

2013 Season Review..



Members of the Fremont Ross football team look on from the sideline during the first official day of practice on Monday, Aug 5, 2013.
JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Football is here

Local high schools get football season started with two-a-days

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

Ross will have its security blanket back this fall.

At least that's what 10th year coach Derek Kidwell is calling his offensive line. The Little Giants welcomed linemen Jarvis Jones, Kyle Lamalie, Mike Muffler, Dylan Jagodzinski, Blake Moyer, Tyler Tran, Alec Carnicom and others to camp on Monday as two-a-day practices started around Sandusky County.

A total of 90 kids, including 25 freshmen were present on the first day of Ross practices.

"We're going to rely a lot on those experienced big boys up front to control the line of scrimmage," said Kidwell, whose team enters 2012 off a disappointing 3-7 season that saw them finish 1-6 in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference. "We're going to be a run football team. We got a nice stable of running backs and having a new quarterback, I'm not going to ask them to go out and win us games. We're going to manage games for them."

Kidwell's offense averaged

23.4 points per game in 2012, led by three-year starter Tyler Wolf. However, Wolf is gone. Junior Jalen Slick is the front-runner to replace him, but Kidwell says he'll get plenty of competition.

Dick Kidwell moved to offense after coaching the defense the last nine years. He'll be working with the running backs and helping with the offensive play-calling where they hope he can breathe in some new life.

"He's always been an offensive guy," said coach Kidwell of his father. "We just wanted to make a change defensively to see if we could get better."

With that in mind, Kidwell nabbed former Clyde assistants Chad Long and Troy Albright. Long, a former college football player at Bowling Green State University, like Kidwell, will be the new defensive coordinator, while Albright will work with the defensive line.

Ross gave up an average of 33.1 points per contest, including 34 or more points in six games a year ago.

"Chad has his own style he

brings to his defenses," Kidwell said. "He's an aggressive defensive coordinator where he can adjust his schemes to different offenses and different formations, so we'll have a lot of flexibility defensively."

The Little Giants open the season Aug. 30 with a visit to their long-time chief rivals, the Blue Streaks of Sandusky, before visiting Maple Heights in Week 2. Ross' first home game is Sept. 13 when it hosts Pickerington North.

"We need to have a good season," Kidwell said. "We haven't represented ourselves well since we've gotten to this new league. We need to get back to playing hard-nosed and fundamental Fremont Ross football."

SJCC

Across town at the Naderer Sports Complex, new St. Joseph Central Catholic coach T.J. Buckley had 30 kids in camp who have made it no secret that they want to follow up a banner season, by one-upping themselves.

The Crimson Streaks rebounded from a 4-6 campaign

in 2011, going 10-2 and winning their first outright Midland Athletic League title since 1996 with a perfect 7-0 league mark. They topped Ottawa Hills (27-3) in their first-ever home playoff football game, before falling to Delphos St. John's (54-21) in the Division VI regional semifinals.

"We just came off of eight days of camp where the kids only had four days off, so everything was still nice and fresh for them today," said Buckley, who served as co-defensive coordinator and special teams coach at Elmwood a year ago after five successful years as an assistant coach at Genoa.

Former coach Scott Knisely left Buckley plenty in the cupboard. SJCC returns one of the area's top offensive lines that features the likes of Grant Mercer, Jacob Widman, Hunter Harrison, Corey Durbin, Nick Militello and others. They'll be in front returning tailbacks Mitchell Gonya and Marcus Kerr.

The Crimson Streaks

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2013 Fremont Ross Football

Ross enjoying the underdog role

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Ross senior Kole Amor promises change for 2013.

"We're going to be something this year," said the Little Giants' captain. "The attitude is better, we have a chip on our shoulders and we got a tight-knit senior class that wants to prove it can play

Little Giants hope to respond from injury-plagued 2012 season to make statement in competitive Three Rivers Athletic Conference title chase

football in this league (Three Rivers Athletic Conference)."

Amor's play and development was one of few bright spots for Ross during a 3-7 campaign that started out with so much promise after a blowout win over Sandusky (52-18)

and a come-from-behind road win over a good Brecksville-Broadview Heights team in Week Two (32-29). But like the season before, health became an issue. The team that was on the field in the first two weeks was the never the same.

Injuries to key players piled up, as did the miscues. Ross was minus-20 in turnover margin, as untimely mistakes cost them games they could have won.

The Little Giants' five-game losing streak to the end the year was the first

of that length under coach Derek Kidwell, who enters his 10th season.

"We need to have a good season," Kidwell said. "We haven't represented ourselves well since we've gotten into

SCHEDULE

Games at 7 p.m. unless noted
Aug. 30 at Sandusky
Sept. 6 at Maple Heights
Sept. 13 Pickerington North (7:30 p.m.)
Sept. 20 at Lima Senior
Sept. 27 Central Catholic
Oct. 4 at Whitmer
Oct. 11 Oregon Clay
Oct. 18 St. Francis De Sales
Oct. 25 at Findlay
Nov. 1 at St. John's Jesuit

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"We haven't represented ourselves well since we've gotten into this new league."

FREMONT ROSS HEAD COACH DEREK KIDWELL

2013 FREMONT ROSS LITTLE GIANTS

No.	Name	ht.	wt.	Pos	Yr.
3	Devin Benson	5-7	140	WR/DB	12
4	Ajayi Patterson	6-2	160	WR/DB	12
5	Jeffery Barnett	5-7	150	WR/DB	11
6	Charles Trammell	6-1	175	WR/DB	11
7	Elijah Hampton	6-1	170	WR/DB	12
8	Javon McDonald	6-1	145	WR/DB	11
9	Tanner Albert	6-2	180	WR/LB	11
10	Jalen Slick	5-11	165	QB/DB	11
11	Jarren Hampton	5-11	165	QB/DB	10
12	Isaac Kearns	5-10	175	QB/LB	10
14	Samuel Franco	5-10	160	WR/DB	10
15	Luis Castaneda	5-10	165	WR/DB	10
16	Stefan Johnson	6-0	170	WR/DB	11
18	Uriah Haun	5-9	190	RB/LB	10
19	Trey Grine	5-8	155	LB	12
21	Alec Foos	6-0	180	WR/DB	12
22	Devante Daniels	5-10	155	RB/DB	11
23	Matthew Robles	5-7	165	LB	11
25	Rico Puente	5-7	130	WR/DB	11
26	Hunter Trautwein	6-2	210	RB/DL	12
27	Elijah Johnson	5-10	140	WR/DB	10
28	Isaiah McDonald	5-6	185	RB/LB	10
30	Mylan Garcia	5-5	180	RB/LB	10
31	Tyler Schell	6-0	155	FB/LB	10
32	Sam Detwiler	5-8	160	FB/DL	10
33	Zane Cox	5-9	185	RB/LB	12
34	Austin Shiets	5-9	160	WR/DB	11
35	Ben Root	5-10	205	FB/LB	10
37	Isaiah Guzman	5-7	205	FB/LB	11
40	Kole Amor	5-11	205	RB/DL	12
42	Cory Montgomery	5-10	175	TE/DL	12
43	Ismael Torres	5-10	230	LB	10
44	Bryce Moreno	5-6	195	FB/DL	11
45	Cole Beckley	6-1	195	WR/DL	10
48	Solomon Sharpley	5-10	200	FB/DL	10
49	Caleb Ottney	5-9	180	DL	11
51	Mike Muffler	6-1	185	OL/LB	12
52	Garrett Hausman	5-10	210	DL	11
53	Evan Lejeune	6-0	255	OL	10
54	Zack Hoffman	5-8	185	DL	12
55	Alonzo McGhee	5-90	190	OL/DL	11
56	Tralin Richardson	6-11	265	OL/DL	11
57	Patrick Rusher	5-8	230	OL/DL	11
60	Brennan Rostetter	5-10	165	OL/DL	10
61	Tyler Tran	5-8	205	OL	12
62	Derek Fuller	5-8	200	OL	11
64	Ivan Franks	5-5	150	OL/DL	11
65	Blake Moyer	5-11	240	OL	12
66	Alec Carnicom	6-2	240	OL	11
67	Isaac Spears	5-8	200	OL/DL	10
69	Kyle Lamalie	6-2	235	OL/DL	12
70	Matthew Brunner	5-4	150	OL/DL	12
74	Jarvis Jones	6-5	245	OL/DL	12
75	Jason Stout	5-11	230	OL	12
77	Ismael Venegas	5-10	256	OL/DL	10
79	James Jackson	6-2	340	DL	11
80	Jermani Homler	6-2	145	TE/DB	10
81	Tavarius Simms	6-2	190	TE/DL	10
82	Dylan Jagodzinski	6-4	220	TE	12
85	Eric Gedeon	6-0	170	TE/DL	10



Ross' Hunter Trautwein is wrapped by the Toledo Central Catholic defense during the second half of a high school football game on Friday, Sept 28, 2012. Trautwein will be on the Little Giants' featured tailbacks in 2013. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Ross

Continued from Page 35

this new league. We need to get back to playing hard-nosed and fundamental Fremont Ross football."

Since starting TRAC play in 2011, Ross has gone 3-11 in league play, including 1-6 a year ago. Two of those wins came against Lima Senior, the other was a home victory over St. Francis de Sales in 2011.

Ross was picked seventh by league coaches. Toledo Central Catholic — the defending state champions in Division II — were pegged as the TRAC favorites with Whitmer — the Division I runners-up — in tow.

"I don't see why we wouldn't be voted anywhere except where we were after the way we've fared the last two years," Kidwell said. "I mentioned the preseason vote to the team, but we're not dwelling on it."

"I like our effort so far. I've had teams with more talent, but the chemistry and work ethic have been good. Our senior leadership has been extremely good and I think we're a lot more physical than we were in recent years at the present juncture."

Usually Kidwell has had quarterback picked out coming into two-a-days, too. Not the case this time around.

Junior Jalen Slick and sophomore Jared Hampton are locked in a neck and neck dual.

