

New coach, new look for Ross

Young Ross team will be led by first-year coach Jen Bair

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — The Fremont Ross softball program will have two new pitchers this spring. And neither one's last name is Gallagher.

Over the last seven seasons, it was a rare occurrence for former longtime Little Giants coach Mike Gilbert not to use a Gallagher in his circle. Jordyn Gallagher pitched most of the Little Giants' innings in her four years (2007-10) and her younger sister, McKenzie Gallagher, followed suit, dominating the pitching rubber each of the last three years for the purple and white.

Now, Gilbert is gone and sophomore Kayla Foss and freshman Chloe Swaisgood will be the first non-Gallaghers in the circle for Ross since 2006. They're two of many new faces and changes for the Little Giants in 2014 as former junior varsity coach Jen Bair takes over the varsity program.

"Mike (Gilbert) has been a mentor," Bair said. "He's still around. That's been extremely helpful. But we're excited and looking forward to what the season can bring. The girls are working hard so far. We are a young team and we're building on the basics."

Ross returns six players, including a first-team all-Three Rivers Athletic Conference in senior shortstop Kelsey Ivy, from last year's squad that went

FREMONT ROSS SOFTBALL

Coach: Jen Bair, first year.

2013 Finish: 15-12 (7-7 TRAC).

Returnees: Seniors Kelsey Ivy and McKenna Pettiford; juniors Mo Fox, Brina Hrynciw, Kortni Lagrou and Odie Lopez.

Newcomers: Senior Andrea Ysasi; sophomores Kayla Foss and Val Samson; freshman Chloe Swaisgood.

Graduates: Bailey Eishen, McKenzie Gallagher, Kiera Hall, Meghan Michael, Lindsay Overmyer and Kalee Royster.

Outlook: The Little Giants have a new look infield and battery, along with new leadership at the top, but won't use those factors an excuse. Competing in the TRAC is difficult no matter what the circumstance.

15-12 and 7-7 in league play.

The Little Giants lost 7-1 to Bowling Green in the Division I district semifinals to wrap up Gilbert's 15-year run as coach.

Ivy hit close to .350 as a junior. This year, without McKenzie Gallagher and Meghan Michael in the lineup, she'll be asked to be the team's big bat. She'll be the lone returnee in a new look infield.

"She's definitely our leader," said Bair of Ivy, a four-year starter for Ross at short. "She's been great about teaching the younger kids."

Senior McKenna Pettiford also returns, as do juniors Mo Fox, Brina Hrynciw, Kortni Lagrou and Odie Lopez.

Other newcomers, besides Foss and Swaisgood, include Val Samson and Andrea Ysasi. Foss, Samson and Ysasi all



Fremont Ross' McKenzie Gallagher is congratulated by Brina Hrynciw after scoring during a softball game against Bowling Green on May 21, 2013. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSANGER

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played for Bair's JV squad a year ago.

Swaisgood and Foss are each in the process of learning new pitches and working on their pitch location.

"It's hard to tell what kind of pitchers they'll be yet," Bair said. "They're working on a lot of new stuff."

Bair's new staff includes Paula War-go, Annie Kolbeck, Jordyn Gallagher,

Doug Gallagher and Jerry Phillips.

"The girls have set very reasonable goals to start the season," Bair said. "We want to give 110 percent, have good communication on the field and keep working to improve. I don't think they expect to be TRAC champions right now, but they want to have a winning record and they definitely want to compete and contend."

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