

FREMONT ROSS

Coach: Mike Gilbert (first year)

1998 record: 15-5

Key losses: C Nicky Pelfrey, C; Jodi Kusmer, P; Erin Gilbert, 1B; Emily Dowell, 2B; Erin Lytle, CF; Char Horn, DH

Key players: Jodi Fick, RF, Sr.; Jenny Mielke, SS/P; Tiffany Nitschke, 3B; Jenny Schaaf, LF, Sr.; Brittany Brudzinski, 2B, Sr.; Ainsley Watkins, CF, Jr.; Tiffany Garcia, CF; Abby Gilbert, C; Allison Hickey, 2B; Tammy Crawford, DH; Courtney Abbott, P; Ashleigh Horn, DH

Outlook: Schaaf, who is headed to the University of Toledo on a scholarship, will once again bat leadoff and play left field. Fick will bat clean-up and play left. Watkins and Garcia will split time in center. The infield will include Hickey at first, Brudzinski at second, Mielke at short and Nitschke at third. Crawford and Horn will split time at designated hitter. On the mound, Abbott will replace Kusmer as the team's main pitcher. Mielke will also see some time at pitcher.

Bowling Green 7, Ross 0

BOWLING GREEN — Ross mustered only two hits and dropped its opener 7-0 at Bowling Green.

"It's a matter of us having to get a lot better," said Ross coach Mike Gilbert. "Execution-wise, we're a long way off."

Tiffany Garcia and Abby Gilbert hit singles to account for Ross's only hits. Courtney Abbott took the loss on the mound.

Softball

Ross gets first win



News-Messenger/Guy Schultz

ALLYSON HICKEY had an RBI single in Fremont Ross's 4-0 win over Margaretta on Thursday.

Abbott's shutout leads win over Margaretta

News-Messenger reports

The Fremont Ross softball team won its first game of the season, scoring in four of the first five innings and playing solid defense to beat Margaretta 4-0 in non-conference action.

"Basically, the kids played well mentally," said first-year Ross coach Mike Gilbert. "They kept their heads in the game, I was real pleased with everyone."

Courtney Abbott picked up the win for Ross (1-1), while Tiffany Frisch took the loss for the Polar Bears. Abbott struck out four — without a walk — in seven innings for the shutout.

Offensively for the Little Giants, Jen Mielke had two triples, Ainsley Watkins was 2-for-3 with two runs

Thursday	
Ross.....	4
Margaretta	0
Saturday	
Ross at Norwalk	
Margaretta at Willard	

and Allyson Hickey went 2-for-3 with an RBI.

In the first inning, Watkins hit a single, stole second and scored on an error. Ashleigh Horn got things going in the second inning with a single, Abby Gilbert and Brittany Brudzinski sacrificed her to third, and Hickey's two-out single scored Horn.

In the third inning, Watkins hit a single, reached third on an error, and scored on Tiffany Nitschke's sacrifice fly. Nitschke closed out the scoring in the fifth inning,

singling and scoring on Mielke's triple.

In the fifth inning, Ross protected the shutout with a fine defensive play.

"With the bases loaded and one out, they hit a bouncer, Mielke made the play and threw home in the dirt to Abby, who made a scoop tag for the out," said coach Gilbert. "That was a key play, it kept them from scoring."

Ross travels to Norwalk for a 1 p.m. doubleheader, and Margaretta plays at Willard that afternoon.

In other softball action Thursday:

Lakota 3, Clyde 2

KANSAS — Despite being out-hit 10-5, Lakota beat Clyde 3-2 in a non-conference game.

"They out-hit us, but we

Inside: Oak Harbor shuts out Genoa. **Page B2**

executed the bunt in crucial situations," said Lakota assistant Joe Wyant.

Ashley Lockmiller got the win for Lakota, which improved to 8-0. Lacy Haggard started for the Raiders and worked 5½ innings, allowing eight hits, striking out two.

Rachel Dick took the loss for Clyde (3-2), pitching the last three innings in relief of starter Katie Crockett.

"The game could have gone either way," said Clyde coach Marc Marshall. "We just couldn't get the big hit. We left too many runners on base."

See LAKOTA, B2

Little Giants meet Truckers



News-Messenger/Guy Schultz

BRITTANY BRUDZINSKI and Fremont Ross travel to Norwalk today for a softball doubleheader, weather permitting. The Little Giants beat Margareta 4-0 Thursday for their first win of the season.

Softball

Ross sweeps Norwalk

News-Messenger reports

The Fremont Ross softball team outscored Norwalk 34-8 to sweep a non-conference doubleheader Saturday.

In the first game, the Little Giants (3-1) used an 11-run third inning to win 17-1. Allyson Hickey homered, drove in three runs and scored three runs for Ross, Jenny Schaaf went 3-for-4 with three runs and two stolen bases, Jodi Fick went 2-for-4 with four RBI, Abby Gilbert scored three runs and Ainsley Watkins went 2-for-3 with three stolen bases.

Courtney Abbott picked up the win for Ross to improve to 2-1, striking out four and allowing four hits.

In the second game, Ross scored five runs in the second and fourth innings, four runs in the fifth and three runs in the sixth to win 17-7.

Brittany Brudzinski had a triple and two RBI, Tiffany Nitschke was 2-for-5 with two RBI, and Watkins, Gilbert and Hickey scored three runs apiece.