"I've never been a two-quarterback type of coach before, but these two guys may force us to play both of them," Kidwell said. "Neither one has separated themselves yet to have full possession of the position, they're very comparable to each other. But with as much time as they'll be playing on defense, that could be a good thing."

Whoever gets the nod, though, won't have quite

FREMONT ROSS

Coach: Derek Kidwell, 10th year.

Last year: 3-7 (1-6 Three Rivers Athletic Conference).

Graduates: Drake Brown, Jacob Luc, Drew Starks, Dylan Starks, Rakim Davis, Tyler Wolf, Oakley Contreras, Michael Egbert, Chris Mack, Matthew Egbert, Shanquise Mills, Tyler Lynch, Jalil Dolton, DeAndre Gates, Nate Otermat, Dmitre Aaron, Nick Streaker and Eddie Chavez.

Key Returnees: Kole Amor, Sr., FB/DE/TE; Devin Benson, Sr., WR/DB; Zane Cox, Sr., FB/LB; Trey Grine, Sr., LB/WR; Dylan Jagodzinski, Sr., TE; Jarvis Jones, Sr., OL; Kyle Lamalie, Sr., OL/DL; Blake Moyer, Sr., OL/DL; Ben Root, Jr., FB/LB; Jalen Slick, Jr., QB/SS; Tyler Tran, Sr., OL/DL and Hunter Trautwein, Sr., RB/DE.

Key Newcomers: Jared Hampton, So., QB/DB; Uriah Haun, So., RB; Isaiah McDonald, So., RB.

Outlook: Thru the second week of the 2012 season, everything was looking up for the Little Giants. They enjoyed a thorough beating of arch-rival Sandusky in Week One (52-18) then beat a solid Brecksville-Broadview Heights team on the road in Week Two (32-29). But Ross could only win one of its final eight games, finishing seventh in the TRAC standings. Through two seasons of play in the league that started in 2011, Ross is 3-11. With the loss of Wolf and his top receivers, the Little Giants should be a run-heavy team. The entire offensive line returns with the exception of DeAndre Gates, and Trautwein will lead a talented stable of running backs. New defensive coordinator Chad Long came over from Clyde and has breathed instant energy into a defense that surrendered 33.1 points per game a year ago. Ross was picked seventh in the preseason TRAC coaches poll. Defending Division II state champion, Toledo Central Catholic, is picked as the team to beat.

the same pressure on their shoulders as outgoing quarterback Tyler Wolf had. The Little Giants have their full offensive line back and a good stable of running backs who will be looked upon to carry the load.

"We're going to be a run football team," Kidwell said. "We've got a nice stable of running backs and having a new quarterback, I'm not going to ask them to go out and win us games. We're going to manage games for them."

Jabree Lather, who rushed for more than 800 yards a year ago, moved out of the district during the off-season. Senior

Hunter Trautwein, along with sophomores Isaiah McDonald and Uriah Haun are expected to see a majority of the carries. Ben Root, Amor and Zane Cox will be the fullbacks.

They'll be running behind a line that includes Jarvis Jones, Kyle Lamalie, Mike Muffler, Dylan Jagodzinski, Blake Moyer, Tyler Tran, Alec Carnicom and others.

Devin Benson, Ajayi Patterson, Elijah Hampton, Stefan Johnson, Tanner Albert and Jeffrey Barnett will be receivers.

"We feel comfortable with our receiving corps," Kidwell said. "They're doing the things we've been asking them to do pretty



Ross' Jalen Slick looks to throw while running a drill during the first official day of practice on Monday, Aug. 5, 2013. Slick will be one of two quarterbacks the Little Giants could use this season. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSANGER

well."

The Little Giants open the season Aug. 30 with a visit to their long-time chief rivals, Sandusky, before visiting Maple Heights in Week 2. Ross' first home game is Sept. 13 when it hosts Pickerington North.

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Long excited for new coaching challenge

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Derek Kidwell had his eye on new Ross defensive coordinator Chad Long for quite some time.

"I tried recruiting him three years ago when he left (Tiffin) Columbian, but he had already committed to Clyde," said the 10-year Ross head coach. "Then this off-season we decided we wanted to make a change defensively, so I went out and recruited Chad a second time and the second time he came over. Lucky for us. I think that'll be a huge upgrade for us on our coaching staff."

Long, a social studies teacher at Tiffin Columbian High School, had coached at Clyde — his alma mater — since the 2010

football season, after coaching at Columbian under former coach Steve Gilbert.

The Fliers gave up an average of 16.1 points per game in 2012, 11.8 in 2011 and 10 in 2010 with Long in charge of the defense. Clyde won two Sandusky Bay Conference titles and advanced to the second round of the playoffs twice. Ross surrendered 25.4 points per contest during that same span, including 33.1 last season under former defensive coordinator Dick Kidwell, who moved back to offense where he's always been more successful and more at home.

"Chad has his own style he brings to his defenses," Derek Kidwell said. "He's an aggressive defensive coordinator. And just in the summer camp and the

start of practice, the defense has improved a lot. We'll definitely be aggressive and I don't have a problem with that one bit."

Long liked the idea of testing his coaching abilities in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference — a league featuring some of the top talent in the state.

"Getting to work with Derek Kidwell was big," Long said. "Plus, I want to see where I'm at as a defensive coordinator. I've seen teams like Central Catholic and Whitmer from my days at Columbian, then when you add in opponents like Maple Heights and Pickerington North, it's going to be a tough assignment."

Gone are the Starks twins (Drew and Dylan)



Chad Long

and their play-making skills from the secondary. However, Long will have one of the area's top defensive ends to work with in Ross senior Kole Amor.

"I'd be surprised if the Amor kid isn't setting records for sacks this year," Long said. "He's just a ball of fire on the field and he's a born leader for this football team."

The other side of the line isn't bad either.

"Hunter Trautwein is a ball of fire, too, at the other end spot," Long said. "Then behind him, Trey Grine is just all over the field at the outside line-backer spot. So you got two crazy people running after the ball on that side and they're both fast. They're making a lot of plays right now in practice."

Ben Root and Zane Cox are Ross' other linebackers. Devante Daniels should also see time, as the Little Giants want to utilize his speed on the

"I've seen teams like Central Catholic and Whitmer from my days at Columbian, then when you add in opponents like Maple Heights and Pickerington North, it's going to be a tough assignment."

CHAD LONG

Fremont Ross defensive coordinator

edge.

Devin Benson and Jeffrey Barnett are penciled in at the defensive back spots, while Jalen Slick and Jared Hampton will play the safety spots.

"Our strength will be the secondary and the defensive line," Long said. "I think our defensive line is really going to carry us. We'll be underdogs this year, but these kids want to get Fremont Ross football back on track."

Troy Albright, the Little Giants' new defensive line, came over from Clyde with Long.

"He's an awesome addition," Long said. "He brings a good amount of energy and he's a great technician on that front line. I'm excited to see how those kids have advanced under his coaching."

Seth Childers, a former player at Otsego and at Adrian College, is a student teacher at Ross and will serve as a second line coach.

"We just call him young Seth," Long said.

Long's hire has created a new dynamic in the coaches' office — one that Kidwell said is a change that needed to happen.

"Derek was very happy seeing his dad back on the offensive side," Long said. "It's been great looking over the field to the other side, those offensive coaches are challenging us based on our defense and what we're doing and then they counter that. It's been a real chess match out there. I think it's making us better as a whole coaching staff and Derek said the atmosphere among the coaches is definitely better because of that."

The players like it as well.

"It's been a really good change ... one for the better," Amor said. "I think it gives us a lot more opportunities to make plays, too. He's more of a teacher than coach (Dick) Kidwell was. He's breaking things down for us and helping us understand what we're doing better."

During his playing days, Long played for Clyde's 1995 state title team before going on to be a four-year starter at Bowling Green State University. He was given the Coaches' Award by Urban Meyer and his staff as a senior in 2001, a year the Falcons had the largest turnaround in NCAA football, going from 2-9 to 8-3.

Good Luck to all area schools!

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Ross thumps Sandusky again

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

Little Giants run for 514 yards in fourth straight win over chief rivals

SANDUSKY — Hunter Trautwein likes the vibe around him in the Ross backfield — and with good reason.

Trautwein ran for a career-best 222 yards on 20 carries and had touchdown runs of 18, 20 and 36 yards as the Little Giants, for the second straight season, put up more points than ever before on their arch-rivals,

thumping Sandusky 64-30 Friday night at Strobel Field at Cedar Point Stadium.

Ross' 52 points in the 2012 opener was the previous high.

"Me and the two fullbacks Ben Root and Kole Amor have this whole new stitch kind of thing," Trautwein said. "They blocked real good for me tonight. So, too, did the offensive

line. Things were opening up real good out there ... I found holes where I could and ran hard."

Trautwein's 18-yard scoring run at the 5:03 mark of the opening quarter, ended Ross' second drive where he accounted for all 64 yards. Patrick Rusher's extra point gave the Little Giants an early 7-0 lead and some

momentum after Ben Root fumbled at the 1-yard line on their opening possession.

Trautwein added a 20-yard run on the first play of the second quarter to up the advantage to 14-0, rushing for 114 yards in the first half. Root added 66 yards on six touches for the game and scored twice, while Jeffrey Barnett had two long re-

verse plays go for 69 yards.

Barnett's 48-yarder in the final minute of the opening half answered a 65-yard scoring run by Sandusky's Gene Porter that cut the Little Giants' lead to 21-12.

As a group, the Little Giants ran for 514 yards on 51 attempts. "Speed kills," said Ross coach Derek Kidwell. "It was a crazy game. A lot of these points

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Ross

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were because of fluke things tonight. But what I liked was anytime they scored, we answered. We gave them zero momentum all night.”

Insanity ensued in the third quarter as Ja’Vion Moore ran a kickoff back 85 yards at the 2:10 mark to get the Blue Streaks back to within 43-24. But right on cue, Barnett received the ensuing kickoff and followed suit, taking his return back 70 yards for a score.

“Jeffrey made some huge plays tonight,” said Trautwein of the junior. “His return was a huge confidence booster for this team. And then that reverse on the third-and-long play saved a drive before that.”

