

## Ross tries to build on past success

News-Messenger reports

The spokes are there, but the hub is missing as Fremont Ross begins its fifth season under coach Cheryl Schell.

Following two consecutive regional tournament appearances, a third is not out of question. But the

loss of top pitcher Jessica Rollins and

### Softball

four-year letterwinner Holly Pelfrey will make the task difficult for Ross.

Rollins, an honorable mention selection on the Ohio High School Coaches Association all-state team, took her 33-3 record with her when she flipped the tassel on her graduation mortarboard this last spring. Pelfrey, a second-team all-Ohio pick, patrolled the outfield for four seasons.

Those two, along with seven letterwinners, produced a 23-3 record last season. That included a 12-0 mark and the Great Lakes League championship.

"We have the core of our defense back," said Schell, who has a 74-27 coaching record. "I think the kids are excited about the chance to have more defensive opportunities."

Schell pointed out the youth and inexperience of her pitchers: sophomores Jodi Kusmer and Nicki Pelfrey and junior Megan Alexander. Kusmer and Alexander shared duties on the junior varsity last season, while Pelfrey was the varsity's catcher.

Kusmer and Alexander have the better control. Pelfrey is the fastest of the trio.

"All three have great potential," Schell said, "but they have to show how they will do under pressure."

Dawn Zerman, a three-year starter at shortstop, anchors a veteran infield. At third base is senior Casey Schepflin, with sophomore Emily Dowell at second and junior Michele Smith at first.

"The only switching we will do in the infield is at catcher and pitcher," Schell said.

When Pelfrey is pitching, sophomore Dusty Ruffing will catch. Pelfrey will go behind the plate when Kusmer and Alexander are on the rubber.

"We did not get hit real hard last year because of Jessica," Schell said, "but defensively the kids know they have to produce this season while our pitchers gain experience."

Jamie Hinkle returns to the Ross outfield. Hinkle played right field last year, but she may move into center this season between freshmen Jodi Fick and Jenny Schaaf.

## SOFTBALL

# Ross wins opener

News-Messenger reports

Nicki Pelfrey pitched a three-hitter as Fremont Ross opened the season with a 12-6 victory at Sylvania Southview Monday.

Pelfrey, a sophomore, struck out 11 and overcame eight walks.

Southview (0-3) committed three errors.

Casey Schepflin and Jodi Fick both had two of the Little Giants' seven hits, while Dawn Zerman scored three runs, drove in three and stole four bases.

Pelfrey, who had a double, also drove in two runs as did Kylee Schneider with a pair of sacrifice flies.

In other games reported:

**Columbian 8, Clyde 6**

Clyde took a 6-5 lead into the bottom of the sixth inning, but the Fliers made three errors in the inning as Tiffin Columbian scored three times to win.

The Fliers finished the game with eight errors. One of the

Tornadoes' runs was earned.

Columbian (2-5) committed one error behind winning pitcher Michelle Hoffman.

Michelle Kovalaske took the loss in relief of Clyde starter Deniel Murray.

**L. Center 13, Woodmore 12**

Woodmore scored nine runs in the seventh inning, but Liberty Center scored three in the bottom of the inning to win.

The Wildcats (0-1) trailed 10-3 entering the seventh before taking the lead.

A double by Kathy Irelan highlighted Liberty Center's seventh.

The Tigers (2-1) took advantage of 15 Woodmore walks while overcoming six errors.

Rupa Narra had three hits, including a home run, for Woodmore. Cari Robenstine added a pair of hits.

Tammy Davis, who led Liberty Center with three hits, was the winning pitcher. Sherry Swartz, who relieved Narra in the fifth, took the loss.

# Ross blanks Margaretta for second win

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross shut out Margaretta 24-0 in five innings Tuesday, winning its second game in as many outings.

Dawn Zerman, who scored five runs, and Emily Dowell both had two of the Little Giants' 22 hits.

Ross committed just one error behind the one-hit pitching of Jodi Kusmer, who struck out eight and walked two.

Nicki Pelfrey, who added three hits, drove in six runs. Dowell drove in four runs.

Margaretta (1-1) committed 10 errors.

In other games:

**Hopewell-Loudon 5, St. Joe 4 (8)**

St. Joe scored two runs in the bottom of the seventh to force the extra inning, but Hopewell-Loudon scored the winning run in the top of the eighth on two walks, a passed ball and a fielder's choice.

The Crimson Streaks (0-3 and 0-1 in the Midland Athletic League), scored twice in the seventh after Angie Wiechman reached on a two-base error. Cori Bruchs then followed with a sacrifice bunt.

Erin Lytle drove in Wiechman with a single, stole second and scored on a single by Jenny Gabel.

Lytle finished with two hits and two RBIs, and Wiechman scored twice.

Liz Strausbaugh took the loss for the Streaks, walking seven and striking out five.

The Chieftains (1-1 and 1-0) scored three runs in the third inning and one in the fourth. St. Joe scored single runs in the third and fifth.

**Lake 19, Lakota 4**

Cindy Martin homered for Lake, and the Flyers outhit Lakota 13-6 and took advantage of 12 walks.

Lake (4-1) led 10-0 before Lakota (1-3) got on the scoreboard in the fifth inning.

## Roundup

News-messenger reports

Clyde won its second game without a loss while Fremont Ross lost for the first time in three games in high school softball action Thursday.

Clyde jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first inning en route to a 7-2 victory over Sandusky.

Ross outhit Elyria 7-1 but still lost 4-3 in eight innings.

Deniel Murphy gave up four hits and two runs while walking four and striking out two to get the pitching win for Clyde.

Kritsy Nieset tripled and Amanda Hoffman doubled while Liz Norman drove in two runs.

"We did not hit the ball well — we left 11 on base," Clyde coach Marc Marshall said, "but we played much better defensively."

In other games:

**Elyria 4, Ross 3 (8)**

The Pioneers took advantage of six Ross errors including three in last inning. None of the Elyria runs were earned.

Losing pitcher Nicki Pelfrey allowed one hit, a bunt single in the eighth, struck out seven and walked four while winning pitcher Lindsay Anderson had 14 strikeouts and walked two. The Elyria defense committed three errors.