Ross beats Findlay in GLL

News-Messenger reports

FINDLAY — Fremont Ross won its fourth game in a row, routing Findlay 16-4 in a Great Lakes League game.

Tiffany Nitschke was 3-for-5 and drove in two runs. Jen Mielke was 2-for-2 with an RBI, Allyson Hickey was 2-for-3 with three RBI and Brittany Brudzinski and Abby Gilbert drove in three runs apiece for the Little Giants.

Courtney Abbott was the winning pitcher, striking out eight in a complete game effort.

"I'm real happy," said Ross coach Mike Gilbert. "We had the same amount of hits that Findlay had (12), but the kids are making good decisions on the base paths, we're getting bunts down, the kids are playing very unselfishly."

In other softball action:

St. Wendelin 10,

St. Joe 3

Fostoria St. Wendelin scored four runs in the third inning and beat St. Joseph Central Catholic 10-3 in a Midland Athletic League game at Rodger Young Park.

Laura Hirt was 2-for-3 and Carla Hammer doubled for the Crimson Streaks (1-5).

Clyde 7, Huron 6

CLYDE — Clyde scored two runs on three hits in the bottom of the seventh inning to edge Huron 7-6 in the Sandusky Bay Conference.

"We were down by one in the seventh and somehow we found a way to score two runs to win it," said Clyde coach Marc Marshall. "All of our

Softball

girls in that inning hit good balls. We had three hits in that inning, and we also had a very good sacrificed bunt in the seventh to win it."

Molly Pawsey doubled and drove in two runs for the Fliers (4-2). Rachel Dick was the winning pitcher.

Oak Harbor 7,

Margaretta 6

CASTALIA — Oak Harbor scored twice in the seventh to rally for a 7-6 win over Margaretta in the SBC.

In the inning, Stacy Honaker reached on an error, Anne Greener bunted her over to third and reached safely on an error. Honaker

scored on a passed ball and Katie Green hit one to third for an error that scored Greener.

Oak Harbor improved to 3-2, 1-0.

Carey 2, Old Fort 0

OLD FORT — Carey pitcher Sarah Watkins fired a no-hitter as the Blue Devils beat Old Fort 2-0 in the MAL.

Erin Rau took the loss for the Stockaders.

Woodmore 7,

Lakota 1

KANSAS — Woodmore handed Lakota its first loss of the season, a 7-1 decision in the SLL.

Ashley Lockmiller took the loss for Lakota (8-1, 2-1). The Wildcats improved to 3-3, 2-1.

Ross wins fifth straight game

Continued from B1

The Little Giants extended in the lead in the second. Nitschke led off with a triple and scored on a Fick sacrifice fly. Watkins then drew a walk and scored on a single by Tiffany Garcia.

In the fourth, Watkins led off with a single, stole second, went to third on a groundout by Gilbert and scored on a safety squeeze bunt by Garcia.

"That kind of summed up our

team," said coach Gilbert. "Ainsley gets a little hit, a little two-footer. Then Abby hits the ball to right and then we bunt her in. We've been kind of manufacturing runs like that all year."

The Little Giants lost Mielke, who was hit in the cheek by a pitch in the fourth inning. Jill Diedrich took her place.

The Little Giants return to action today, as Oregon Clay comes to town for a Great Lakes League game. The contest will be Ross's third of five this week.

Ross musters only two hits in 12-2 loss to Clay

News-Messenger reports

Oregon Clay collected 13 hits and handed Fremont Ross a 12-2 loss Wednesday in the Great Lakes League.

Megan Susor fired a two-hitter for the win for the Eagles. Courtney Abbott took the loss for the Little Giants (5-2, 1-1).

Softball

Conference defeat.

Missi Salyer settled down after a rocky start, and held the Fliers to one hit over the final five innings.

Clyde fell 5-3, 1-1.

St. Joe edges Carey; Ross pounds Fostoria

News-Messenger reports

CAREY — St. Joseph Central Catholic won a defensive struggle over Carey Monday, beating the Blue Devils 3-2 in a Midland Athletic League game.

"It was a very good defensive game, both teams played very well," said Streaks coach Bill Bork. "It came down to the point where it was luck of the draw and we got one more hit than they did."

Jennifer Bork earned the win for St. Joe (2-7). Laura Hirt was 3-for-4 in the win, and Melissa Geller and Kelly Halm each had hits.

St. Joe travels to Seneca East on Wednesday for a MAL game.

Ross 13, Fostoria 1

Fremont Ross battered Fostoria pitching for 13 runs and nine hits in a 13-1 Great Lakes League victory over the Redmen on Monday.

Courtney Abbott earned the win for Ross, while Tracy Lee took the loss for Fostoria.

Ross started its scoring in the third inning, when Jenny

Softball

Schaaf tripled and scored on Jenn Mielke's RBI. Tiffany Nitschke then walked, and Jodi Fick hit a two-run double. Abby Gilbert's squeeze bunt knocked in the fourth run of the inning, Ashleigh Horn walked, and Allyson Hickey's two-out single drove in Gilbert and Horn.

In the fourth, Fick, Watkins and Gilbert worked their way on base, and all scored on Fostoria errors to give the Little Giants a 9-0 lead.