New quarterback Jarren Hampton ran for 37 yards and threw for 45, completing three passes on only five pass attempts. He was thought to be sharing snaps with Jalen Slick, but Slick never saw the field as a quarterback.

“(Hampton) didn’t have to do a lot, but what he did do, he did very well,” Kidwell said. “For this to be his first start, in a rivalry game, you couldn’t ask for much more.”

“He’s out there during special teams talking to the special teams group and he does the same thing on defense. For a sophomore, he’s got a lot of

composure about him and he’s taken ownership of this team.”

Does that change the whole two-quarterback system that was planned?

“We’ll see,” Kidwell said. “I’m comfortable with Jarren right now and I think it’ll be his job again next week. But Jalen (Slick) has to be ready to play, too, if something happens. And Jalen knows we have confidence in him. He’s just a big piece to our defense right now and we need him out there.”

Moore finished with 182 rushing yards as the Blue Streaks ran for 302 yards. Most of their scoring plays came on special teams plays, or plays where he made something out of what looked to be nothing.

“He’s a hell of an athlete,” said Kidwell of Moore who had two returns for scores. “He’s going to cause problems for a lot of teams.”

Ross’ defense wasn’t without big plays, though, as Trey Grine and Barnett both had interceptions. The defense also forced a fumble.

“I expected Hunter Trautwein and Ben Root to run the ball well tonight,” Kidwell said. “The kids we were counting on came through, but it doesn’t get any easier from here on.”

Ross travels to Maple Heights for a non-league game next Friday.

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Barnett is turning some heads at Ross

Little Giants travel to Maple Heights on Friday for Week 2

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Football fans love play-makers.

So it's been understandable that a lot of the talk surrounding Ross's Week 1 64-30 win at Sandusky has centered around the return of junior Jeffrey Barnett. At first, the 5-foot-7-inch wide receiver/defensive back had lots of people scanning the Little Giants' roster to see who this electrifying kid was in the No. 5 jersey. But by night's end, no one could forget.

Barnett ran a kickoff back 70

yards for a touchdown and ran for another on a 48-yard reverse play. A second long reverse run on a third-and-long play saved a Ross drive in the third quarter. On defense, he intercepted a second quarter pass.

Not bad for his first game back on the field in two seasons.

"I think missing football last year, not only hurt him, but it made him appreciate it more," said Ross coach Derek Kidwell of Barnett, who missed the 2012 season due to academic ineligibility. "He's been nothing but a pleasure to have around the weight room and locker room during the entire off-season. I've told him, 'don't ever be satisfied.' Hopefully he won't."

Watching his team from the stands on Friday nights was agonizing for Barnett.

IF YOU GO

ROSS (1-0) at MAPLE HEIGHTS (1-0)

When: Friday, 7 p.m.

Where: Stafford Stadium, 5403 Mayville Road, Maple Heights, Ohio 44137

Mobile/Web: Each Friday, the News-Messenger and Port Clinton News Herald host an online chat, providing game updates, statistics and more.

You can access the chat by visiting our website: thenews-messenger.com, going to the sports tab and selecting Game Night.

Football player of the week poll

Hunter Trautwein, Ross (222 yards, three TDs vs. Sandusky) 160 34.93%

34.93%

Matt Tille, Gibsonburg (190 yards & 4 TDs passing, rushing TD vs. Elmwood)

82 17.9% 17.9%

Jake Matwiejczyk, Woodmore (Rush TD, 3 pass TDs, interception, 369 yards

of total offense vs. Port Clinton) 67 14.63% 14.63%

Colin Timmons, Lakota (rushing TD, 2 pass TDs vs. Arcadia) 149 32.53%

32.53%

"It killed me inside. Football is what I love to do," he said.

"Last year made me realize I wasn't doing the right things,

like staying up with my grades.

I had to try harder, bring up my

grades and show everyone what I could do."

He did that.

Barnett put his talents on display moments after an 85-yard

kickoff return for a score by

Sandusky play-maker Ja'Vion Moore cut Ross' lead to 43-24 late in the third quarter. After evading a defender's grip that forced him to lose his balance, Barnett found a way to keep his footing before racing, untouched, up the visiting sideline, putting the same speed that made him a regional and district qualifier in track the last two respective years, to work.

"I put my hand down, looked up and saw the field was open," Barnett said. "That me feel real good to see that."

His coaches were even happier.

"We knew he was going to be good as a freshman when we put him back on kickoffs and

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Ross

Continued from Page 1B

punts," Kidwell said. "When we learned he was going to be ineligible we were really disappointed because we were really going to count him. He's just a special football player, whose his own kind of special athlete."

ONE WEEK TO THE NEXT:

The old saying in high school football is that team's learn the most during the week of practice between the first and second games. Going into Friday's game at Maple Heights, coach Kidwell is pleased with the overall performance of his team, except for one obvious area.

"Special teams," Kidwell said. "Our returns were solid but our coverages were very suspect. That's been something we've been working on this week."

Aside from some missed tackles on defense, the Little Giants coughed up the ball twice — one that was turned over on the 1-yard line that went from a touchback in the end zone — on fumbles in the red zone. Yet, each time the Blue Streaks got points, the Little Giants always seemed to have an response.

"I liked our intensity and how we always answered," Kidwell said. "I think that's the sign of a team that is maturing. That could be a key thing for us this year, learning how to battle and stay in games. The next nine are going to be tougher games than this first one was."

GRADING OUT: Coach Kidwell said his offensive line, which returned in its entirety this fall, graded out as he expected: well.

Ross ran for 514 yards as

group, utilizing a variety of running backs and fullbacks. According the unofficial records, the total is one of the top five all-time single-game rushing performances by a Ross team.

"It's good for our offensive line to go in and get confidence, but that's one thing," Kidwell said. "They definitely don't need to be walking through these doors feeling cocky, though, because we got a lot of room for improvement, too. Sandusky was pretty undersized on the line."

MAPLE HEIGHTS: The Mustangs rolled through Fremont back in the fall of 2009, topping Toledo St. Francis de Sales, 34-21, in the Division II, Region 6 title game at Don Paul Stadium en route to finishing as state runners-up — something they'd rectify a year later.

That's the only known time Maple Heights — 18-7 winners over John Adams in Week 1 — has had any dealings with Ross.

"They're a spread team offensively with plenty of athletes," Kidwell said. "They're a run team, but they'll chuck the ball around a little bit, too. They got a tall receiver like to get the ball to on fade routes and a little scat kid they like to get in space. Then defensively, they got good size up front and active linebackers."

"We'll have our hands full, but I think our style will cause them problems. They haven't seen a tight end, fullback and a power running game like ours. Hopefully, it'll make a kid that's use to playing in space, have to come up and play over somebody and have to be more physical than they normally are."

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Ross earns big win against Maple Heights

By Kevin Yanik
News-Messenger correspondent

MAPLE HEIGHTS — A one-score Fremont Ross lead wasn't going to do Friday night. Not with the way Maple Heights kept threatening to make big plays with its slashing ground game.

Fortunately for the Little Giants, they overcame a missed-touchdown opportunity midway through the fourth quarter and sealed a 35-26 win late in the game on Ben Root's 6-yard touchdown run.

"There was a big sense of relief once we got that touchdown," said Root, a junior fullback. "I was pumped up and really glad I could help bring home a win for my team and my city."

The Little Giants (2-0) had a chance to put the game away on their previous drive. They pulled within five yards of the end zone around the eight-minute mark of the fourth, but quarterback Jarren Hampton took a 9-yard sack that backed Ross up to Maple Heights' 14-yard line.

The Little Giants inched clos-

er on Isaiah McDonald's 2-yard run, but an incomplete pass on third down and a completion to Uriah Haun on fourth that fell a few yards short of the end zone gave possession to the Mustangs.

Ultimately, the turnover on downs didn't matter, because the Little Giants defense kept the Mustangs (1-1) pinned against their own end zone on that drive.

The Little Giants also forced a poor punt from the back of the end zone, giving themselves a second chance to put a second

straight road win away.

Root's late touchdown, which McDonald set up with an 18-yard run off a pitch, gave Ross a nine-point advantage and virtually assured the Little Giants the win.

"I thought it was really important to get up two scores because our defense struggled throughout the game," Little Giants head coach Derek Kidwell said. "Sometimes, the defense is going to struggle and the offense has to complement them. Sometimes, we're going to struggle offensively and the de-

fense has to keep us in the game."

The Little Giants defense certainly had its struggles in this one. Collectively, the defense allowed 271 yards to nine different rushers.

But Ross' defense overcame several big Maple Heights gains with even bigger plays of its own. Hunter Trautwein's 75-yard interception return for a touchdown late in the first half was one such big play.

"That was a big play," Kid-

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Ross

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well said. "They had the momentum and looked like they were going to go in and score and be up at half. Then, (Kole Amor) tips the ball and (Trautwein) takes it down the sideline."

Trautwein made the play with the Little Giants trailing 14-13. His touchdown and an ensuing 2-point conversion put Ross up 21-14 to give the Little Giants a lead they wouldn't relinquish.

"All I saw was the end zone on that play," Trautwein said. "I was just trying to go for it."

Friday's game started with a pair of touchdowns in the game's first 66 seconds. Jeffery Barnett handled the opening kickoff for the Little Giants, found a seam down the right sideline and raced 87 yards into the end zone for a quick 6-0 lead.

After a missed extra point, the Mustangs took over and needed only two plays to score their first points, as Cameron Crews faked a handoff, juked

a Ross defender and sprinted into the end zone for a 56-yard touchdown.

All of this after a mere minute and six seconds.

The teams settled into their offenses later in the first quarter. On its second possession, Ross marched 62 yards for yet another touchdown — this one on Hampton's 31-yard run.

The Little Giants maintained a 13-6 lead until early in the second, when the Mustangs overcame a penalty and a Zane Cox sack to inch ahead. The Little Giants forced a third down inside their own 20-yard line, but Maple Heights' Josh Coffee found an opening and scored. A 2-point conversion put the Little Giants in a 14-13 hole.