Dawn Zerman had three hits

and Michele Smith two for Ross. Pelfrey homered to put the Little Giants up 3-2 in the eighth.

**Lakota 13, H-Loudon 8**

The Raiders (2-3) built a 7-5 lead after five innings and held on for the victory.

Cira King homered and singled and Jessica Wyant singled twice for Lakota. Kristen Zoeller, Wyant and King drove in two runs apiece. Winning pitcher Mary Hale struck out five.

**Gibsonburg 19, Danbury 4 (5)**

Gibsonburg won for the fourth time in five games, scoring in every inning of the five-inning game. The game was called because of the 15-run rule.

Lorena Shively homered for Gibsonburg with Angie Davis and Nicki Reino singling twice each for the Golden Bears. Jenny Taulker doubled with Shively driving in three runs. Ellie Estep and Sherril Hiser drove in two runs apiece, also for Gibsonburg.

Winning pitcher Katie Wonderly allowed six hits.

**Van Buren 22, Bettsville 10**

Van Buren led 13-1 after two innings and then cruised to the win. Jill Windau had two hits for Bettsville with Sherry Dodson doubling and Alicia Valentine



# Pelfrey pitches, hits Little Giants past TCC

News-Messenger reports

Nicki Pelfrey pitched six strong innings, and Fremont Ross defeated Toledo Central Catholic 15-7 Wednesday.

Playing without shortstop and leading hitter Dawn Zerman, Ross collected 13 hits. Pelfrey, who allowed three runs, struck out seven and walked one, had three hits.

Jamie Hinkle replaced Zerman at shortstop. Zerman missed the game with a sore knee.

Ross (3-1) committed just one error.

Michele Smith, Casey Schepflin and Dusty Ruffing all had two hits for the Little Giants.

Smith and Pelfrey both drove in three runs as TCC fell to 6-2.

In other games:

## **Seneca East 13, St. Joe 11**

Erin Lytle homered, Ann Foos doubled twice and Jenny Gabel had three hits but St. Joe remains winless in five games.

The Crimson Streaks (0-2 in the Midland Athletic League) also got two hits from Kelly Lotycz, and Lytle finished with two hits.

St. Joe, which outhit Seneca East 13-10 but committed seven errors, scored four runs in the fifth and four in the sixth.

Winning pitcher Jenny Hall walked one and struck out five, going the distance as the Tigers improved to 2-3 and 1-0.

## **Clyde 15, Port Clinton 4**

Clyde scored in every inning but the second of the six-inning game, improving to 5-1 after downing PC in the Sandusky Bay Conference opener.

Jackie Swaisgood had four hits and scored four runs for the Fliers, who had 14 hits and took advantage of nine Port Clinton errors.

Amanda Hoffman, who had two RBI and also scored four runs, added three hits. Jessica Swartz and Sara Oakleaf had two hits each.

Michele Lacey homered for the Red-

skins (1-2 and 0-1).

Michelle Kovalaske was the winning pitcher with relief help from Kristie Mounts.

## **Gibsonburg 15, Lakota 13**

Nikki Reno had a home run and a double among three hits, drove in three runs and scored three times to lead Gibsonburg.

The Golden Bears, who improved to 5-1 in their first season, also got two hits from Krista Reiter in the Suburban Lakes League opener.

With Courtney Russell, Jessica Wyant, Kristen Zoeller, Kelly Morel, Regan Youngs and Gretchen Creeger all collecting two hits, Lakota outhit Gibsonburg 13-9.

Morel drove in three runs, and Howe scored four times for the Raiders (3-4 and 0-1).

## **Eastwood 13, Woodmore 8**

Eastwood jumped out to a 7-0 lead and held on for the SLL victory.

The Wildcats (1-3 and 0-1) committed seven errors and walked 10 Eastwood batters.

Abby Aspacher had two hits for Woodmore.

## **Oak Harbor 15, Perkins 0**

Lisa Overmyer had two hits and scored four runs, while Jamie Seeger drove in two runs and scored twice for Oak Harbor in the SBC win.

The Rockets, who scored 10 runs in the second inning of the six-inning game, improved to 7-2 and 2-0 in the SBC.

Winning pitcher Erin Radsick also had two hits and scored three runs, and Nancy Appelhans had three RBI.

## **Calvert 27, Bettsville 9**

Bettsville led 4-3 after two innings, but Tiffin Calvert scored eight runs in the third inning of the MAL game.

Calvert took advantage of 22 walks and got three hits from Rhonda Best.

Alicia Valentine and LaVonna Williams both scored twice for the Bobcats.

## **Ross 7, Fostoria 5**

Fremont Ross needed eight innings to dispose of Fostoria in its Great Lakes League opener Friday.

The Little Giants scored four runs in the top of the eighth and withstood two Fostoria runs in the bottom of the inning of a 7-5 victory.

Nicki Pelfrey had three of the Little Giants' 12 hits and scored two runs. Emily Dowell, Kylee Schneider and Jodi Fick all added two hits.

Ross (4-1) committed one error behind the complete-game pitching of Jodi Kusmer, who struck out four and walked two.

Tonya Hayes took the complete-game loss.

# Kusmer, Pelfrey star in Ross win

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross scored in every inning but the fourth and sixth and defeated Toledo Whitmer 8-2 in a Great Lakes League game Friday.

Jodi Kusmer pitched a complete game, scattering five hits and striking out five with one walk.

"The wind was behind her, which made her a little faster," Ross coach Cheryl Schell said. "She moved the ball a little bit and changed speeds.

**Softball**

"It's good for Jodi."

Nicki Pelfrey doubled, tripled and scored three runs for the Little Giants (5-1 and 2-0).

"She's really making good contact," Schell said. "She's been hitting all season."

Ross also got two of its nine hits from Emily Dowell and Michele Smith and a double from Casey Schepflin.

# Findlay slides past Ross in 8 innings

News-Messenger reports

Findlay outscored Fremont Ross by a run in the eighth inning of a 4-3 victory over the Little Giants Saturday.

The Great Lakes League foes meet again next Friday.

"We've got to take care of business Monday and Tuesday first," Ross coach Cheryl Schell said.

