."

Added Radaabaugh: "She had great control today. She's just a good pitcher."

Steinberger also had phenom-



News-Messenger/David Distelhorst

CLAY'S KADIE ONDRUS advances to second base in front of Fremont Ross's Jaymelee Glaspy. Ondrus was Clay's only baserunner in a 2-0 loss.

enal defense behind her.

The Little Giants were error-free and made several outstanding plays.

Hickey had five assists — including the final out of the game — at third base. Shortstop Jaymelee Glaspy made a strong throw from deep in the hole to get Yerrick for the second-to-last out.

Second baseman Stephanie Nagle made the play of the game.

Stephanie Allred ripped a grounder to first baseman Sara

Hoffman. The ball went through Hoffman's legs, but Nagle was in perfect back-up position.

The junior sprinted to first base and slid feet-first to beat Allred to the bag.

"That was just a heads-up play," Gilbert said. "There were a lot of tough plays out there, and we played great defense."

Added Hickey: "We owe it to (Steinberger). She is such a great pitcher that we owe it to her to play great defense."