Yet, they overcame that touchdown and held the Mustangs off for the win.

"It was a tough overall victory," Kidwell said. "We scored defensively, on special teams and offensively — and we needed every last one of them. I thought our kids showed a lot of character. ... Hopefully, this victory goes a long way for us in showing our character."

Fremont Ross 35, Maple Heights 26

Fremont Ross	13	8	7	7	—	35
Maple Heights	6	8	6	6	—	26

First quarter

FR - Jeffery Barnett 87 kickoff return (kick failed), 11:47.

MH - Cameron Crews 56 run (conversion failed), 10:54.

FR - Jarren Hampton 31 run (Patrick Rusher kick), 7:00.

Second quarter

MH - Josh Coffee 14 run (Da'Qonn Pully pass from Crews), 9:39. FR - Hunter Trautwein 75 interception

return (Dylan Jagodzinski pass from Hampton).

Third quarter

FR - Devin Benson 25 pass from Hampton (Rusher kick), 9:26. MH - Martez Butler 37 run (conversion

failed), 7:55.

Fourth quarter

MH - Ray Powell 15 run (conversion failed), 10:01. FR -

Ben Root 6 run (Rusher kick), 4:04.

	F	M
Total Net Yards	196	455
Rushes-Yards	37-143	38-271
Passing	53	184
Comp-Att-Int	5-9-0	15-24-2
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	4-1
Penalties-Yards	5-57	11-70

Individual statistics

Rushing — Fremont Ross, Ben Root 8-28, Hunter Trautwein 12-37, Jarren Hampton 6-24, Isaiah McDonald 8-40, Jeffrey Barnett 2-9, Kole Amor 1-9. Maple Heights, Cameron Crews 11-82, Kierre Hawkins 9-61, Curtis Brown 3-28, Martez Butler 7-52, Ray Powell 3-26.

Passing — Fremont Ross, Jarren Hampton 5-9-0-53. Maple Heights, Cameron Crews 8-14-1-141, Kierre Hawkins 7-10-1-43.

Receiving — Fremont Ross, Uriah Haun 1-5, Devin Benson 3-34, Ajayi Patterson 1-14. Maple Heights, Cliff Garner 5-53, Martez Butler 3-76, JaVonte Richardson 3-23.

Root bringing back the fullback to Ross

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Up until three seasons ago, kids like Ross' Ben Root never gave much thought to playing fullback.

The position had become a lost art in the new age four- and five-wide offenses of high school, college and even pro football. And before Trent Stout made being a fullback a prominent position at Ross again in 2010, it had been a long time since a Little Giants' offense featured one.

"I just started playing fullback in high school when the coaches told me to play it," said Root, a junior. "For a second there, I had to almost ask them,

'what's a fullback?' Luckily, I had Trent in front of me and I was able to look off a lot of the things he did, but before him, I can't remember watching any other fullbacks at Ross.

"But I like it."

Root has been the main fullback in a Little Giants' power run game that, unofficially, has run for 657 yards in two games. Individually, Root, who is listed at 5-foot, 10 inches tall and 205 pounds, has rushed for 94 yards and three touchdowns. He and Kole Amor — Ross' fullback in the power look — are also big reasons for why tailback Hunter Trautwein has been able to rush for 257 yards, including 222 against Sandusky in Week 1.

Ross (2-0) will host Pickerington North (2-0) on Friday at 7:30 p.m.

IF YOU GO

PICKERINGTON NORTH (2-0) at ROSS (2-0)

When: Friday, 7 p.m.

Where: Don Paul Stadium.

Radio: WFRO Eagle 99.1 FM

Mobile/Web: Each Friday, the News-Messenger hosts a chat, providing game updates, statistics and more. You can access the chat by visiting thenews-messenger.com, going to the sports tab and selecting Game Night.

rington North (2-0) on Friday at 7:30 p.m.

"We knew Ben would be a heck of a blocker with how strong and physical he is," Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "But he'll definitely get more touches this season, too. He and Amor are two of our best players and we feel if we can get them on the field as much as possible, it gives us the best chance to suc-

ceed."

Personnel changes going into the team's final season in the Greater Buckeye Conference forced Kidwell to move away from his typical spread offensive look. Instead, he opted for the old I-formation pro set type of offense that he and his father, Dick Kidwell, ran at Fostoria.

"We have fullback type of

kids who are physical players," Kidwell said. "When I first got here in 2004, we'd have 30 receivers and five running backs."

Simplifying the game for the offensive line was also a concern.

"When we played top teams, we always had trouble protecting the edges," Kidwell said. "We had good athletes, but we think you can still get the ball to those kids just as easily in this system, like we are with Jeffrey Barnett and Devin Benson."

Another side effect from the switch has been toughness.

"Our defense is going against a downhill running

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football team everyday in practice," Kidwell said. "I think it's made every individual we have, a tougher football player. And it's the type of offense teams and players just aren't prepared for anymore and it's showed against some of the teams we've faced."

Root's 6-yard touchdown run with 4:04 left was the final score in the Little Giants' 35-26 win at Maple Heights this past Friday.

Ross has started a season 2-0 each of the last four years.

"There's definitely a lot more excitement when you walk in the locker room now as oppose to the end of last year," Root said. "Even when you walk through the school, it seems like there's a lot more students excited for this weekend. It's a big opportunity for us and we

should be excited."

42: That's the amount of total plays the Ross offense ran against Maple Heights, including only 20 in the first half.

"We need to run more plays than that if we want to save our defense," Kidwell said. "That's been a big emphasis for us this week, we want to control the tempo of this game with our offense."

HAMPTON: New Little Giants' quarterback Jarren Hampton has thrown only 14 passes in the first two games, completing eight of them for 98 yards and one touchdown.

The sophomore may not be wowing onlookers yet, but he's doing what his coaches expect.

"The passing game will evolve more as Jarren gets experience," Kidwell said. "For the most part, he's played mistake-free football for two games, which is impressive for a sophomore."

PICKERINGTON NORTH: The

Panthers enter Don Paul Stadium 2-0 after wins over St. Charles (20-0) and last week at Cincinnati Princeton (47-22).

Pickerington North went 12-2 a year ago, losing in the Division I state semifinals to Cincinnati Moeller (26-21). Included in the Panthers' wins was a 41-13 Week 3 home win over the Little Giants. North tailback Godwin Igwebuike, now a Northwestern freshman, zigged and zagged his way to 223 yards and four scores as the Panthers piled up over 500 yards of total offense.

"Their offensive schemes are the same as they've been, but their running backs try to get outside," Kidwell said. "They got a nice stable of running backs, they'll use two or three of them. But their quarterback is probably the most dangerous kid they have on the field. He was their backup last year and he came in that game and really hurt us with his legs."



Fremont Ross' Isaiah McDonald carries the ball for a touchdown during the first half against Pickerington North on Friday, Sept 13, 2013.
JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

ROSS FALLS VICTIM TO PANTHERS

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

Pickerington
North QB Zeph
Miller accounts
for 406 yards of
total offense

FREMONT — Ross got a glimpse of Pickerington North quarterback Zeph Miller's talents at the end of last year's Week 3 contest in Pickerington.

On Friday night on Harmon Field at Don Paul Stadium, the Little Giants got the whole shebang.

Miller tossed for 284 yards and four touchdowns, adding another 122 yards and two scores with his feet as the Panthers handed Ross its first loss, 60-27 in its non-conference finale.

"He's a difference-maker," said Little Giants coach Derek Kidwell of Miller. "We had a hard time containing him, which we kind of knew may happen watching film, and that's the way it played out tonight."

North (3-0) — Division I state semifinalists a year ago — blew open what was a 34-27 game late in the third quarter by scoring 26 unanswered points in the final 12 minutes, 8 seconds.

Jabree Lather, a transfer from Ross, scored on a three yard run with four seconds left in the third quarter as the Panthers

went 58 yards in seven plays to steal the game's momentum back.

The Little Giants (2-1) had pulled with a single possession when Jeffrey Barnett took a reverse in from 15 yards out. Patrick Rusher's extra point made it 34-27 at the 3:10 mark. That came on the heels of a big defensive play by defensive end Kole Amor, who stripped Panther tailback Brett Howell at the North 14.

Ross trailed 34-14 after North scored on its opening possession of the second half.

Miller found Quincy Storey down the left sideline for a 27-yard scoring pass, two plays after an interception by Tony Welch ended Ross' drive to start the half.

"That's the killer in a lot of games ... the momentum change," North coach Tom Phillips said. "We got the changes we needed it

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and (Ross) didn't."

Tanner Albert's 17-yard touchdown grab from backup quarterback Jalen Slick got the Little Giants within 34-20 at the 5:39 mark.

"We're not far off from being a very good football team," Kidwell said. "We played with them for over three quarters. It was 34-27 and we had the momentum."

"We've got to learn to get stops, we've got to learn to finish a half and we've got to learn to protect the football and get first downs. But we don't have to learn to fight. Our kids fight."

Miller's 27 yard scoring run on the opening drive of the game, got the Panthers out to a quick 7-0 lead just 2:11 in.

Ross' Hunter Trautwein answered Miller's scoring run just 13 seconds later. The senior broke through the middle of the line, and nearly fell twice on North's side of the field as two different Panthers tried to get him by the ankles, but he stayed upright for an 80-yard touchdown run. Rusher's point after tied the score at 7-7.

But after a long 29-yard kickoff return by Jaye Williams, the Panthers retook the lead at 14-7 on their first play. Miller found Chris McDowell who caught the ball in the center of the field at the Ross 2, before falling into the end zone.

Trautwein carried the ball on Ross' next possession but never re-entered the game as he required help to leave the field after second down run.

Ross rushed for 247 yards



Fremont Ross' Hunter Trautwein carries for an 80 yard TD on the opening play Friday. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

as Isaiah McDonald racked up 101 yards on 25 touches.

Lather added 102 yards and two scores for North, which ran for 275 yards.

But the night belonged to Miller.

