

Ross opens season Friday ... maybe

Little Giant diamondmen led by All-Buckeye Conference performer John Stierwalt

By ROB BOUKISSEN
Staff writer

Barring any more un-spring-like weather, the Ross baseball team is scheduled to open its season Friday at Bellevue.

Of course, that's asking a lot.

But just in case it gets warm like it's supposed to this time of year, the Little Giants will be ready to take on the Redmen tomorrow, according to third-year head coach Dan Fought.

"We were inside just four days until this week," said Fought. "We are ahead of where we were last year at this point, but so is everyone else."

The Little Giants have seven lettermen returning from last year's 11-15 team. Those returnees, along with the newcomers, will make the Giants strong in the hitting department, but questionable in pitching, Fought said.

"Hitting has always been our strength since I've been here, and I see no change this year," he said. "Offensively, I don't have any worries."

"Pitching is the main thing early. A lot of guys will get the opportunity early. We'll have to wait and see who can do the job."

As far as defense is concerned, Fought sees a distinct improvement.

"We committed five errors a game last year," he said. "We're looking to improve

there, not so much in fielding but in throwing the ball.

"I think we've gotten a lot stronger (defensively) this spring. We look better than we did last spring."

The Little Giants' top player in all three categories — hitting, pitching and defense — is likely to be senior John Stierwalt, who is coming off a banner season.

As a junior last year, Stierwalt had a batting average of .478, hit two home runs, drove in 19 runs and went 7-3 on the mound. He was a first-team All-Buckeye Conference selection and finish second by one vote in the balloting for conference player of the year.

He will play shortstop and be the Giants' No. 1 pitcher this year.

Joining him on the pitching staff will be Andy Peterson, the Egbert twins — Rob and Rick — Tony Patrick, Bob Hrynciw and possibly freshman Shane McConnell. Peterson and the Egberts are seniors while Patrick and Hrynciw are juniors.

"Realistically, Stierwalt is the only pitcher with experience," said Fought.

Assistant coach Tom Woleslagel added, "Peterson has been a surprise. He throws hard and has a good curve. But he's untested, like the others. Those six guys need to step through and do the job."

The Egbert twins are also being counted

on to provide plenty of offense for the Giants, especially Rob, who batted .330 last year and is considered a major college prospect. Rick hit .280 last year.

Another top offensive weapon is senior catcher Shawn Overmyer, who hit .305 last season.

Other lettermen are rightfielder Andy Shawl and leftfielder Chris Corthell. Both are seniors.

The tentative opening day batting and defensive lineup will be junior Aaron Meade at second base, Rob Egbert in centerfield, Stierwalt at shortstop, junior Mike Zelms at designated hitter, Peterson on the mound or junior Craig Raney at first base, Rick Egbert at third base, Shawl in right, Overmyer behind the plate and Corthell in left.

Other members of the team are outfielder Gary McClure, utilityman Talbot Aldrich, catcher Chuck Snyder and outfielder R.J. Willey, all juniors.

The Giants will be without two-year letterman Mike Hrynciw, who is still hampered by a knee injury suffered during the football season.

"That's a big loss," said Fought, "but we'll be all right. We're looking to play over .500 ball this year."

They will start on their mission tomorrow, if the weather cooperates, at 4:30 p.m.

Little Giants drop season opener to Toledo CC

News-Messenger Reports

The Fremont Ross baseball team opened its season Tuesday with a tough 4-3 loss to Toledo Central Catholic in Toledo when the home team scored the winning run in the bottom of the seventh inning.

John Stierwalt went 2-for-2 with two RBIs for the Little Giants but still took the loss on the mound.

The Little Giants grabbed a 1-0 lead in the first when Rob Egbert tripled and was singled home by Stierwalt, but the Irish came back with two runs in the bottom half of the inning for a 2-1 lead.

Stierwalt drove in another Ross run in the third to even the score and in the fifth Egbert drove in Shawn Overmyer with a sacrifice fly after Overmyer doubled to give Ross a 3-2 lead.