Ross takes on Oregon Clay today and Sylvania Northview the next day.

The Trojans (5-3, 5-0) scored two runs in the eight on a hit batsman, a walk, two wild pitches and a

Ross error.

Ross managed a run in the bottom of the inning on Kylee Schneider's RBI double but lost for the second time in seven games, including its first loss in three GLL games.

Jamie Hinkle and Schneider both had two of the Little Giants' six hits.

Ashlie Ammons was the winning pitcher, and Nicki Pelfrey took the loss. Pelfrey struck out nine but walked eight.

Ross cored a run in the second; Findlay took a 2-1 lead in the fifth and the Little Giants tied the score in the bottom of the fifth.

## Softball

### Ross 16, St. Ursula 5

Dawn Zerman had five of the Little Giants' 18 hits, including a triple and double, in the non-league victory.

Ross (6-2) scored seven runs in the first inning, while Nicki Pelfrey pitched 4 $\frac{1}{3}$  innings for the victory.

Michele Smith had four hits for Ross, with Pelfrey, Casey Schepflin, Jamie Hinkle and Jenny Swint all chipping in two.

Zerman drove in three runs, and Kylee Schneider and Swint both drove in two.

St. Ursula is 8-6.



# Two-run double beats Little Giants

News-Messenger reports

Findlay scored two runs in the bottom of the fifth inning and defeated Fremont Ross 3-1 in a Great Lakes League game Friday.

Janel Simpson's two-run double provided the winning runs, and Ashley Hammons got the win over Nicki Pelfrey.

Ross (6-3 and 2-2) scored in the first when pelfrey walked, stole second and Casey Schepflin followed with an RBI single.

Findlay (5-5 and 5-2) scored in the bottom of the first to tie it.

The Trojans did not commit and error, and the Little Giants made two.

In other games:

**Clyde 8, Port Clinton 3**

The Fliers scored two in the first, two in the second and one in the third off Misty Lewis to open up a 5-0 lead and went on to the Sandusky Bay Conference victory.

Doubles by Jessica Swartz, Amanda Hoffman, Kelly Emery, Mary Jo Hoffman and Sara Oak-

leaf were among Clyde's 11 hits.

The Fliers committed just one error behind winning pitcher Deniele Murphy.

The Redskins are 2-9 and winless in seven SBC games.

**Lakota 11, Gibsonburg 10 (9)**

Erin Howe scored on Cira King's sacrifice fly in the ninth after Gibsonburg scored four runs in the bottom of the seventh to tie the score 10-all.

Winning pitcher Jill Flagg and loser Katie Wonderly both went the distance as Lakota improved to 7-7 and 4-4 in the Suburban Lakes League and Gibsonburg fell to 5-9 and 1-6.

Jessica Wyant and Gretchen Creeger both had three of the Raiders' 17 hits. Angie Davis and Amanda Cottrel both had two of the Golden Bears' 10.

**Woodmore 20, Eastwood 5**

Woodmore played errorless defense while taking advantage of eight Eastwood errors to score eight unearned runs in the SLL game.

Amy Perkins was one of five Wildcats with two hits and drove

in four runs.

Tiffany Travis pitched 4 2/3 innings for the victory.

Woodmore is 4-8 and 3-4. The Eagles are 3-8 and 2-6.

**Oak Harbor 7, Perkins 6**

Erin Radsick got the win in relief of Ann Greener and had three hits as Oak Harbor won its fourth straight game.

Greener added two hits and drove in two runs for the Rockets (13-3 and 8-1 in the SBC).

Both teams had 10 hits, but the Pirates had three errors. Oak Harbor did not commit an error.

Perkins fell to 4-9 and 2-6.

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# Narra, walks key Woodmore win

News-Messenger reports

Woodmore scored in every inning and beat Genoa 18-6 in a Suburban Lakes League game Monday.

Rupa Narra had five hits and drove in four runs, while the Wildcats took advantage of 20 walks by Genoa pitchers.

Tiffany Travis was the winning pitcher after the Comets knocked Woodmore starter Narra out in the third. Travis did not walk a batter over the final 2/3 innings.

Genoa (9-5 and 5-2) scored all six of its runs in the third to tie the score at 6-6. Woodmore is now 6-8 and 4-4.

In other games:

**Oak Harbor 12, Port Clinton 6**

Oak Harbor scored seven runs in the first two innings and outhit Port Clinton 15-4.

Brandy Gaines had two doubles among four hits and drove in two runs, while winning pitcher Erin Radsick had three hits.

Radsick struck out 12 and walked four as the Rockets (14-3) won their ninth Sandusky Bay Conference game **Old Fort 8, Danbury 1**

Old Fort improved to 10-5 scoring in every inning but the fifth.

Jenny Magers had two hits and Heather Omlor drove in two runs for the Stockaders.

**Bedford 2, Ross 1**

Nicki Pelfrey pitched a one-hitter but couldn't overcome eight walks in the Great Lakes League game.

Pelfrey struck out nine, but Ross didn't score until the seventh when Emily Dowell walked, took second on a wild pitch and scored on a passed ball.

Bedford (9-5 and 6-2) scored single runs in the third and sixth.

Ross (6-4 and 2-3) meets Celina in a Division I sectional tournament game at Elida today at 5 p.m.

**Mohawk 17, St. Joe 3**

Mohawk outhit St. Joe 12-2 and did not commit an error, while the Crimson Streaks made 11 errors in the Midland Athletic League game.

St. Joe (3-8 and 1-4) scored all its runs in the second.

**Clyde 10, Perkins 2**

Jacki Swaisgood had three hits and drove in two runs for Clyde in the SBC game.

Kelly Emery also drove in two runs and had two hits for the Fliers (9-2 and 5-1), with Tiffany Wettrich, Amber Noftz and Amanda Hoffman all collecting two hits.

The Fliers outhit the Pirates 13-2 to back the pitching of Michelle Kovalaske, who threw four strikeouts.

**Northwood 22, Gibsonburg 2**

Lorena Snivel had two hits and drove in both Gibsonburg runs, but Northwood collected 15 hits.