"It was a big game for (Miller)," Phillips said. "He didn't have too good of a game in Week 1 or Week 2."

"I think a lot of that is because he's new to the starting role. It's taken him a good two to three games to get a grip on things. He made good reads to-night. But he's best when we get him in space."

Ross will look to rebound next week when it starts Three Rivers Athletic Conference play at Lima Senior.

"I thought this Ross team was a lot better, just because it seems like they have more unity this year," said Phillips, whose Panthers beat Ross 41-13 a year ago. "And they got speed. I know coach Kidwell runs a great program here and he has tough kids. They'll win a lot of games this year."

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SPARTANS RALLY PAST LITTLE GIANTS

Two throws in quagmire give Lima a win

LIMA — This isn't the same old Lima Senior football team.

Losers of 21 of their last 23 games — 61 of their last 73 going back to the start of 2005 — and winless a season ago, the Spartans, under new coach Mike Fell, are shedding the stigma of losing that has followed them since winning a Division I state championship in 1996.

Lima topped Piqua last week to end a 20-game losing streak and on Friday took another big step forward, winning its first-ever Three Rivers Athletic Conference game by downing Ross 13-12 on a rain-soaked night at Lima Stadium.

"It doesn't feel real," said Spartans' quarterback Justice Graham of the win.

Graham found receiver Marquis Gra-

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

ham streaking across the field for a 46-yard touchdown with 2:34 to play. It came four plays after he saved the Spartans' go-ahead drive with a 12-yard toss to Graham on a long 3rd-and-11 play at his own 32-yard-line.

"I was just thinking, throw the ball," Justice said. "Let my receivers make the plays."

Lima (2-2, 1-0) had a chance to ice the game after Cory Jackson fell on a squib kick at the Ross 31. But the Little Giants (2-2, 0-1) forced a turnover on downs with 1:48 to go.

Sophomore quarterback Jarren Hampton hit Devin Benson four times on what would be a 10-play drive for Ross. But after getting all the way to the Spartans' 31 with 28 seconds to go on the clock, Hampton was intercepted by Lima's Marquis Miller, sealing the win for the Spartans.

"The key tonight was the defense," said Fell, who is coaching at his alma mater after 23 years at Columbus Grove, Celina and Ada that saw his teams go 169-83. "Coach (Frank) Crea and his defense got a little maligned in the first couple weeks, but right now, they're doing a good job for us."

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The same could be said for the Little Giants' defense, which surrendered 214 total yards to a team that had averaged 35 points per game in its first three contents.

However, lost opportunities, particularly two turnovers on downs in the fourth quarter inside the Lima 25, loomed large in the game's reflection.

"We left too many opportunities out there," said Little Giants coach Dick Kidwell, who filled in as active head coach Friday. "Penalties killed us. We had first downs and a touchdown called back because of penalties.

"We just left things on the field that we shouldn't have. We got to be more disciplined and take advantage of opportunities."

Dick's son Derek, was unable to attend the game after having spinal surgery on Tuesday in Sandusky.

Ross let another golden opportunity for points slip through its hands early in the

third quarter. Trey Grine fell on a fumbled punt return at the Spartans' 18, but a touchdown was called back for a holding call. The drive ended with Patrick Rusher missing a 22-yard field goal.

Jalen Slick made another special teams play for the Little Giants in the second quarter, when he blocked a punt at the Lima 12. A play later, Devante Daniels gave Ross a 12-7 lead with a 12-yard scoring run with 4:08 left until halftime.

Jeffrey Barnett brought a 17-play, 62-yard scoring drive to an end in the first quarter with a 15-yard score on a reverse. Rusher's point after, though, was blocked.

That answered Lima's opening drive that saw Juniel Liles run for a 22-yard score on the fifth play of the game.

"The kids got to come back from this and get better," Kidwell said. "We're probably playing the best team on our schedule (Toledo Central Catholic) next week and we have to have a good week of practice."

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Lima 13, Fremont Ross 12

Fremont Ross	6	6	0	0	—	12
Lima	7	0	0	6	—	13

First quarter

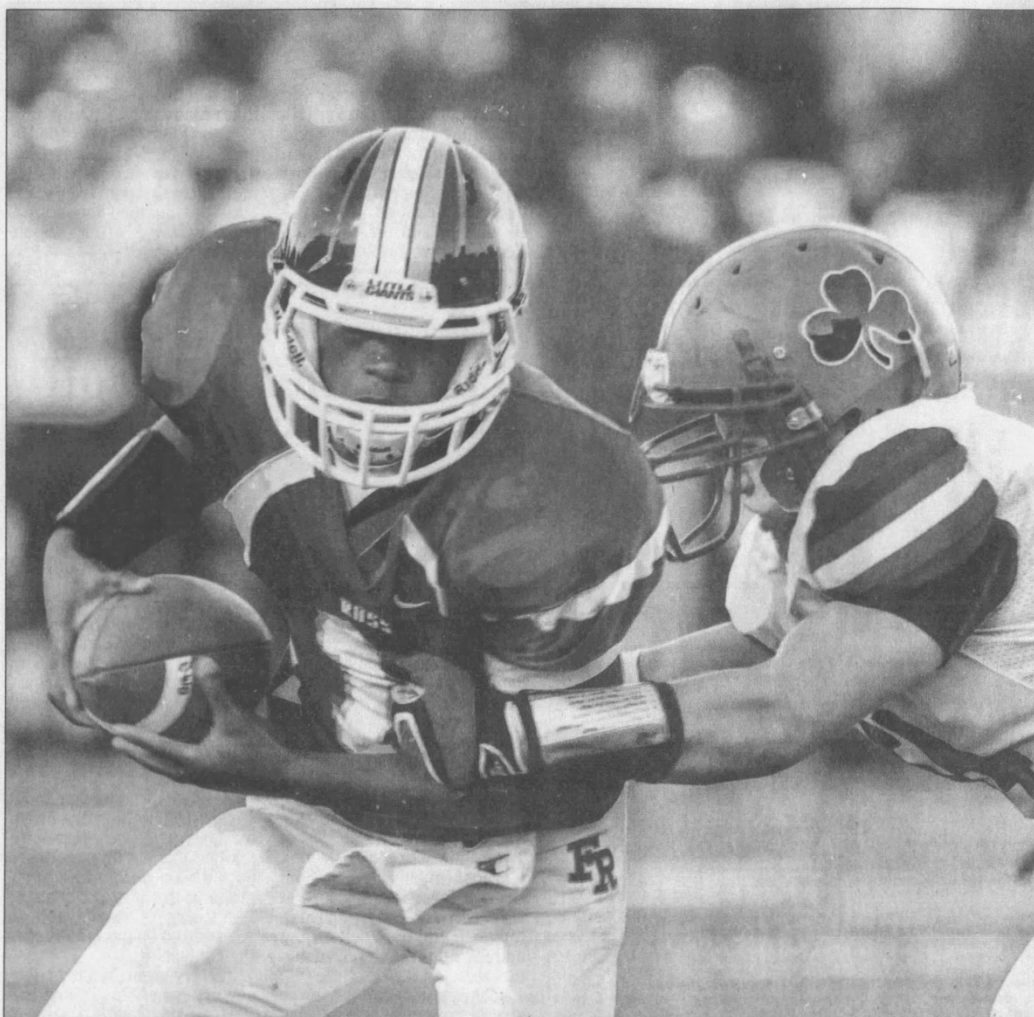
L - Juniel Liles 22 run (Jacob Meyer kick), 10:21. R - Jeffrey Barnett 15 run (kick blocked), 2:52.

Second quarter

R - Devante Daniels 12 run (conversion failed), 4:08.

Fourth quarter

L - Marquis Graham 46 pass from justice Graham (conversion failed), 2:34.



Fremont Ross' Jarren Hampton is chased by the Toledo Central Catholic defense during the first half on Friday, Sept 27, 2013. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

IN THE END: Little Giants no match for loaded Irish

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — For the second time in three weeks, the Ross football team showed it could perform with the big boys.

But much like the Pickerington North game in Week 3 (a 60-27 loss where Ross trailed 34-27 in the fourth quarter), the Little Giants imploded in the game's latter stages Friday, allowing Toledo Central Catholic the chance to walk off Harmon Field at Don Paul Stadium with a comfortable 35-7 Three Rivers Athletic Conference

win.

Ross (2-3, 0-2) — losers of three straight games — trailed 14-7 near the mid-point of the third quarter, before a 14-point swing, aided by an on-side kick, turned the game completely in the favor of the Fighting Irish (5-0, 3-0).

"(Ross) caused two turnovers in the first half, which really cost us," said Irish coach Greg Dempsey. "They came out and played with a lot of passion tonight after coming off a tough loss (13-12 at Lima Senior) without their coach (Derek Kidwell) last week.

"You could tell (the Little Giants) were inspired tonight. They're a very athletic football team and a young and hungry football team."

In need of some positive momentum again, Dempsey turned to his star quarterback — Notre Dame recruit DeShone Kizer. Kizer was 4-for-4 in the air for 27 yards and ran the final 15 with his feet on an eight-play, 56-yard drive that answered Ross' lone touchdown drive to start the second half.

Then, just like the Little Giants tried to no avail on the previous kickoff, Central

Catholic kicker Patrick Schommer's onside kick was recovered by the Irish at the Ross 47.

The Irish got down to the Little Giants' 9 in nine plays, before Paul Moses, getting a caravan to the end zone by his offensive line, upped Central's lead to 28-7 with 10 seconds left in the third quarter.

"We can't have our defense on the field the whole third quarter," Kidwell said. "We scored and then didn't get the ball back again in that quarter. We got to find a way to

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stay on the field offensively and get stops defensively.”

After being held scoreless on three trips to the Irish side of the field in the opening half, Ross finally hit on some long pass plays to help it march 68 yards in 10 plays to start the half. Jeffrey Barnett ripped the ball away from a Central Catholic defensive back – and lost his helmet in the process – for a 27-yard pickup to the Irish 17. That was four plays after he drew a pass interference call on third-and-long to keep the drive alive.