Schaaf went 2-for-2 and Watkins went 2-for-4 for Ross. Schaaf, Mielke, Fick, Watkins and Gilbert all scored two runs.

Abbott struck out three to improve to 5-2. Ross hosts Napoleon in a non-league game Wednesday.

Clyde 5, Perkins 3

SANDUSKY — Clyde took the lead in the fifth inning and held on for a 5-3 Sandusky Bay Conference win over Sandusky Perkins.

Rachel Dick earned the

win for Clyde to improve to 5-1, striking out six in seven innings, and Molly Pawsey led the Fliers' attack with two hits.

Clyde made several key defensive plays late, including a seventh inning, bases loaded double play that got the Fliers out of a jam.

Clyde (6-3, 2-1) hosts St. Mary's in an SBC game today.

Gibsonburg 4, Eastwood 1

PEMBERVILLE — Jenny Taulker went 2-for-3 with a double, and earned the win as Gibsonburg beat Eastwood 4-1 in a Suburban Lakes League game.

Gibsonburg scored three runs in the first and one in the second and held Eastwood to just five hits. Lexe Warren homered for the Golden Bears, who improved to 6-2, and Sarah Taulker went 2-for-3.

Gibsonburg travels to Genoa for an SLL game Wednesday.

See WOODMORE, B2

ATTICA — St. Joseph Central Catholic's softball team won its second Midland Athletic League game in a row, topping Seneca East 3-1 Wednesday.

Marianne Fox tripled and Melissa Geller, Rachel Babione added singles for the Crimson Streaks (3-7).

Jolene Williams suffered the loss for the Tigers (8-2).

"It was a game coaches dream of," said SJCC coach Bill Bork. "The game was tight and we played an awesome defensive game.

"The people in the stands and in the dugouts knew the game wasn't over until the last inning it was so defensive. The fans enjoyed the game."

Ross 13, Napoleon 0

NAPOLEON — Fremont Ross collected 16 hits and thumped Napoleon 13-0 in a non-league game.

Jodi Fick, Jenny Schaaf and Ainsley Watkins each collected three hits for the Little Giants (7-2).

The Little Giants scored three in the first to get rolling. Tiffany Nitschke's sacrifice fly scored Schaaf, Fick singled to drive in Jenn

Softball

Mielke and scored on an error after a Watkins single.

Abby Gilbert and Ashleigh Horn collected RBI as Ross extended its lead to 5-0 in the third. Ross scored five more times in the fourth, hits by Mielke, Nitschke, Fick and Watkins and two key Napoleon errors keyed the inning. In the sixth, Allyson Hickey's triple scored Gilbert and Amanda Shaffer and Schaaf singled home Ross's final run.

Mielke was the winning pitcher. She fanned six and yielded three hits in seven innings.

Oak Harbor 7, Clyde 1

CLYDE — Anne Greener tossed a two-hitter and went 2-for-4 with one RBI as Oak Harbor beat Clyde 7-1 and ran their record to 6-3 and 4-0 in the SBC.

Greener (6-3) struck out four and walked two. Rachel Dick took the loss for the Fliers.

"She was pretty much in control all night," Oak Harbor coach Kent Whitman said.

Little Giants sweep two from Notre Dame

News-Messenger reports

TOLEDO — The Fremont Ross softball team won two games from Toledo Notre Dame on Saturday, in markedly different ways.

In the first game, Ross outlasted the Eagles 3-2 in 11 innings, with Courtney Abbott earning the win.

Jodi Fick knocked in Jenn Mielke twice in the first three innings to post the Little Giants to a 2-0 lead. But Notre Dame rallied, tying the game with runs in the fifth and seventh innings.

In the top of the 11th, Fick led off with a single, but was retired on Ainsley Watkins' fielder's choice. Abby Gilbert's fielder's choice forced Watkins, but Ashleigh Horn tripled to drive in Gilbert.

In the bottom half of the inning, Notre Dame put a runner on first with two outs. On a single to right, Fick's throw to third base was late, but third baseman Tiffany Nitschke threw to Mielke at

Softball

second to retire the batter.

Mielke was 4-for-5 for Ross with a double, three stolen bases and two runs, Fick was 4-for-5 with two RBI and Emily Bibler was 2-for-4. Abbott, who struck out five, improved to 6-2 with the win.

Ross won the second game 14-0, punishing Notre Dame pitching for 16 hits. The Little Giants broke the ice with four runs in the third inning, and put the game away with 10 runs in the fifth.

Jenny Schaaf was 3-for-4 with two steals, Mielke was 3-for-5 with two runs, Nitschke was 2-for-3 with a triple and three runs, Fick was 3-for-5 with five RBI, a triple and three runs and Gilbert was 3-for-4 with two RBI. Mielke struck out six and allowed just four hits to improve to 3-0.

Ross, which improved to 9-2 overall, travels to Sandusky today for a Great Lakes League game.

Ross crushes Findlay



News-Messenger/Guy Schultz

AINSLEY WATKINS puts the ball in play during Fremont Ross's 17-2 win over Findlay on Wednesday.

Little Giants improve to 10-2 overall, 3-1 in GLL

News-Messenger reports

Jenny Schaaf was 4-for-5 with three RBI and winning pitcher Jenn Mielke was 3-for-5 with three RBI as Fremont Ross whipped Findlay 17-2 in a Great Lakes League game.