The Irish, now 1-1, then came up with

Baseball

single runs in the sixth and seventh to get the win.

In other games Tuesday, Genoa beat Lakota 10-4, Old Fort topped Hopewell-Loudon 5-3, and Bellevue defeated Edison 15-5.

Genoa 10, Lakota 4

At Genoa, the home team scored six runs in the first two innings and never looked back to win the Suburban Lakes League and season-opening game for both teams.

Gary Nissen went five innings to get the win for the Comets while Dan Lowe picked up the save. Nestor Hernandez took the loss for the Raiders.

Nissen was backed by a 10-hit attack. Todd Hanely went 3-for-4 for the Comets

while Todd Witt had a double and three RBIs. Eric Wolfe and Lowe added two RBI apiece for the winners.

Hernandez hit a double to account for Lakota's lone extra-base hit.

Old Fort 5, Hopewell 3

David Shelton was the winner and helped his cause with two hits, including a double, to lead the Stockaders.

Bob Copley also doubled for Old Fort and John Tyree was credited with a save.

Bellevue 15, Edison 5

Chris Missler went 2-for-2 with a home run and two RBI to help the Redmen to their opening day victory.

Brad Schubert also homered and added a pair of RBI for Bellevue while John Oddo had three hits and John Oddo added two.

Edison fell to 0-3 for the year.

Ross rallies, then holds off Jackets

News-Messenger Reports

Fremont Ross scored three times in the sixth inning and weathered a last-inning assault to defeat Perrysburg 4-3 at the Yellow Jackets' home in high school baseball Wednesday.

Shawn Overmyer's two-run homer and Rob Egbert's run-scoring single accounted for the Ross runs in the sixth, giving the Little Giants a 4-1 lead. Craig Raney started the rally with a leadoff double and Overmyer's shot over the leftfield fence broke a 1-1 deadlock. Rick Egbert was safe on an error and, after two outs, scored on Rob Egbert's single.

Perrysburg scored twice in the bottom of the seventh. John Stierwalt, taking over for starter Rob Egbert with one out and the bases loaded, got the save. Stierwalt surrendered a single and a fielder's choice before getting the final out on a groundout.

Rob Egbert had three hits with Mike Zelms, Raney and Overmyer getting two hits apiece for Ross, 1-1. Steve Lind doubled and singled for Perrysburg, 1-1.

In other games, New Riegel blanked Clyde 4-0, Genoa blasted Toledo Waite 18-0 and Bellevue nipped Port Clinton 4-3 in eight innings.

Baseball

Clyde pitchers Ken Davis and Steve Miracle gave up six hits with Davis pitching the first four innings. Davis had six strikeouts and Miracle five.

First inning RBI singles by Scott Huss and Joe Wank gave New Riegel all the runs it needed in the opening game for both teams.

Genoa 18, Waite 0

Genoa had 14 hits and three Comets pitchers scattered eight hits. Genoa is 2-0 while it was Waite's season debut.

Scott Joehlin was the winning pitcher, hurling 4 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings, allowing six hits and striking out two. Todd Hanely came in with two outs and the bases loaded in Waite fifth and got the final out.

Steve Cousino pitched the final inning for Genoa and in spite of allowing three of the four batters he faced to reach base, got out of the inning undamaged. He walked the first two batters but both were thrown out attempting to steal second by catcher Aaron Wolfe. Cousino hit the third batter but got the final out on a groundout.

Dan Lowe had three hits with Cousino, Hanely and Brooks Baird getting two apiece.
Bellevue 4, Port Clinton 3

Ross loses two games and Rob Egbert

News-Messenger Reports

It was one of those lost weekends for the Ross baseball team.

The Little Giants dropped a pair of games to visiting Admiral King Saturday, falling 15-9 in eight innings and 11-5. And that's not even the bad news.

The bad news is that centerfielder Rob Egbert, one of the top players on the team, was lost for the season with a broken leg in the first game. Egbert collided with rightfielder Andy Shawl in the fourth inning when both were chasing down a fly ball. Shawl suffered a deep thigh bruise that will keep him out a week, but he was the lucky one.