Jarren Hampton brought the Little Giants to paydirt when he found a wide open Tanner Albert for a 15-yard scoring toss at 7:08 mark.

“(Hampton) is nice young quarterback that can make some plays,” Dempsey said. “He’s not going to be fun for us to watch, but he’ll be fun for the people of Fremont to watch over the next couple of years.”

Central Catholic needed only 1:34 to get on the scoreboard first thanks to a 54-yard touchdown run from Tre’Von Wade.

Three carries for 29 yards by Isaiah McDonald and 25 yard pass play to Barnett had Ross down to the Irish 9 on its first drive. But things stalled when after McDonald got the

Little Giants to the 5, Hampton was dropped for a 10-yard loss, before his fourth down pass fell to the turf.

Elijah Hampton fell on a fumble on Central Catholic’s next drive, but Ross couldn’t take advantage.

After a nice defensive stand where the Little Giants forced the Irish into a three-and-out, Ross got as close as the Central 34, but the trip ended in a punt.

Five plays later, Kizer found Moses for a 30-yard touchdown grab on a screen pass. The ball was tipped initially at the line, before Moses caught it and made defenders miss in the secondary en route to the goal line.

The Irish threw for 211 yards and ran for 253. Kizer finished 17-of-21 and threw one interception to Devin Benson in the second quarter.

“We definitely have a talented quarterback, but we’re trying to stay more balanced,” Dempsey said.

Ross ran for 60 yards, getting 68 on the ground from McDonald who had 13 carries.

“I told our kids if they keep working hard, they can win out,” Kidwell said. “I think we’ve played the best two teams we’ll play. But the TRAC is tough. Each week will be a battle.”

The Little Giants travel to Whitmer next Friday.

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Whitmer 35, Fremont Ross 14

Fremont Ross	14	0	0	0	—	14
Whitmer	7	7	7	14	—	35

First quarter

W - Zac Ryan 1 run (Talal Farham kick), 7:21. FR - Ajayi Patterson 22 interception return (PAT missed), 4:04. FR - Jeffrey Barnett 46 punt return (Jarren Hampton pass to Dylan Jagodzinski), 2:21.

Second quarter

W - Larry Patterson 1 run (Farham kick), 2:27.

Third quarter

W - Christopher Boykin 25 pass from Matt Winzeler (Farham kick), 4:55.

Fourth quarter

W - Patterson 7 run (Farham kick), 9:45. W - Patterson 10 run (Farham kick), 4:49.

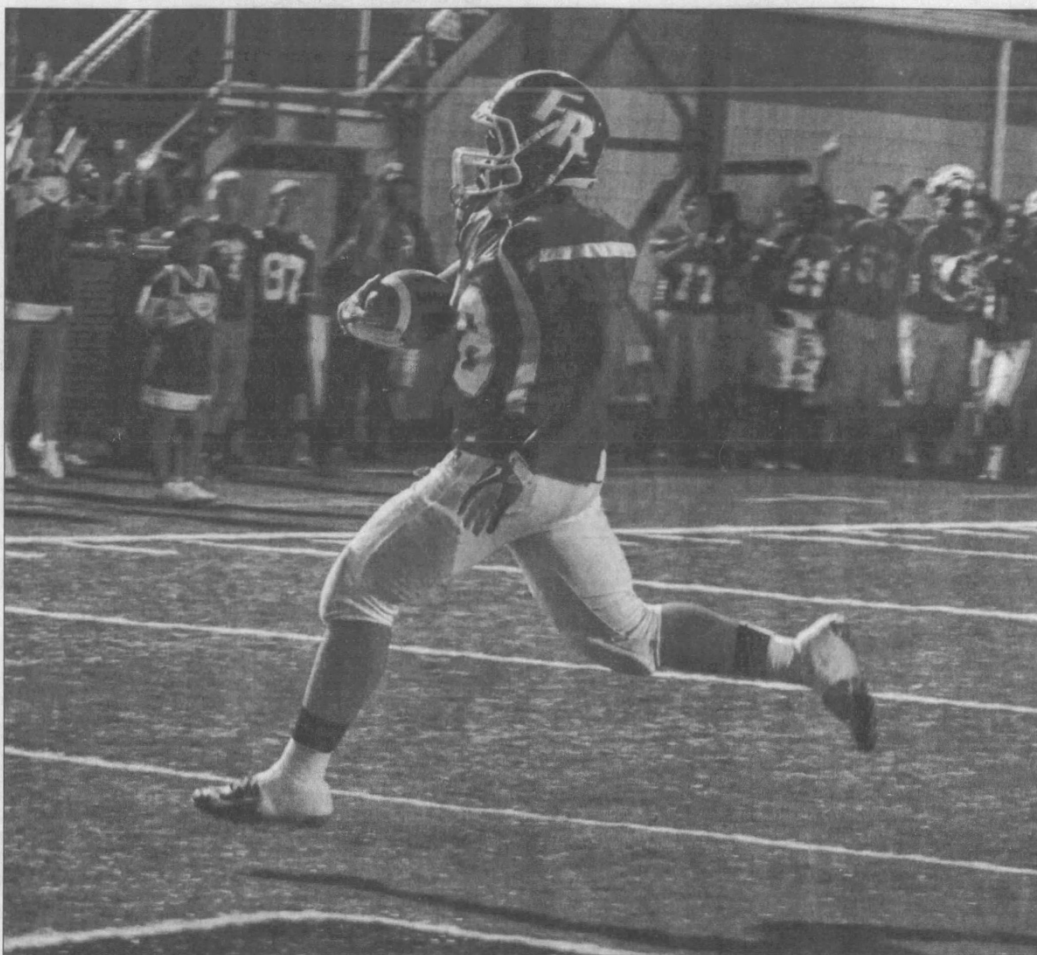
	F	W
Total Net Yards	178	269
Rushes-Yards	36-139	46-202
Passing	39	67
Comp-Att-Int	6-12-2	6-11-1
Fumbles-Lost	4-4	1-0

Individual statistics

Rushing — Fremont Ross, Ben Root 4-6, Hunter Trautwein 19-107, Jarren Hampton 4--8, Isaiah McDonald 6-8, Jeffrey Barnett 2-23, Kole Amor 1-3. Whitmer, Kenneth Jr Guerrero 2-0, Matthew Winzeler 4--12, Chase Bodeman 6-43, Zachary Ryan 13-23, Shamonde Sanders 1--1, Larry Patterson 19-141, Richard Ruiz 1-7.

Passing — Fremont Ross, Jarren Hampton 6-12-2-39. Whitmer, Matthew Winzeler 4-7-1-56, Chase Bodeman 2-4--11.

Receiving — Fremont Ross, Jalen Slick 1-3, Jeffrey Barnett 3-23, Devin Benson 1-3, Stefan Johnson 1-10. Whitmer, Robert Tober 1-11, Christopher Boykin 5-56.



Fremont Ross' Jalen Slick throws a pass during a Three Rivers Athletic Conference game at home against Oregon Clay on Friday. BARB GLASPY/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

ROSS SURVIVES

Little Giants overcome Clay passing game in win

FREMONT — It's never fun to lose, and after four weeks of it, Ross finally said enough is enough.

The Little Giants played solidly on offense and special teams, and received timely stops from their defense as they survived a 356-yard passing performance by Clay quarterback Josh Pennington on Friday to earn their first Three Rivers Athletic Conference victory of the year, topping the Eagles 49-38 on Homecoming night on Harmon Field at Don Paul Stadium.

"Our kids were just tired of losing," Ross coach Derek Kidwell said. "This is good for them. It's Homecoming week and I'm glad they have a victory and glad that they can go to Homecoming and feel good about themselves."

Ross (3-4, 1-3) got the final punch in a

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

first half of what had become a battle of "Can you top this?" A total of 20 points were scored in the final 46 seconds of the half, including 13 with one second remaining. It all started with Dylan Jagodzinski hauling in a 6-yard touchdown pass from Jalen Slick on a jump ball in the back left corner of the end zone to give Ross a 21-20 lead.

But it took Pennington only three pass plays to move the Eagles (2-5, 0-4) 64 yards to the Little Giants' 7. After a false start penalty and an incompleteness, Pennington found Kyle Row from 12 yards out with a second left for his second of three scoring grabs — he had a 60-yard TD re-

ception in the first half and a 72-yard one the Eagles' first possession of the second half.

But just when it looked like Clay had seized the momentum going into the halftime locker room, Ross took it right back.

Devin Benson's 90-yard kickoff return for a touchdown on the final play of the half was one of two scoring kickoff returns on the night for the senior. He added a 95-yard return for another score to give the Little Giants the lead back after Row's 72-yard play.

It was marked difference from Ross' special teams of the last two weeks, in which the Little Giants had multiple turnovers — including a few on botched punt returns and kickoffs.

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Giants

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"Devin Benson was a huge contributor on special teams tonight," Kidwell said. "We switched some personnel around this week and maybe that sparked us."

Ross led 28-26 at halftime, despite allowing Clay 218 yards in its passing game.

However, after completing his first nine passes, Pennington's third missed pass found the arms of Ross safety Jarren Hampton just moments after Benson gave Ross a 35-32 advantage.

Hampton intercepted the ball at the 50 and returned it to Eagles' 18. Four plays later, Isaiah McDonald, who had 31 carries, found paydirt with a 3-yard TD run to give the Little Giants a much needed 10-point cushion.

"I told the team to believe in me and I'll get them the victory," said McDonald, who had 163 yards and a pair of scores.

McDonald was the main tail-

back again as an ankle injury kept Hunter Trautwein out of the lineup for the fourth time this fall.

"We expect that kind of effort out of him," Kidwell said of McDonald. "He's worked hard."

Ross' defense didn't waste time going back to work, forcing a three-and-out before the offense went 90 yards in 16 plays to take more than seven minutes off the clock and close out the game.

McDonald did most of the work, again.

Slick's pitch to Kole Amor, a 2-yard TD run, upped the Little Giants' edge to 49-32 with 10:16 remaining.