The Rangers scored 13 runs in the second against Krista Reiter, who walked 12. Amanda Cottrell also had two hits for Gibsonburg.

**Eastwood 28, Lakota 7**

Eastwood capped off its SLL win with 12 runs in the seventh and collected 15 hits as it improved to 4-8 and 3-5.

Three Lakota pitchers walked 20 as the Raiders fell to 8-8 and 4-5.

Regan Youngs had two hits and drove in three runs for the Raiders.

**Bettsville 7, Hopewell-Loudon 5**

Bettsville scored six runs in the first inning and held on for the MAL win.

Sherry Dodson pitched a complete game for the victory and also had two of Bettsville's seven hits, Leigh Berry drove in two runs and Jessica Penock had a double.

## Softball

# Kusmer, Ross blank Maumee for 8th win

News-Messenger reports

Jodi Kusmer pitched a two-hit shutout as Fremont Ross defeated Maumee 8-0 Wednesday at Rodger Young Park.

Kusmer struck out one and walked two. The Little Giants (8-4) committed just one error behind her.

Nicki Pelfrey had two doubles, and Dawn Zer-

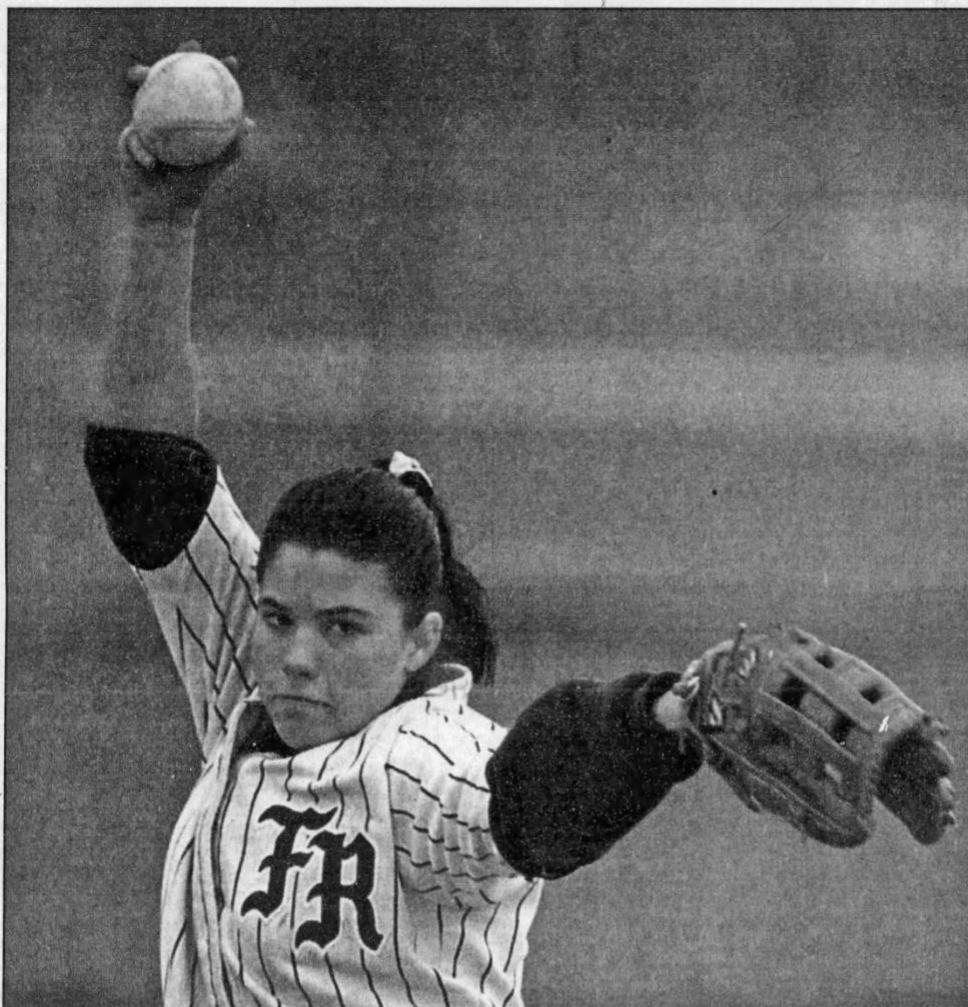
## Softball Roundup

man added two of the Little Giants' eight hits.

Ross, which got an RBI from four different batters, scored two runs in the first in the first inning, two in the third and four in the fourth. Pelfrey, Casey Schepflin, Kylee Schneider and Simone Brown all drove in a run.

Maumee is 6-11.

# A pitch for success



**SHELL**  
... Ross softball coach wants to find pitchers who can throw for the Little Giants for four years. This year, her fifth as coach, she has two sophomore pitchers.

**JODI KUSMER**, shown here pitching Wednesday against Maumee, is one of those pitchers. The other is Nicki Pelfrey.

News-Messenger/  
Andrew Morrison

## Ross softball coach wants to groom young throwers

By **TIM HARMON**  
Staff writer

Fremont Ross softball coach Cheryl Schell's wish is to develop a pitcher to come in as a freshman and dominate for four years.

It hasn't happened in Schell's first five seasons, but sophomores Jodi Kusmer and Nicki Pelfrey are currently toeing the rubber.

They follow Kim Crawford and Jessica Rollins, who pitched Ross to consecutive Great Lakes League championships and regional tournament appearances before graduating last spring.

"I knew if we could have a dominating pitcher on the mound we'd be very successful because there's a lot of athletes

here," Schell said.

Her program began with Crawford, who started pitching for Schell on the junior varsity. She was given simple instructions that haven't changed: throw hard and do not worry about balls and strikes.

Rollins was encouraged to try pitching when she was a freshman.

"When you're a pitcher, you have control over every single play of the game," she said. "Once I started pitching, I realized that's what I wanted."

Schell, who teaches physical education at Fremont Junior High, always looks for young prospects.

"I tell them they're going to be bad for a few years when most kids like the instant self-

### Sectional Championship

Saturday vs. Wapakoneta  
at Elida  
11 a.m.

gratification," she said.

Said Rollins: "Not everyone has the mentality to face that reality."