"Oh, it was a great weekend all right," deadpanned Ross Coach Dan Fought. "It was one I'd just as soon forget. It's a real shame about Egbert because I think he had a chance for all-

state (honors). Hopefully, we'll bounce back."

Andy Peterson bore the brunt of Ross's difficulties, taking the loss in both contests.

Craig Raney went 3-for-3 in the opener to lead the Little Giants, while Tony Patrick and Shawn Overmyer hit home runs. In the second game, Overmyer was 2-for-4 and John Stierwalt had two RBIs for Ross, which fell to 2-3.

Admiral King, now 2-2, got home runs from Andy Bito in the first game and Andy Kachure in the second.

In other games Saturday, Clyde nipped St. Joe 12-11 in eight innings, Woodmore fell to Woodward 12-1, and Gibsonburg swept a doubleheader from Old Fort 12-5 and 4-3.

Clyde 12, St. Joe 11

Clyde scored the winning run on a wild pitch to cap a five-run eighth inning.

The Fliers, now 2-1, scored twice in the seventh inning to tie

the game 7-7, but St. Joe came back with four runs in the eighth, three coming on Tim Woolf's three-run homer. Clyde, which benefitted from 10 walks by St. Joe pitching, got four alone in the eighth and Tony Speaker hit a two-run single to spark the rally.

Steve Miracle was the winning pitcher for Clyde, while Jeff Blanton suffered the loss.

Woolf and Doug Young each had three hits for the Streaks, who dropped to 1-2, and Brad Young added a home run. Mike Kelbley and Doug Young added triples.

Dave Gregg had two hits for the Fliers.

Woodward 12, Woodmore 1

The Wildcats fell to 0-4 for the year with the loss at home.

Steve Schmeltz was 3-for-4 for the Wildcats, including two doubles, but Woodmore managed just one more hit the rest of the game.

Woodward had 13 hits in raising its record to 3-1.

Gibsonburg 12-4, Old Fort 5-3

Kevin Diekman's pinch-hit two-run homer in the bottom of the sixth helped the Golden Bears to a sweep at home.

Gibsonburg is 3-1 while Old Fort is 1-4.

Diekman was suffered a twisted knee in Friday's game at Eastwood and did not play Saturday until called upon to pinch hit in the sixth. His blast gave the Golden Bears the win after they trailed 3-0. Tim Haney got the win.

In the opener, Brent Liskai scattered nine hits and Jaime Mancha had a home run and three RBIs as the Golden Bears grabbed a 2-0 lead in the first and never looked back.

Sam Dandar, the loser in game two, had a double for Old Fort.

Maumee 16, Ross 2

The Little Giants managed just five hits and helped Maumee's cause with seven errors to fall to 2-4 for the season.

John Stierwalt had a double to provide one of the few bright spots for Ross.

Maumee, now 4-2, pounded out 12 hits, including a home run by Mike Mason. Jeff Nagy added a triple and five RBIs to back the pitching of Dave Barker, who got the victory.

Craig Raney took the loss for Ross.

At Perkins, Overmyer's pitching almost went to waste as the Little Giants were held scoreless for the first five innings.

Ross finally got on the scoreboard in the sixth on an RBI double by Rick Egbert and then scored the game-winner in the top of the seventh when Chris Corthell reached base on an error and scored on John Stierwalt's single.

The Little Giants are now 3-4 for the season.

Crippled Ross team splits with Lorain

News-Messenger Reports

The injury-plagued Ross baseball team came close to a sweep but had to settle for a split with Lorain Senior in a double-header here Saturday.

The Little Giants, playing without four of their regular starters, won the opener 10-2 over the Steelmen but blew a one-run lead in the bottom of the sixth inning to lose the nightcap 6-4.

Regulars out for Ross include the starting outfield trio of Rob Egbert (broken leg), Chris Corthell (bursitis) and Andy Shawl (deep thigh bruise) plus backup outfielder-shortstop Mike Zelms (broken hand).