"I thought our defense played extremely well in the second half," Kidwell said. "(Clay's) is a tough offense to stop. But coach (Chad) Long and them made nice adjustments at halftime ... got some things figured out and got some pressure on the quarterback."

Clay found it tough to get pressure back as Slick made plays with both his arm and feet.

Slick, a junior, was making

his first career start.

"I got the call on Saturday after the Whitmer game and I knew I had to step up," Slick said. "We didn't have a spark on offense, so I knew I had to come out and do something."

"And we did."

Slick wasn't asked to be a playmaker, just to facilitate and keep the offensive operation running smoothly.

"I thought he managed the game extremely well," Kidwell said of Slick, who finished 6-of-12 passing for 78 yards. "He had a great grasp of the game and didn't force stuff."

Ross will host St. Francis in its final home game Friday.

"We played with all our hearts tonight," Slick said. "We came out to practice this week and battled that adversity."

"We're going to turn this thing around."

For now, though, Kidwell is happy to see his team respond to the challenges he and his coaching staff laid out.

"I'm proud of them," Kidwell said.

Fremont Ross 49, Clay 38

Clay	14	12	6	6	—	38
Fremont Ross	7	21	14	7	—	49

First quarter

C - Aaron Seymour 6 run (Blaze Okey kick), 7:39. R - Isaiah McDonald 4 run (Zane Cox kick), 4:35. C - Kyle Row 60 pass from Josh Pennington (Okey kick), 2:30.

Second quarter

R - Kole Amor 7 pass from Jalen Slick (Cox kick), 8:59. C - Seymour 1 run (PAT missed), 3:29. R - Dylan Jagodzinski 6 pass from Slick (Cox kick), :46. C - Row 12 pass from Pennington (Okey kick), :01. R - Devin Benson 90 kickoff return (Cox kick), :00.

Third quarter

C - Row 72 pass from Pennington (2pt failed), 9:14. R - Benson 95 kickoff return (Cox kick), 8:56. R - McDonald 3 run (Cox kick), 7:17.

Fourth quarter

R - Amor 2 run (Cox kick), 10:16. C - Jadea Robinson 35 pass from Pennington (2pt failed), 7:30.

C F

Total Net Yards	441	292
Rushes-Yards	26-85	46-214
Passing	356	78
Comp-Att-Int	15-24-1	6-12-0
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	0-0

Individual statistics

Rushing — Clay -Oregon, Aaron Seymour 11-53, Josh Pennington 13-34, Ryan Fournier 5--2. Fremont Ross, Ben Root 2-13, Jalen Slick 6-21, Isaiah McDonald 31-163, Uriah Haun 5-18, Kole Amor 1-2.

Passing — Clay -Oregon, Josh Pennington 15-24-1-356. Fremont Ross, Jalen Slick 6-12-0-78.

Receiving — Clay -Oregon, Jay Smith 2-29, Kyle Row 8-228, Jadea Robinson 3-81. Fremont Ross, Dylan Jagodzinski 1-6, Jeffrey Barnett 3-39, Kole Amor 1-7, Stefan Johnson 1-26.

Ross

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opening kickoff that went between the legs of return man Devin Benson. St. Francis recovered at the Little Giants' 9-yard-line. Keontae Johnson's three-yard scoring run had the Knights up 7-0 just 1:16 in.

"It's been our Achilles' heel all year," said Little Giants coach Derek Kidwell, whose team is minus-10 in turnovers the last three games. "When we lose, we turn the ball over way too much and it started from the opening kickoff. We never got momentum. It was free points for (St. Francis). There's no excuse for it.

"Overall, it just wasn't a good night. I feel bad for these seniors and everything they've given to us. But turnovers continue to be our Kryptonite."

The Little Giants had three fumbles, two interceptions and two other drives that ended on downs—both in St. Francis territory. Of the seven turnovers, five were committed on the Knights' side of the field.

"The game is all about momentum, so turnovers and big stops on defense really changed the game a lot tonight," Nees said. "We got some and we gave some to (Ross), too.

"Otherwise, it was a great game."

With leading rusher Lamar Carswell out, Nees took over as his team's main rusher.

"Whatever coach asks me to do, I'll do it for him," Nees said. "If that means run the ball, I'll run the ball."

St. Francis had 292 yards of total offense, of which 226 came on the ground. Johnson, who took over Carswell's spot at running back, added 68 yards on 21 touches.

Hedden's offense was a mix of the run and pass a year ago. However, in his second season, the former University of Toledo offensive coordinator has made pounding the ball his team's focus.

"There's so many good offenses in this conference," Hedden said. "We wanted to find a way to run the ball, keep those other offenses on the sideline and give our defense a break. It's been effective for us."

Their victory kept the Knights tied for second in the TRAC standings with Lima Senior. Both are a game back of unbeaten Toledo Central Catholic.

Ross' loss keeps them in a three-way tie for fifth with Findlay and Oregon Clay. The Little Giants will visit the Trojans on Friday.

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St. Francis De Sale 31, Fremont Ross 14

St. Francis De Sales	10	7	7	7	—	31
Fremont Ross	0	7	0	7	—	14

First quarter

SF - Keontae Johnson 3 run (Drew Stark kick), 10:44. SF - Stark 24 field goal, 5:38.

Second quarter

SF - Tyler Thebes 7 pass from David Nees (Stark kick), 5:31. FR - Ben Root 1 run (Zane Cox kick), 1:58.

Third quarter

SF - Nees 9 run (Stark kick), 7:48.

Fourth quarter

SF - Nees 3 run (Stark kick), 7:51. FR - Uriah Haun 10 pass from Jalen Slick (Cox kick), 3:48.

	S	F
Total Net Yards	292	226
Rushes-Yards	50-226	28-96
Passing	66	130
Comp-Att-Int	6-7-0	14-25-2
Fumbles-Lost	2-2	4-3

Individual statistics

Rushing — St. Francis De Sales (Toledo), David Nees 29-158, Keontae Johnson 21-68. Fremont Ross, Ben Root 3-15, Devante Daniels 3-11, Jalen Slick 13-45, Isaiah McDonald 1-3, Uriah Haun 7-15.

Passing — St. Francis De Sales (Toledo), David Nees 6-7-66. Fremont Ross, Jalen Slick 14-25-2-130.

Receiving — St. Francis De Sales (Toledo), Andrew Bonfiglio 2-10, Tyler Thebes 1-7, Steven David 2-25, Keaton Isaacson 1-24. Fremont Ross, Dylan Jagodzinski 3-37, Uriah Haun 1-10, Jeffrey Barnett 4-4, Devin Benson 2-8, Tanner Albert 1-10, Stefan Johnson 2-52.

Little Giants rough up Findlay

Hunter Trautwein turns in a big game

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FINDLAY — Ross has been a completely different team when No. 26 has gotten the ball in his hands.

After missing a majority of the last six games with off-and-on leg injuries, Hunter Trautwein was once again the Little Giants' featured tailback Friday. And when he's been in, he's been a difference maker.

Findlay found that out the hard way.

Trautwein ran wild on the

Trojans' defense, running for four touchdowns, of 6, 3, 3 and 66 yards, and accounting for 190 of Ross' 334 rushing yards in the Little Giants' 42-7 rout of their Three Rivers Athletic Conference rivals at Donnell Stadium.

Ross piled up 529 total yards of offense.

"Hunter Trautwein makes a huge difference for us," Little Giants coach Derek Kidwell said. "When he's been healthy, we've been very, very good or had the potential to be very good. And tonight, he ran the ball extremely well."

Missing most of his senior season has been a tough pill to swallow for the 6-foot, 2-inch, 210-pound tailback. Trautwein

played exclusively at defensive end in Week 8 after missing games in Week 4, Week 5 and Week 7.

Ross is 3-1 in games in which he has seen significant action at tailback, losing only to Whitmer when Trautwein was lost late in the third quarter in what was at the time a seven-point game.

"I was feeling my ankle out all week," said Trautwein, who was injured in a Week 3 loss to Pickerington North after he ran 80 yards for a score on Ross' opening possession.

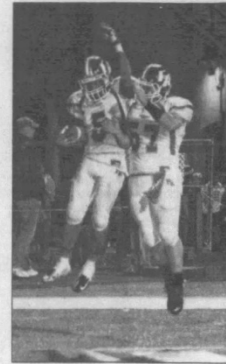
"The worst thing would've been for me to come out here, get hurt again, and not be able to contribute to the team. But it felt great all week and didn't

bother me one bit."

Emanuel Mogolu's 52-yard score on Findlay's second play of the game got the Trojans (2-7, 1-5) on the board first after Ross was forced to punt.

The run was one of few highlights for Findlay's offense, which was pretty well kept in check by the Little Giants. Take away that run and the Trojans had only 14 rushing yards and 198 yards of offense.

"We didn't pass protect very well," Findlay coach Mark Ritzyler said. "We got a few runs early, got the nice trap. (Ross) made some adjustments and we've struggled with inside



Ross' Patrick Rusher and Jeffrey Barnett celebrate a score during the Little Giants' win. BARB GLASPY/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

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Giants

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penetration all year."

Trautwein finally got the Little Giants on the board on the second play of the second quarter, ending a quick 6-play, 28-yard drive that was aided by Findlay's punter bobbling the snap on fourth down.

A drive later, Jeffrey Barnett's 79-yard scoring catch gave Ross the lead for good.

Junior signal caller Jalen Slick was 6-of-11 passing for 195.

"He played excellent tonight," said Kidwell of Slick. "There were some opportunities out there where he could have done some things, but I'm a coach."

Jarren Hampton stalled a promising drive for the Trojans in the second quarter, intercepting Jordan Dean in the end zone for a touchback. Three plays later, Slick hit Stefan Johnson for a 49-yard gain, setting up a Trautwein scoring run from three yards out.

Dean started at quarterback in place of regular starter Brandon Muehl, who had to sit out after sustaining a concussion. Dean was one of three quarterbacks used by the Trojans.

Ross led 21-7 at the half and then took a commanding 28-7 advantage late in the third. Trautwein's second TD run of three yards, ended a long 16-play, 90-yard scoring drive that took more than seven minutes off the game clock. The drive was exclusively run plays.