Jodi Fick was 3-for-4 with two runs, and Abby Gilbert, Allyson Hickey and Tiffany Garcia also scored two runs apiece in

Wednesday

Ross.....	17
Findlay	2

Friday

Ross at Oregon Clay, 4:30 p.m.

the win.

The Little Giants (10-2, 3-1) scored three in the first.

Schaaf led off with a triple and scored on an

error, Jenn Mielke singled and scored on a Jodi Fick single. Fick scored on a wild pitch.

Allyson Hickey walked and scored Ross's fourth run in the second.

Ross put the game away with seven in the third, highlighted by a two-run triple by Schaaf. Runs batted in by Tiffany Garcia, Schaaf and

Mielke increased the lead to 13-1.

Nitschke and Watkins singled and scored in the sixth to close out the scoring.

On the mound, Mielke fanned seven and walked four to improve to 4-0.

The Little Giants return to action Friday, as they travel to Oregon Clay for a GLL game.

singled and scored in the win.

Strausbaugh pitched five solid innings and struck out three.

St. Joe improved to 6-9.

Ross 10, Oregon Clay 1

OREGON — Fremont Ross handed Oregon Clay its first Great Lakes League loss, a 10-1 decision Friday afternoon.

Jenny Schaaf was 3-for-4 with three runs, Jodi Fick was 2-for-4 and scored twice, Ainsley Watkins, Jenn Mielke, Ashleigh Horn and Allyson Hickey were all 2-for-3, Emily Bibler drove in two runs.

Courtney Abbott improved to 7-2 with the win on the mound.

Ross improved to 11-2, 4-1.

Clyde 9, Margaretta 8

CASTALIA — Margaretta scored four runs in the top of the seventh but it was not enough as Clyde earned a 9-8 Sandusky Bay Conference win.

For Clyde, winning pitcher Rachel Dick was 2-for-3 and Julie Kern was 2-for-4 in the win.

Clyde improved to 9-6 (5-4).

Tiffany Frishee tripled twice, but Margaretta fell

Softball

Ross holds off Tiffin Columbian

News-Messenger reports

BUCYRUS — The Fremont Ross softball team scored two runs in the fourth and two more in the fifth and held on to beat Tiffin Columbian 4-3 in a Division I sectional semifinal Saturday afternoon.

Tiffany Nitschke was 3-for-4 and Ashleigh Horn was 2-for-3 with two RBI for Ross, which improved to 12-2 (4-1).

The Tornadoes took a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the first with a pair of unearned runs. In the top of the fourth, Tiffany Nitschke and Jodi Fick hit back-to-back singles and one out later, Horn delivered a two-run single to tie the game.

Columbian nearly regained the lead in the bottom of the inning, but shortstop Jenn Mielke threw a runner out at the plate to thwart a double steal attempt.

Ross scored two runs in the

Saturday

Ross	4
Columbian	3

Today

Bedford at Ross, 4:30 p.m.

fifth. Jenny Schaaf singled and stole second, went to third on a Mielke single and scored on a wild pitch. Mielke scored on Nitschke's single to give Ross a 4-2 lead.

Columbian scored a run in the bottom of the sixth and loaded the bases with one out. But winning pitcher Courtney Abbott was able to get two ground ball outs to escape.

The Tornadoes made one last effort in the ninth with a two-out double, but a ground-out to Emily Bibler ended the game.

Abbott struck out six and walked two for her eighth win of the season.

Mielke pitches three-hitter in Ross win

News-Messenger reports

Jenn Mielke pitched a complete game three-hitter as the Fremont Ross softball team posted a 5-0 win over Bedford in the Great Lakes League.

Mielke improved her record to 5-0, as she fanned nine and walked five. At the plate, she was 2-for-3.

Ross took control with two runs in the first. Jenny Schaaf opened with a triple, Mielke followed with a single and Jodi Fick then delivered a two-run single.

Ross improved to 13-2, 5-

1. Calvert 4, St. Joe 2

St. Joseph Central Catholic fell to 6-12 with a 4-2 loss to Tiffin Calvert at Rodger Young Park.

Erin Raubenolt doubled in the loss for St. Joe. The Crimson Streaks managed just four hits in the game.

Clyde 14,

St. Mary's 1

SANDUSKY — Clyde pounded out 19 hits in a 14-1 SBC win over St. Mary's.

Softball

Rachel Dick earned the win for Clyde (10-7, 6-4), and went 4-for-5 with a triple and three RBI. Katey Nieset, Julie Kern, Marissa Greenslade, Katie Crockett and Jamie Potter also had multi-hit games for Clyde.

Lakota 5,

Woodmore 4

KANSAS — Woodmore scored two runs in the seventh, but Lakota held on for a 5-4 SLL win.

Crystal Miller was 2-for-3 with an RBI for the Raiders (14-3, 7-3). Jamie Ray and Kristen Lentz added doubles for Lakota. Ashley Lockmiller earned the win.

Cori Moenter was 4-for-4 with a triple and three RBI in the loss for the Wildcats (9-11, 5-6).

Oak Harbor 9,

Edison 0

OAK HARBOR — Anne Greener fired a two-hitter as Oak Harbor (11-3, 8-0) blanked Edison 9-0 in the Sandusky Bay Conference.