Rollins struggled until she was a junior.

"I can remember her walking off the mound and not wanting to go back on," Schell said. "I see that in (Nicki)."

Pelfrey, a power pitcher, has control problems. Kusmer is not as quick but always around the plate.

"I never seriously started pitching until this year," Pelfrey said. "When I started, I walked too many and gave up. I

was a catcher last year. This year, coach said pitching is my top priority this year."

Kusmer has been a pitcher since the seventh grade, by mutual agreement with her father, Bob Kusmer. Like Schell, he is a former fast-pitch catcher.

"Catchers know how to work a pitcher," Schell says.

That's a dilemma for Pelfrey.

"Every pitch I think of from the pitcher and catcher standpoint," she says. "I shouldn't be doing that. I should be thinking like a pitcher."

But Kusmer enjoys throwing to Pelfrey.

"She calls my game and I like that," Kusmer said.

Interestingly, when Kusmer and Pelfrey graduate, the Class of 2002 will be freshman.

## **Ross beats Bedford**

Dawn Zerman's bases loaded double scored three runs in the fourth inning to push Ross past Bedford. Jodi Kusmer went the distance and gave up only three hits for the win. Nicki Pelfrey also contributed an RBI double. Ross improved there record to 9-4 (3-3).



# SPORTS EXTRA

Special report for The News-Messenger sports section

Sports Editor Brian Spiess, 332-5511, ext. 142

Tuesday, May 14, 1996 B3

## Math, Zerman style

Senior Dawn Zerman has lettered all four years in three sports: tennis, basketball and softball. That gives her 12 for the career, believed to be a first for a girl at Fremont Ross.



## Tennis

Four varsity letters. GLL Player of the Year, two years. GLL first team, four years. State qualifier, three years. Team captain. Team MVP.



## Basketball

Four varsity letters. GLL Player of the Year, two years. District 6 Player of the Year. District 6 first team, two years. Associated Press District Player of the Year. First team All-Ohio. All-time leading scorer in Ross history. Named to USA Today All-USA team. First team GLL, three years. Led team in assists all four years. Led team in rebounding for one year.



## Softball

Four varsity letters. GLL first team, two years. Team batting champ, three years. Second team all-Ohio. Team regional qualifiers, two years. 1996 team has not been selected.

# 12 varsity letters

Sports have 'been my life,' Zerman says

By BRIAN SPIESS  
Sports editor

Dawn Zerman's classmates laugh as she reaches for her artwork.

They are visibly unimpressed with her collage, which contains cut out magazine pictures of basketball stars, a miniature orange ball and cardboard hoop. The project illustrates both her passion for athletics and, Zerman admits, her lack of enthusiasm for art.

"I'm not one of those people to sit down and concentrate on drawing. I want to get it done and over with. I'm not artistically good," Zerman said, turning her attention to teacher Lisa Ayres. "But do I get all my projects done?"

Ayres nods in agreement. Even in art, one of the few things she has not excelled in at Fremont Ross, Zerman has been successful in getting it done.

So when she goes to work on the types of projects she loves — dissecting basketball defenses, gobbling up ground balls or acting a test — the results are startling. Among the highlights:

■ Twelve varsity letters, three each in tennis, basketball and softball. Athletic director Pat McGhee believes she is the first female athlete to accomplish the feat and is unsure if any men have done so.

■ Four Great Lakes League Player of the Year titles, split between tennis and basketball.

■ More points than any basketball player in Ross history.

■ Selected to the USA Today All-USA team as an honorable mention selection representing the state of Ohio.

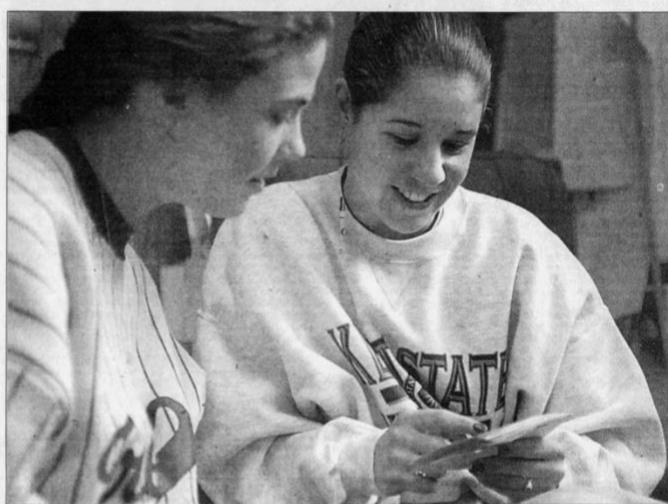
■ Found time to earn better than a 3.0 grade-point-average, good enough for academic honors.

"She's always going to be the first, she's first in everything," teammate and best friend Michele Smith said of Zerman.

"When she made the All-USA team she was shocked. I wasn't at all."

**Open admirers**

And Smith is not a lone admirer. Coaches, teammates and



Dawn Zerman, right, enjoys some free time with best friend and teammate Michele Smith while looking at prom photos in the athletic office at Fremont Ross.

opponents describe Zerman as a hard-worker with great skills and an even better attitude.

"As much of a star as she's been, it's never gone to her head," Ross basketball coach Sue Wolf said. "You watch her play any sport, she has a smile on her face — even in practice."

"She has natural ability and yet she still puts forth hard work," said Ross senior Jenny Swint, a softball teammate.

Whitmer's Jessica Viertboeck was on the Panther basketball and tennis teams which faced the 5-foot-6 Zerman. She remembers Zerman's sportsmanship.

"She never provoked anyone or anything like that, and she wasn't very cocky at all," Viertboeck said.

After Zerman's love of God and love for her parents, sports were always No. 1.

"It's been my life, really," Zerman said last week, reflecting on her career from the site of many top accomplishments — the Purple Pit.

## Break my records please

Because of her achievements, Zerman realizes that she is a role model to young female players who might ordinarily have only male sports heroes.

"Hopefully people would follow in my footsteps and break all my records," Zerman said.

Instead of doing something else, they'd be doing something worthwhile."

And just 10 years ago, Zerman was that youngster. As an active second-grader, she began to play neighborhood games — already looking for wins.