"The offensive line and fullbacks were amazing with their blocks tonight," Trautwein said. "The field opened up nicely all night."

The field was all that was between Trautwein and paydirt as he went 66 yards for a 35-7 lead early in the fourth. That was a play after he battled his way to a first down on a fake punt on 4th-and-4 in Ross' territory.

"We played close to a complete game," Kidwell said. "We still had our brain lapse in the first series on defense. But besides that, I thought we played a very solid game."

Ross will close out the season next week at Toledo St. John's Jesuit.

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Fremont Ross 42, Findlay 7

Fremont Ross	0	21	7	14	—	42
Findlay	7	0	0	0	—	7

First quarter

F - Emanuel Mogolu 52 run (Grant McKinniss kick), 8:33.

Second quarter

R - Hunter Trautwein 6 run (Zane Cox kick), 11:47. R - Jeffrey Barnett 79 pass from Jalen Slick (Cox kick), 9:33. R - Trautwein 3 run (Cox kick), 6:08.

Third quarter

R - Trautwein 3 run (Cox kick), 3:16.

Fourth quarter

R - Trautwein 66 run (Cox kick), 11:20. R - Barnett 9 run (Cox kick), 7:19.

	Fr	Fi
Total Net Yards	529	252
Rushes-Yards	56-334	29-68
Passing	195	184
Comp-Att-Int	6-11-0	15-32-1
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	1-0

Genoa Area 59, Elmwood 0

Elmwood	0	0	0	0	—	0
Genoa Area	20	24	12	3	—	59

First quarter

G - Ryan Espinoza 2 run (Cody Pickard kick). G - Casey Gose 13 run (Pickard kick). G - David Nutter 8 run (PAT missed).

Second quarter

G - Nutter 25 run (Pickard kick). G - Gose 25 run (Pickard kick). G - Nutter 45 run (Pickard kick). G - Pickard 45 field goal.

Third quarter

G - Gose 11 run (Pickard kick). G - Saftey. G - Pickard 29 field goal.

Fourth quarter

G - Pickard 27 field goal.

	E	G
Total Net Yards	138	523
Rushes-Yards	41-124	43-370
Passing	14	153
Comp-Att-Int	3-9-0	12-19-1
Fumbles-Lost	6-2	2-1

Individual statistics

Rushing — Elmwood, Noah Baker 9-0, Aaron Arnold 3-15, Austin Isaacs 19-34, Austin Jasso 5-59, Jace Grossman 4-30. Genoa Area, David Nutter 18-187, Logan Scott 3-9, Ryan Espinoza 5-59, Casey Gose 8-101.

Passing — Elmwood, Noah Baker 3-9-14. Genoa Area, Logan Scott 12-19-1-153.

Receiving — Elmwood, Aaron Arnold 4-7, Austin Isaacs 1-7. Genoa Area, Casey Gose 6-44, Quentin Spiess 4-60, Alex Hayes 4-17, Lucas Apel 1-31.

ROSS WINS SEASON FINALE

Little Giants finish .500 with back-to-back victories

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

TOLEDO — Moral victories are hard to come by in a .500 season.

Ross' finish to its 2013 campaign, however, is one of those rare exceptions. Battling an up-and-down season for the third straight year, which saw injuries to key players and the Little Giants wrapped in a four-game losing streak at the midway point, Ross refused to quit.

The Little Giants continued

to work, continued to get better and put together two of their strongest full game to finish the year. That included Friday's dominating, 28-7 Three Rivers Athletic Conference victory over Toledo St. John's Jesuit in a game played at Lyden Field.

Ross played solidly in all three phases once again. The offense rushed for 227 yards, the defense bent at times but never broke and with the exception of a missed 22-yard field goal to end the first half, the special teams did what was asked.

"It was an all around performance tonight," Little Giants coach Derek Kidwell said. "Hunter (Trautwein) had a big night again. Jeffrey Barnett made some key plays and the offensive line played well. Then the defense came up with turnovers and we didn't turn the ball over."

Trautwein, playing his final game in the purple and white, ran for 114 yards on 33 carries and scored a touchdown in each

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Ross' Hunter Trautwein with one of his 33 carries during Friday's game at St. John's Jesuit.

Trautwein had 114 yards and ran for two scores.

BARB GLASPY/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

Ross

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of the third and fourth quarters as the Little Giants (5-5, 3-4) pulled away in what was a 14-7 lead at the half.

"This is a great way to go out," Trautwein said. "Everyone wants to go out on top and we did just that."

The Little Giants needed only three plays to steal the lead for good. Following a big return on the kickoff that got Ross to the Titans' 35, two runs by Trautwein setup a 29-yard scoring pass from Jalen Slick to senior Devin Benson. Senior Zane Cox's extra point made it 7-0 just 1 minute, 21 seconds in.

St. John's (2-8, 2-5) tried to answer back, moving 77 yards in 14 plays. But Joe Pool was stopped short on 4th-and-5 at

the Ross 3.

Jeffrey Barnett's 22-yard touchdown run on a reverse upped the Little Giants' lead to 14-0 on the third play of the second quarter. His run ended a 12-play drive as Ross ate up the clock and controlled a majority of the game's possession time.

"I liked the way our offensive line controlled the line of scrimmage and I liked the way that Jalen Slick managed the football game," Kidwell said. "I would have liked to score at the end of the first half, but we kind of got short on time."

A blocked punt setup the Titans' lone score in the second quarter. Needing only 25 yards, St. John's scored on the ninth play of the drive when quarterback Dick Anderson found Pool from 17 yards out on 3rd-and-12.

After a touchback, Ross utilized runs from Trautwein, Slick

and Barnett to go 75 yards in the final 5:29 of the half, before the missed field goal.

Stefan Johnson recorded his first of two interceptions in the third quarter when he ended St. John's second drive of the half with an 11-yard return to the Titans' 30. That setup a two-yard TD plunge from Trautwein for a 21-7 lead with 3:05 left in the period.

"I thanked the seniors for keeping the locker room together," Kidwell said. "It didn't feel like a 5-5 season because of these seniors and the leaders they are. They kept everything positive and they kept working and working."

"Every last one of them is going to be successful with whatever they want to do after they leave high school."

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Little Giants earn all-TRAC honors

Three Ross football players make first team

News-Messenger staff report

Three Ross football players were named first team all-Three Rivers Athletic Conference as the league recently released its all-league teams from the fall.

Senior Zack Hoffman was named first team on the defensive line after registering 63 tackles, 17 tackles for a loss and four sacks. He was joined by senior linebacker Trey Grine, who also had impressive defensive numbers, tallying 110 tackles, 13 tackles for a loss,

four sacks and two interceptions.

Jeffrey Barnett was first team as a return specialist.

Offensive lineman Patrick Rusher was a second-team honoree, as was senior defensive end Kole Amor.

Jarvis Jones, Kyle Lamalie, Ben Root, Garrett Hausman, Dylan Jagodzinski, Hunter Trautwein and Alec Carnicom were honorable mention picks.

Toledo Central Catholic's DeShone Kizer was named offensive player of the year. Chris Green, also of the Fighting Irish, was named defensive player of the year.

Lima Senior's Mike Fell was coach of the year.

Boys soccer

Ross junior Nate Domiray earned first-team all-TRAC honors for the Little Giants in boys soccer.

Senior goalkeeper Ben Morroney was second team. Steven Blodgett, Trent Damschroeder and Trent Bishop were honorable mention.

Girls soccer

The Ross senior trio of Erin Slaughter, Shelby Keeran and Ashlee Duncan each earned honorable mention honors.

Volleyball

Ross' Allison Ackerman and Kelsey Ivy both received honorable mention.

FREMONT ROSS FOOTBALL

Derek Kidwell out as the Little Giants' head football coach

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT—Derek Kidwell is out as the head football coach at Fremont Ross.

Ross athletic director Chad Berndt confirmed the district's decision not to renew Kidwell's coaching contract Thursday. The district has plans to advertise the position starting Monday, with the goal of having a new coach in place by March 3.

Berndt said he informed Kidwell of the decision at a meeting between the two Thursday morning.

"I'm disappointed about it, but I wasn't going to resign and give up on these kids," said Kidwell of the

decision via a phone interview late Thursday night. "They made a decision to go in a different direction. Time will tell if it was the right one or not.

"Right now I feel bad for the kids that got on that bus after the St. John's game who were feeling good about themselves and where our program was. But we tell them everyday that they have to fight through adversity, and they'll have to fight through this one. I wish them nothing but the best going ahead."

The Little Giants went 5-5 this season and 3-4 in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference. They were 3-7 in 2012 and 5-5 in 2011.

Ross last made the playoffs in

2010 going 9-1 and winning the final Greater Buckeye Conference championship, before falling 45-35 to Toledo St. John's Jesuit in the opening round. The Little Giants also made the playoffs in 2006 after the school's first perfect regular season since 1997. Kidwell's teams were 61-41 in his 10 seasons at Ross, winning two Greater Buckeye Conference titles in 2006 and 2010.

Kidwell took over a program in 2004 that had gone 1-19 in the two previous seasons.

"The sad thing is this decision doesn't just affect me, it affects a lot of individuals," Kidwell said. "There's a lot of assistant coaches



Ross coach Derek Kidwell reacts during a home against Findlay on Oct. 28, 2011. DOUG HISE/NEWS-MESSENGER
CORRESPONDENT

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Out

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and other people associated with this program that people don't think about. That's what upsets me more than anything."

Berndt said the district has a plan in place to help with the transitional period.

"There is currently a transition plan in place to ensure the football team continues to move forward," he said. "A strength and conditioning schedule will be made available to students this upcoming

Monday and students interested in playing football will have access to the weight room beginning Jan. 6."

Kidwell said he fully intends to honor his teaching contract.

"I'll continue to show up, unless they tell me otherwise," Kidwell said. "I haven't decided yet if I'll coach again. Everything is still fresh.

"I'll take some time, enjoy the holidays with my family and go from there."

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