The News-Messenger, Fremont, Ohio

Sports Editor Scott Tappa, 332-5511, ext. 142

Abbott pitches 2-hit shutout

News-Messenger reports

FOSTORIA — Courtney Abbott pitched a two-hit shutout as Fremont Ross beat Fostoria 10-0 in a Great Lakes League game Wednesday.

Ross improved to 14-2 overall with the win, 6-1 in the GLL.

Jenny Schaaf tripled to open the game, and scored on Jenn Mielke's triple. Mielke scored on Tiffany Nitschke's sacrifice fly, Jodi Fick and Ainsley Watkins followed with singles and Abby Gilbert's RBI single made it 4-0.

Schaaf went 3-for-4 with a stolen base and two runs, Nitschke had two RBI, Gilbert scored three runs,

Ashleigh Horn tripled and Allyson Hickey went 2-for-3 with an RBI. Abbott struck out three and walked four to improve to 9-2 overall, 4-1 in the GLL.

Ross travels to play Toledo Central Catholic in a non-league game today.

Clyde 12, Perkins 0

CLYDE — Rachel Dick threw a four-hitter to improve to 9-3 as Clyde beat Sandusky Perkins 12-0 in a Sandusky Bay Conference game.

Dick also tripled and was 2-for-2 for the Fliers (12-7, 7-4). Katie Crockett had a big day for Clyde, hitting a home run and a triple, driving in four

Softball

runs.

Julie Kern, Theresa Gierhart and Katie Rathbun also had two hits apiece for the Fliers. Clyde busted open a 2-0 lead with eight runs in the fifth inning.

Clyde travels to Oak Harbor for an SBC game Friday.

Gibsonburg 4,

Woodmore 1

WOODVILLE — Jenny Taulker limited Woodmore to one run on five hits as Gibsonburg beat the Wildcats 4-1 in a Suburban Lakes League

game.

Gibsonburg improved to 13-4, 9-2 in the SLL with the win, while Woodmore fell to 9-12, 5-7.

The Golden Bears scored a pair of runs in the first and fourth innings to provide the necessary support for Taulker. Megan Wassil and Leslie LaPlant tripled for Gibsonburg, and Abby Wonderly, Heather Hill and Taulker doubled. Wassil was 2-for-4 with an RBI.

Rachel Lewis doubled for Woodmore, and Sherry Swartz took the loss.

Gibsonburg hosts Lake and Woodmore travels to Elmwood in SLL games Friday.

Ross rallies past St. Ursula

Mielke scores winning run

News-Messenger reports

TOLEDO — Fremont Ross scored four runs in the final three innings to rally from three runs down to post a 6-5 win over Toledo St. Ursula.

The Little Giants snapped the tie in the seventh. Jenn Mielke started the inning with an infield single and was sacrificed to second by Jodi Fick. Mielke scored the winning run a wild pitch.

Ross scored two runs in the top of the first. Jenny Schaaf led off with a single and scored on a wild pitch. Fick tripled and scored on Ainsley Watkins' single.

After St. Ursula scored four runs in the fourth inning, Ross responded with two in the fifth. Tiffany Garcia singled with one out in the inning. Schaaf followed with a two-run blast over

the center field fence.

In the sixth inning Fick walked and Watkins sacrificed her to second. After Fick stole third, Abby Gilbert reached on an infield single and Fick was able to score to tie the game at 5-5.

Mielke picked up the win, improving her record to 6-0 and 2-0 in the GLL. She gave up nine hits, while striking out seven and walking three.

Ross improved to 15-2. The Little Giants play Ashland in a Division I sectional final at noon today at Bucyrus.

In other softball action Friday:

Lake 8, Gibsonburg 1

GIBSONBURG — Gibsonburg picked up only four hits in its 8-1 loss to Lake (7-11, 2-10).

The Golden Bears tied the game at 1-1 in the third inning on a sacrifice fly by Lexie Warren, scoring Amanda Jividen.

"Things just didn't fall for us

Softball

tonight," said Gibsonburg coach Keith Diebler. "We got behind early and we just didn't get things to go our way."

Jenny Taulker suffered the loss for Gibsonburg (13-5, 9-3 SLL). The Golden Bears are still on top of the SLL, a half game up on Lakota.

"We just have to come back and realize that we're still in it," said Diebler.

Woodmore 7, Elmwood 4

BLOOMDALE — The Wildcats improved to 11-12 and 6-7 in the SLL as Nicole McCarthy went 4-for-4 with two doubles and two RBI.

Cori Moenter went 2-for-4 with two runs and two RBI for Woodmore, which had 10 hits.

Winning pitcher Sarah Bowen went 5½ innings and gave up two runs on eight hits, with three

walks and one strikeout. Sherry Swartz earned the save.

"It was a very nice game," Woodmore coach Dean Sandwisch said. "We finally put a complete game together. I'm very proud of the girls."

Lakota 4, Eastwood 3

RISINGSUN — Ashley Lockmiller improved her record to 14-2 in Lakota's 4-3 win over Eastwood (13-4, 7-3 SLL).

Lakota scored three runs in the fifth inning. Crystal Miller led off with a single. Kristen Lentz reached on an error and both runners advanced when Jessica Rupright laid down a sacrifice bunt.