"I think I'm just a competitive person, I have a natural love for

it," she said.

Her favorite? It is not close. "I really love basketball. I would give a lot for it — and I have," she said.

Wolf gave no hesitation when asked if Zerman was the best player she has coached in 21 years at Ross. And despite her skill, she remained unselfish.

Wolf said. "She's always cared about her teammates," Wolf said. "She'd much rather give it to her teammates ... she was always encouraging her teammates."

The all-time leading scorer in Ross basketball history, Zerman also led the team in assists all four years.

"I'm just glad I'm the lucky one who got to coach her," Wolf said.

The respect is mutual. "Coach Wolf has a drive in

her, the same kind of drive I have," Zerman said. "It got to the point where I never wanted to disappoint her."

When she is not in the classroom or on the court, Zerman spends much of her time at Worship Alive church in Bellevue. "I'm very religious. Without God I'd be nothing."

She'll attend Kent State University this fall on a basketball scholarship, and hopes eventually to "have my own business, get married and all that stuff."

Four years ago she was getting ready to play her first games at Ross, expecting to play on the junior varsity team.

Now she prepares to graduate having played varsity all four years in three different sports.

"None of them came easy," she said.

Just easier than a collage.

## Flash: Zerman to play for Kent State next season

By TIM HARMON  
Staff writer

Dawn Zerman says she's comfortable with Kent University, where she'll continue her academic and basketball careers this fall.

"Comfortable" means more than with the school and with her coach to Zerman, the all-time leading scorer at Fremont Ross.

Zerman is most at home with the Golden Flashes' pressing, up-tempo style.

"That's definitely what I want," she says. "With my size, that's what I need. That's my

strength."

The 5-foot-6 Zerman could have stayed near home for college until the University of Toledo's interest faded.

"I didn't feel like they pursued me as hard as Kent did," she said.

Kent went 34-7 last season and won the Mid-American Conference regular-season championship but lost to Toledo in the finals of the conference tournament. The Golden Flashes received an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament, defeated Texas A&M in the first round then lost to Penn State.

"People ask why she didn't go big time," Ross coach Sue Wolf says. "What's wrong with the MAC? That's where she fits in."

Zerman also considered Miami of Ohio.

"I'm happy where I'm at," she says. "For me, it's big time."

Zerman plans to play AAU ball out of Toledo this summer, despite a knee injury she aggravated last month in the Ohio North-South All-Star Game.

She was in Kent for tests today, although MRI tests last week were negative.

"It's just sore," Zerman said.

"It's frustrating, though. 'Doc' (Ross trainer Joe Hershey) wants me to rest it. That's hard right now because of softball. It depends on what the coaches at Kent say. I'll do whatever they tell me to."

Kent coach Bob Lindsay learned about Zerman two years ago. He saw her play for the first time last summer.

"The Sylvania Southview coach (Kevin Mitchell) is a friend of ours and he told us about her," Lindsay said. "She's a good athlete who has a very good ability to score. She under-

stands the game and more importantly she's a hard worker."

"She'll compete with a couple of other kids at the point guard position. As a sophomore, she'll definitely be somebody we'll look at as a starting point guard for us."

Billie-Jean Smith-Goldman has started at point guard for Kent the past two seasons.

Maureen Zolik is a sophomore at the position.

"I think Dawn will make some playing time for herself," Wolf said. "She's that type of person. She has the personality and the drive to make the playing time."

## Jenn Womer

School: Findlay High School senior. Will play at University of Findlay next season.

**On Zerman:** "She just hustled all the time. She wasn't afraid to come in and try and jump over a 6-foot player to get to the basket."



## Kim Lawrence

School: 1995 Clyde High School grad. Starting guard at University of Indianapolis this year.

**On Zerman:** "She's aggressive. She's quick, very quick. In softball she had a good glove and was quick around the bases. (In college) she'll do great."



## Meghan Hinds

School: Notre Dame Academy senior. Will play for Providence College next season. Played with Zerman in recent all-star game.

**On Zerman:** "Dawn's an excellent player. She can play all-around and has a good head on her shoulders. She doesn't get overconfident with accomplishments."



## Jessica Viertboeck

School: Whitmer High School junior. First-team GLL basketball, second-team tennis.

**On Zerman:** "She's very athletic. You can see that in all three sports she plays. Good sportsmanship. She never provoked anyone or anything like that. She wasn't very cocky at all."



## Julie Niekamp

School: Findlay High School senior.

**On Zerman:** "Oh Gosh. She's the player that your coach talks about the whole week before you play that team. She was never a selfish player. She wanted her team to win — you could just tell that."



# Clay downs Ross

News-Messenger reports

## Clay 10, Ross 9

Oregon Clay squeaked past Fremont Ross in a Great Lakes League contest at Oregon Thursday.

"It was a heart breaker," Ross coach Cheryl Schell said. "We have to get our heads up because we still have seven league games to get in."

Megan Rivenaugh, the winning pitcher, had the game winning hit with two on and two outs in the bottom of the seventh inning.

# Ross splits twinbill

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross split a doubleheader Friday, winning one of two Great Lakes League games at Napoleon.

Ross won the opener 7-3 but lost the nightcap 5-3.

In the first game, the Little Giants outhit the Wildcats 12-2. Kylee

## Softball

Schneider collected three hits, with Emily Dowell and Jodi Fick both getting two.

Jodi Kusmer pitched the final five innings for the victory.

In the second game, losing pitcher Nicki Pelfrey collected three of the Little Giants' six hits. Pelfrey had two triples and a double.

Pelfrey allowed Napoleon five runs in the first three innings before Kusmer finished.

Amy Aschemaier was the pitcher of record in both games for Napoleon.

Ross is 11-6 and 4-5, and Napoleon is 11-8 and 7-4.

# Little Giants seek regional return

## No hits allowed

Jodi Kusmer threw a no-hitter for the Little Giants Monday in a 7-0 win against Clay.

Kusmer, who had never pitched a hitless game, said she realized during the fifth inning that she had a shot at the feat.

"I started thinking, I've got to keep this going," she said.

Softball, baseball roundups, B2



KUSMER

## Ross must win today and Friday to earn third straight trip

By TIM HARMON  
Staff writer

There's still two more tough games before Fremont Ross can advance to its third straight regional softball tournament.

The Little Giants must get past Mansfield Madison and then Ashland in the Division I district tournament at Tiffin.

"They want to go farther in the tournament," Ross coach Cheryl Schell said. "They like playing good teams on good fields. They want to get to Ashland (for the regional)."

### Monday

Fremont Ross .....	7
Oregon Clay .....	0

### Tonight

Ross vs. Mansfield Madison in the district tournament at Tiffin	Columbian
6 p.m.	

Ross, which got a no-hitter from Nicki Pelfrey and beat Wapakoneta 9-0 in a sectional title game last week, faces Mansfield Madison at 6 p.m. Tuesday. Madison, which defeated Lexington to reach the district, lost to eventual state champion Akron Springfield 3-

2 in the state semifinals a year ago.

"They are a good hitting team," Schell said. "They have a pitcher who's not overbearing in speed but throws a lot of junk. We have to lay off the rise ball. It's a tempting pitch."

Ashland, a 1-0 sectional final winner over Shelby, and Defiance meet at 6 p.m. Monday in the other district semifinal. Defiance, which defeated Elida 2-0 to reach the district, is where Schell attended high school. Schell said Jodi Kusmer will start against Madison.

"Madison is going to test her," Schell said. "We're going to have to perform (defensively). We have to be ready because we're going to get some business."

Ross is hitting well, Schell said.

"We've been frustrated at times because we've hit the ball right at people," she said. "We have to go after the first best strike because if you don't against a junkball pitcher you're in trouble."

"And we have to get the bunt down because small details matter."

# Oak Harbor loses in district tourney

News-Messenger reports

The Willard Flashes defeated the Oak Harbor Rockets 1-0 in a Division II district semi-final game Monday at Galion.

The game remained scoreless into the eighth inning before Willard broke the deadlock with a hard shot to center field by Kaci Pugh.

Oak Harbor's Marge Gutilla could not make the catch.

"Marge is a great center fielder," Rockets coach Kent Whitman said. "If the play could have possibly been made, Marge would have made it."

Pugh's triple scored Megan Sanders who had been put on base with a walk.

Erin Radsick took the defeat for the Rockets as Willard's Rebekah Tipton pitched nine strikeouts and allowed four hits in her complete game victory.

Oak Harbor is 17-4 with three Sandusky Bay Conference games remaining. They will travel to Sandusky St. Mary's Wednesday to take on the Panthers.

In regular season games:

## **Ross 7, Clay 0**

Jodi Kusmer's first career no-hitter helped Fremont Ross beat Oregon Clay Monday in a Great Lakes League contest.

## **HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL**

Kusmer did not walk a batter and two Eagle batters reached on errors as Ross improved to 12-6 (5-5 in the Great Lakes League). Clay is now 15-7 (8-4).

Dawn Zerman went 3-for-4 with a double a two RBI and Jamie Hinkle scored two runs for Ross.

## **Seneca East 27, Bettsville 12**

The Senecas outscored Bettville 17-5 in the first two inning on way to the Midland Athletic League victory.

LaVonna Williams and Kristi Blausey finished 2-for-4 for Bettsville 3-18 (1-8).

## **Genoa 14, Gibsonburg 0**

Melissa Cuthbertson allowed four hits and struck out seven Golden Bear batters in Genoa's Suburban Lakes League win.

## **St. Mary's 16, Clyde 7**

Jackie Swaisgood hit a three run homerun in the fifth inning but it was not enough as St. Mary's won the Sandusky Bay Conference matchup.

Swaisgood finished 2-for-4, had three RBI and scored two runs for the Fliers.



## **Kusmer, Zerman pace Ross to softball victory**

Jodi Kusmer pitched a six-hitter and didn't walk a batter, and Dawn Zerman homered, as Fremont Ross blanked Sylvania Northview 4-0 in a Great Lakes League softball game Wednesday.

Kusmer struck out just two, but the Little Giants committed only one error behind her.

Zerman's home run, with a runner aboard, cleared Northview's 250-foot left field fence in the fifth inning.

Ross (14-6 and 6-5) scored in the second when Jamie Hinkle's single knocked in Jodi Fick. In the third, Emily Dowell scored on a single by Nicki Pelfrey. Dusty Ruffin singled in front of Zerman's home run.

Zerman finished with three of the Little Giants' 11 hits, with Pelfrey and Kylee Schnieder each adding two.

# Ross wins GLL contest over Fostoria

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross seventh Great Lakes League contest 14-4 Thursday over Fostoria.

Dawn Zerman had three RBIs scoring four runs for the Little Giants 15-6 (7-5).

Winning pitcher Jodi Kusmer, allowed three hits as she struck out three and walked two.

**Softball**

In other games reported:

**St. Joe 3, St. Wendelin 1**

Fremont St. Joseph Central Catholic scored three runs on one hit enroute to the Midland Athletic League victory at Fostoria.

Erin Lytle, Andrea LaSalvia and Kelly Lotycz scored the runs for the Streaks 7-15 (3-6).

Rochelle Haaser was the winning pitcher with seven strikeouts and seven walks.

**Clyde 7, Margaretta 4**

The Fliers improved to 13-7 (9-5) with its Sandusky Bay Conference victory over the Polar Bears.

Kelly Emery, scoring two runs, led Clyde finishing 2-for-4.

Kristi Mounts was credited with the Fliers victory.

**New Riegel 26, Bettsville 4**

New Riegel scored nine runs in the second inning and eight in the fourth inning as they defeated the Bobcats in Midland Athletic League action.

# Ross ball seasons end

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross ended its softball season with a win.

The Little Giants, who have played in the regional tournament the past two seasons, ended with an 8-1 Great Lakes League win against Toledo Whitmer.

Nicki Pelfrey went 2-for-4 with a double and winning pitcher Jodi Kusmer allowed just two hits, both coming in the seventh inning.

Seniors Jenny Swint, Dawn Zerman and Casey Schepflin each played their final game for the Little Giants.