Renee Chaney followed with a run-scoring single. Megan Stoudinger hit a sacrifice fly scoring Lentz. The scoring ended with Chaney crossing the plate on a wild pitch.

Lockmiller added a triple and Jenni Bomer went 2-for-3 for the Raiders (16-3, 8-3 SLL).

Ross's super eight



News-Messenger/Liz Margerum

COURTNEY ABBOTT is 11-2 for Fremont Ross this season with a 1.40 earned run average.

Abbott's pitching powers Little Giants' streak

By MICHAEL PIDANICK
Staff writer

As a pitcher, Fremont Ross junior Courtney Abbott knows the pressure is on her. If she is at the top of her game, the Little Giants' chances of winning are much better than if she struggles.

That's exactly why she likes playing the position.

"I have a lot of control of the game," Abbott said. "If I have a bad game, then it's real hard for the team to come back from that."

Lately, Abbott has been the Little Giants' big game pitcher. In Ross's sectional final Saturday at Bucyrus, Abbott struck out 11 and yielded just six hits in a 4-0 win over Ashland. She threw a complete game and fanned six in the Little Giants' 4-3 sectional semifinal

win over Tiffin Columbian on May 1.

Pitching in big games is something that Abbott said she enjoys — sort of.

"I like it, but I don't," she said. "I get really nervous. Actually, my parents (Russ and Ellen) get even more nervous than me."

"But I have the rest of the team behind me. I can't play alone."

On Monday, Abbott fired a two-hitter as Ross beat Toledo Whitmer 4-0 for its 12th straight victory. Abbott is 11-2 this season with around a 1.40 earned run average as the Little Giants are 17-2 overall and 7-1 in the Great Lakes League.

"The key is her ability to throw strikes," said first-year head coach Mike Gilbert. "She keeps the game moving fast, so they're ready behind her."

Athlete of the Week

Courtney Abbott profile

School: Fremont Ross.

Grade: Junior.

Sports: Swimming (50 free, 100 free); Softball (pitcher).

Family: Parents: Russ and Ellen Abbott; Sisters: Jennifer, 15, Jessica, 15; Brother: Mike, 11.

Hobbies: Hanging out with friends, rollerblading.

They know she has good control and it's going to move quickly."

Entering the season, the Little Giants weren't expected to do much, after losing six seniors from last year, including No. 1 pitcher Jodi Kusmer.

But Abbott worked to improve her game, and along with No. 2 pitcher Jenn Mielke, has picked up the slack.

"She's really improved her pitching," said senior

outfielder Jenny Schaaf. "She's picked up a lot of speed and has a rise on her pitches."

The season started out as most skeptics expected, as Bowling Green handed the Little Giants a sound 7-0 loss on March 29.

"After that first game, we were like 'I hope the rest of the season isn't going to be like this,'" Abbott said. "It kind of woke us up."

See ABBOTT, B2

Abbott, Little Giants on a roll

Continued from B1

That loss turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the young Ross team.

"Bowling Green did us a favor," said Gilbert. "Since then we've played really well. It forced us to control our emotions and focus a little better."

Since then, the Little Giants have won 16 of 17 games with the only loss coming at Oregon Clay on April 14. Ross has won six straight GLL games.

Gilbert, who took over for Cheryl Schell and was previously an assistant, said he has been coaching Abbott and

several other players for nearly 10 years.

"I've had him for a coach really since I started playing," she said.

The coach said his prior knowledge has helped the smooth transition. Last year's team was 15-6 and reached the district semifinals, before bowing out.

Abbott is also a swimmer for Phil Moran's Ross team, participating in the 50 and 100 free.

But softball is her true love. She has been playing since was in fourth or fifth grade.

"My dad always liked base-

"My dad always liked baseball, and at the time my brother was too young. So he got me into softball."

— Courtney Abbott,
on her softball beginnings

ball, and at the time my brother was too young," she said. "So he got me into softball."

Abbott said she hopes to play in college, but she hasn't made any choices yet.

Next summer she will play of a traveling team with Schaaf.

Softball

In other high school softball action Monday:

Ross 4, Whitmer 0

TOLEDO — Jenny Schaaf was 3-for-4 with two runs and Courtney Abbott fired a two-hitter as Fremont Ross won its 12th game in a row, a 4-0 Great Lakes League decision over Toledo Whitmer.

Schaaf homered to lead off the game for Ross (17-2, 7-1). Jodi Fick singled, scored and drove in a run, Jenn Mielke singled and scored and Ains-

ley Watkins singled and drove in a run for Ross.

Ross travels to Sandusky for a GLL game Wednesday.