"It was a fun game to end with," said coach Cheryl Schell, who let the seniors pick what positions they played. Zerman played first base, Schepflin played second base and Swint played third.

Ross (16-7, 8-5) finished second in the GLL to Oregon Clay. Their final game against Sylvania Northview, scheduled for Thursday, was canceled because

the league title was already decided.

The Little Giants were knocked out of the state tournament Saturday in the district finals by Ashland.

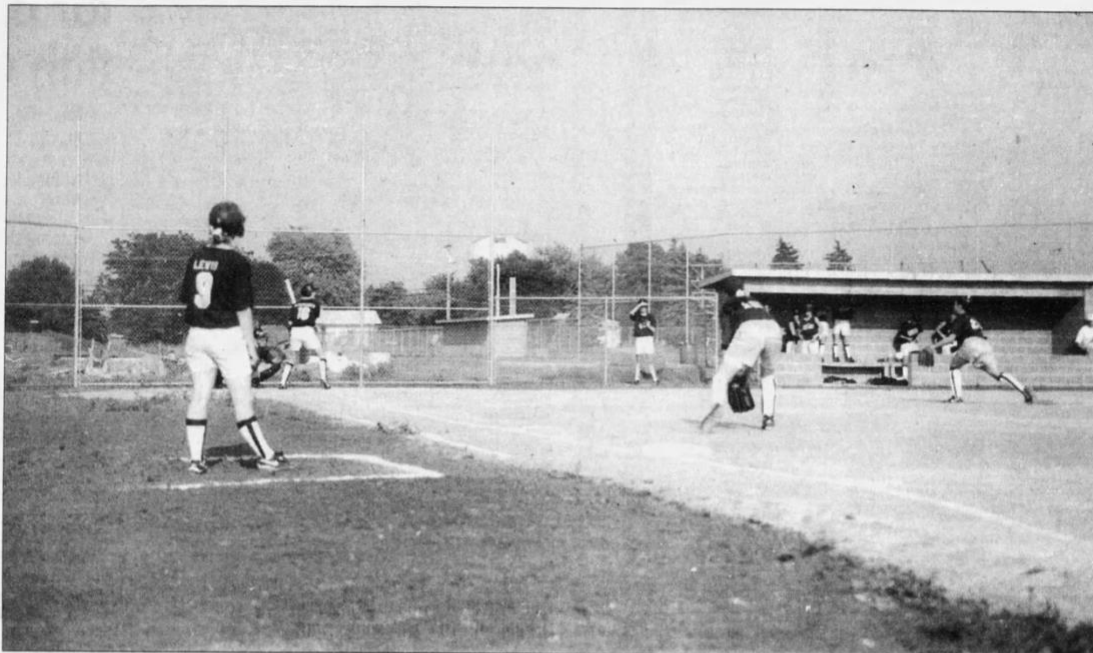
## Awards

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### **FREMONT ROSS Softball**

Megan Alexander- Coaches Award  
Dawn Zerman - Most valuable player  
Jodi Kusmer - Most improved player  
Casey Schepflin - Golden glove  
Dawn Zerman - Batting champ

# New Alumni field opens



Brian Spiess/News-Messenger

JODI KUSMER, right, throws the first pitch Thursday at the Alumni Field softball complex against Woodmore's Katie Busdiecker.

## Softball players give high marks for new complex



LEE



RUFFING



KNOKE

### All in favor

Fremont players participating in the first game at the Alumni Field softball diamond had these observations:

■ "It was a good field to play on. It was level. It wasn't like the regular dirt, it was smoother." — Brooke Lee

■ "A nice kind of feel. The stones (in the field) and the dugouts." — Dusty Ruffing

■ "It was our first home field ... everything feels complete now." — Jenni Knoke

### Two down ...

A breakdown of the two completed fields and the ball diamonds still to be built. Also, a placement of where they fit into the Alumni Fields complex, located behind Ross High School.

**Field One:** The baseball field, with a sand infield partially covered with grass, has been used for two seasons. Placement: southeast.

**Field Two:** Used for the first time Thursday, this softball field has a sand infield. Placement: southwest.

**Field Three:** Scheduled to open in spring 1996, this will mirror the second field. Placement: Northwest.

**Field Four:** This baseball field will have a clay/dirt infield, partially covered with grass. Placement: Northeast.

By BRIAN SPIESS  
Sports editor

The dugouts and smooth infield of the new Alumni Field softball diamond got high marks from local players Thursday after the inaugural game was played there.

But the best news for Fremont softball players: The field is theirs.

"It's our first home field ... everything feels complete now," Jenni Knoke said after the game.

The traveling team of high school players from the Fremont area defeated a team of Woodmore players in the first game ever played at the softball diamond. The field is the second of four to be built using financial and time donations from the community.

"They've finally got a place they can call a home," said Bob Kusmer, who has spent several weekends building this and the baseball field at the complex, located between Ross High School and the bypass.

Prior to this field being completed, the softball team would play at Rodger Young Park.

The baseball field at the new complex has been used for two seasons, and includes a grass infield. The softball diamond does not, but its infield is made from the same sand/stone combination. The home-run fence is 200 feet down the lines and 210 feet in center.

Next on the agenda is an adjacent softball field, built north of the most recent diamond and identical in



KUSMER

dimensions. That could be done by next spring, Kusmer said, allowing Fremont Ross to play varsity and junior varsity games at the same complex.

A concession area will be built next and then, possibly in 1998, the second baseball diamond will be built with a clay infield.

The other diamonds all have stone/sand infields allowing for more rain without cancellation.

Cost to date of the project has been \$50,000 raised through donations.

Kusmer, Brent Allan, Phil Tooman and Steve Shively did much of the work, often using equipment donated by contractors.

"If we would have had to pay to have everything done professionally, we'd be well over \$100,000," Kusmer said.

The Mason's Union built the dugouts. Other companies loaned equipment.

The fields had to be dug out, filled with sand and stone, then leveled off.

The work on the first softball field was scheduled to be finished by the spring, so it could be used by the Ross softball team, but rains slowed the work. It has been worth the wait, Kusmer said.

"We saw it as something for the kids to do. They needed a nice place to play," Kusmer said.