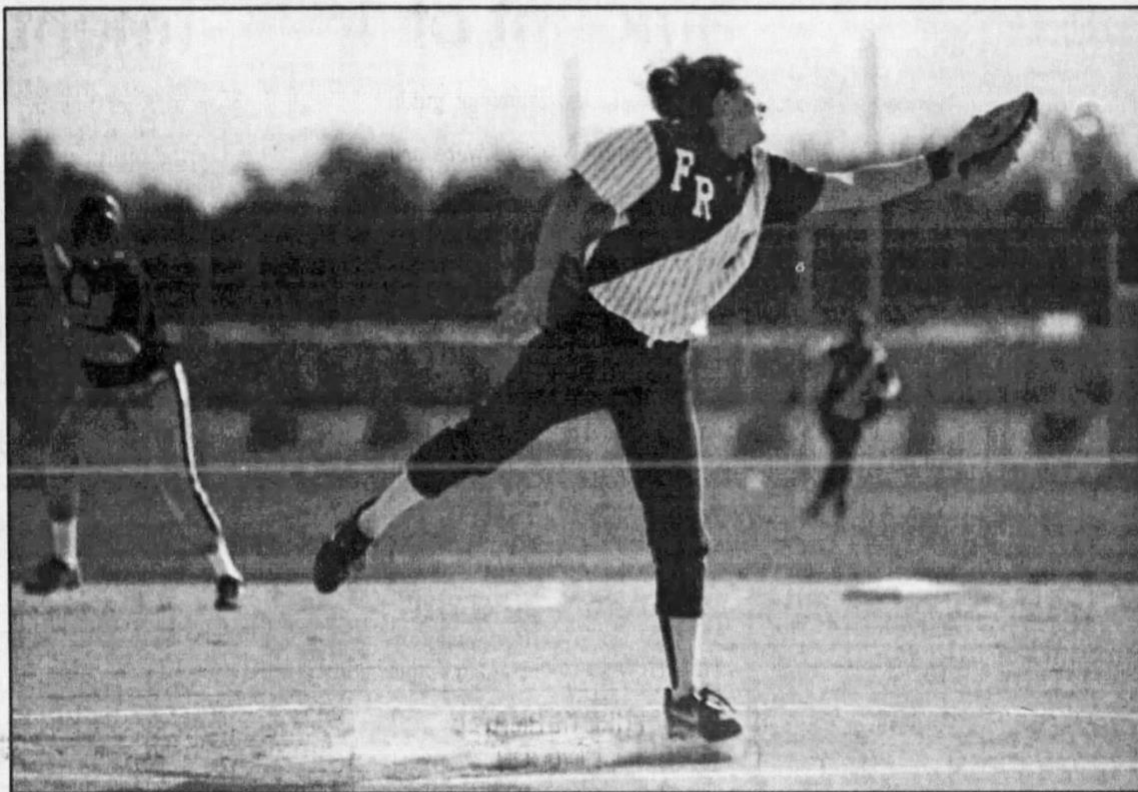
Clyde 3, Edison 2

MILAN — Rachel Dick fired a complete game as Clyde edged Edison 3-2 in the Sandusky Bay Conference.

The Fliers scored two in the third to take a 3-0 lead. Katie Rathbun, Theresa Gierhart and Julie Kern opened with consecutive singles to load the bases, and Dick and Marissa Greenslade followed with back-to-back RBI ground

Softball

13 in a row for Giants



News-Messenger/Liz Margerum

JENN MIELKE stretches for a ball during Fremont Ross's 20-3 win over Sandusky on Wednesday.

Little Giants easily extend winning streak

By MICHAEL PIDANICK
Staff writer

High school softball rules say a game must go five innings before a mercy rule ends the game.

Wednesday's Great Lakes League game could have been stopped after the second inning, as Fremont Ross needed only two innings to put away rival Sandusky.

The Little Giants sent 29 batters to the plate and scored 20 runs, en route to an easy 20-3 Great Lakes League win over rival San-

dusky.

Ross sent 18 batters to the plate and scored 13 times in the first inning, then tacked on seven more runs in the second inning.

"The first inning was the key to game, then we scored seven more in the second which was nice," said Ross coach Mike Gilbert. "So we got it over early."

Ross won its 13th game in a row, and improved to 18-2 overall and 8-1 in the GLL. The Little Giants hold a one-game lead over Oregon Clay atop the league, with

Wednesday

Ross.....20

Sandusky.....3

Friday

Ross at Sandusky, 4:30 p.m.

games remaining against Sandusky, Toledo Whitmer and Bedford (Mich.).

The Little Giants haven't lost in nearly a month, since a 12-2 home loss to Clay on April 14.

"We're starting to hit pretty well now," said Ross outfielder Jenny Schaaf. "We're starting to work to-

gether, we're meshing well."

Schaaf was 3-for-3 with two RBI and three runs for the Little Giants. Gilbert said she has been a big key to the team's offensive success.

"Jen Schaaf has been hitting the ball the last 10, 12 games," the coach said. "You have to be pleased when you've got a leadoff hitter that can hit singles, triples, plus her speed is a big advantage."

See ROSS, B3

Ross wins 13th straight game

Continued from B1

Jenn Mielke was 2-for-4 with three runs, Jodi Fick was 2-for-4 with four RBI, Ainsley Watkins was 2-for-3 with three runs, Tiffany Nitschke and Abby Gilbert scored three runs each, Tiffany Garcia scored twice, Allyson Hickey walked twice and scored a run and Ashleigh Horn singles and drove in two runs.

Mielke pitched five innings for the win. She struck out three and gave up four hits.

"It was easier to pitch with the big lead," Mielke said. "My defense helps me out a lot, too."

The Blue Streaks took a quick 1-0 lead in the top of the first, but the Little Giants stormed back. Schaaf and Mielke opened with back-to-back singles and advanced on a wild pitch. Nitschke followed with a grounder to third, but the Blue Streaks third baseman threw the ball away, allowing Schaaf and Mielke to score. Nitschke hustled to third on the play, and scored on a wild pitch.

One out later, Watkins singled and Gilbert drew a walk. Watkins scored on a groundout by Horn and Hickey drew another walk. Gilbert and Hickey then scored when Garcia reached on a two-base error, giving Ross a 7-1 lead.

Schaaf followed with a two-run inside-the-park home run to center. Mielke reached on an error and Nitschke walked, before Jodi Fick delivered a two-run double for an 11-1 lead. Fick and Watkins, who walked in her second at bat,

scored on wild pitches.

Ross added seven more in the second on five hits, highlighted by a two-run single by Fick.

Che

Go for it! Croghan improvements. For new decks and sw family rooms. For Even simple impr value to your hom

And right right for you. Do

Golden Bears improved to 16-6 overall, 11-4 in the SLL. Ashley Lockmiller took the loss for Lakota, which fell to 18-9-4.

Megan Wassil and Lexe Warren each tripled and went 2-for-2 for Gibsonburg. The Golden Bears scored runs in the first, third and fifth innings to seal the win. In other softball action:

Ross 5, Sandusky 0
SANDUSKY — Courtney

Softball

Abbott allowed just three hits and struck out 10 as Fremont Ross beat Sandusky 5-0 in the Great Lakes League.

Jenny Schaaf broke the ice with a run in the fourth, leading off with a double, scoring on Jenn Mielke's sacrifice. Allyson Hickey led off the sixth with a single, advanced on a sacrifice

bunt by Emily Bibler and scored on Schaaf's sacrifice. Mielke then doubled and scored on Tiffany Nitschke's single.

Abby Gilbert singled to lead off the seventh and scored when Ashleigh Horn reached on an error. Tiffany Garcia's sacrifice scored Horn.

Abbott improved to 12-2 overall, 6-1 in the GLL. Ross improved to 19-2, 9-1.

Ross clinches title

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross clinched a share of the Great Lakes League championship with a 5-2 Friday over Toledo Whitmer.

The Little Giants spotted the Panthers a 2-0 lead but scored two runs in the fourth to tie and three in the fifth to take the lead.

Jodi Fick, Jenny Schaaf, Abby Gilbert and Ashleigh Horn had Ross's four hits. Courtney Abbott was the winning pitcher. She gave up three hits and five walks and fanned five.

Fick collected the Little Giants' first hit, leading off

Softball

the fourth with a single. Ainsley Watkins reached on an error and Gilbert bunted for a base hit to load the bases. Horn followed with a two-run single to tie the game.

In the fifth, Schaaf singled and went to second on a sacrifice by Jenn Mielke. Tiffany Nitschke walked and Watkins followed with a sacrifice bunt, and when the throw to first was errant, Schaaf and Nitschke raced around to score. Watkins scored on a wild pitch to make it 5-2.

Softball

Ross ends season at 20-4

News-Messenger reports

BEDFORD, Mich. — Fremont Ross finished its season at 20-4 with a 6-5 Great Lakes League loss at Bedford.

Jenn Mielke was 3-for-4 with a run and an RBI for the Little Giants (20-4, 10-2). Jenny Schaaf doubled, singled and scored a run, Jodi Fick doubled and singled, Ainsley Watkins went 1-for-2 with a run, Allyson Hickey and Tiffany Garcia both went 1-for-3 with a run and Ashleigh Horn had an RBI for Ross.

The Little Giants (20-4, 10-2) finished as a GLL co-champion with Oregon Clay.

The Little Giants scored in the top of the first, as Mielke singled and scored on a wild pitch. Bedford tied the game in the bottom of the inning, and it stayed that way until the fifth. In the top of the fifth, Allyson Hickey and Tiffany Garcia hit back-to-back singles and Jenny Schaaf followed with another base hit to drive home Hickey. Mielke followed with another sin-

gle to drive in Garcia. Bedford took the lead with three in the bottom of the fifth, but Ross tied it in the sixth, as Watkins singled and was driven home by Horn.

Bedford took the lead in the bottom of the inning, but Ross tied it in the top of the seventh. Schaaf hit a one-out double and scored on Mielke's second RBI of the game.

But the Kicking Mules won the game with a run on a wild pitch in the bottom of the seventh.

Softball

Schaaf, Fick lead area softball award winners

News-Messenger reports

The Fremont Ross softball team, which won a share of the Great Lakes League championship this season, placed four players on the Division I All-Northwest Ohio teams, voted on by coaches.

Outfielders Jenny Schaaf and Jodi Fick were both first team selections, and infielders Jenn Mielke and Tiffany Nitschke were second team selections.

In Division II, Bellevue catcher Becki Moore, pitcher

Lyndsay Beamer, infielder Alisha Hackenburg and outfielder Kristy Baptista were first team selections, and Margaretta's Tiffany Frisbee and Deborah Klepper earned honorable mention. Baptista was named second team All-Ohio.

Randi Whitman, Erin Rau Jennifer Seigley of Old Fort



SCHAAF



FICK

were first team selections in Division III, and teammate Heather Webb made the second team. Rau was a first team All-Ohio pick, and Whitman was a third team pick.

The Stockaders play Edgerton in a Division III regional semifinal Thursday at Findlay High School.