Zelms is expected to be back in approximately two weeks, Corthell and Shawl are out indefinitely and Egbert is done for the season.

"We were down to a 10-man roster," said Ross Coach Dan Fought. "We had to call up some junior varsity players."

Despite their depleted roster, the Little Giants managed to collect 19 hits in Saturday's twinbill. Several players

contributed to their victory in the first game.

Andy Peterson hurled a three-hitter to pick up his first win in three decisions. The senior righthander struck out seven, walked one and didn't allow an earned run while going the distance.

John Stierwalt went three for three, Rick Egbert went three for four and Craig Raney went two for four to lead the Giants' 12-hit assault. Each of those players and Aaron Meade had 2 RBI.

In the second game, Ross took a 4-3 lead with a run in the top of the sixth inning. After Lorain tied the game 4-4 in the bottom of the inning, the Little Giants' Talbot Aldrich made a two-out error that allowed the decisive runs to score.

Rick Egbert suffered the loss in a complete-game performance. He struck out four and walked one.

Peterson had two hits, including a triple. Aldrich and Shawn Overmyer also tripled.

Ross is now 4-5 and will be at Marion Harding today at 4 p.m., in its Buckeye

Conference opener.

In other action Saturday, Genoa won a pair of games, 2-1 over Clyde and 3-0 over Oak Harbor.

Genoa 2, Clyde 1

Genoa 3, Oak Harbor 0

Gary Nissen and Todd Hanely turned in sparkling pitching performances to lead the Comets to a pair of victories.

Nissen scattered five hits, struck out nine batters and walked one to win the opener. But he needed two runs in the bottom of the seventh to do it.

Scott Joehlin drove the tying run home with a two-out, bases-loaded infield single, and the winning run scored on a wild pitch.

In the nightcap, Hanely blanked the Rockets on two hits while facing just 24 batters, three over the minimum. He struck out five and didn't walk a batter.

Genoa scored single runs in the fourth, fifth and sixth innings to back Hanely. Jim Plantz had an RBI single in the fifth.

Genoa is now 8-3 this season, Clyde is 4-3 and Oak Harbor is 2-4.

Little Giants squeeze past Harding

News-Messenger Reports

Fremont Ross escaped a bases-loaded jam in the bottom of the seventh inning to nip Marion Harding 3-2 Monday.

The victory in the Buckeye Conference Western Division game leveled the Little Giants' record at 5-5.

In Sandusky Bay Conference opening games, Clyde rode the one-hit pitching of Ken Davis to a 2-1m victory over Edison, Sandusky St. Mary's tripped Oak Harbor 6-2, Port Clinton knocked off Huron 5-2 and Perkins defeated Margaretta 7-3. Elsewhere, New Riegel outscored Bettsville 10-8.

Tony Patrick relieved John Stierwalt in the bottom of the seventh after the Ross starting pitcher walked the first two batters. Patrick struckout the first batter he faced and after issuing a walk to load the bases, gave up a sacrifice fly before retiring the final batter on a fly to center.

Stierwalt had pitched his way out of a bases-loaded, no outs situation in the fourth, surviving a possible big rally by Harding when leftfielder Bob Hrynciw threw out a runner at the plate.

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Rick Egbert homered in the second and Shawn Overmyer hit a two-run homer, his third roundtripper of the season, in the third.

Stierwalt pitched six innings, allowed seven hits, one earned run, struckout four, walked four and was charged with a balk.

The Buckeye Conference win put Ross on top of the Western Division standings at 1-0. Harding is next at 2-1 and Findlay trails with an 0-2 slate.

Clyde 2, Edison 1

Davis struckout 10 batters and allowed just a third inning bloop single by Joe Hillis to record the win, the Fliers' fifth against three losses.

Steve Gregg and Mike McClanahan had RBI singles in Clyde's two-run fifth inning.

St. Mary's 6, Oak Harbor 2

Dave Sheperd doubled and singled to drive in two runs to pace the St. Mary's win. Brian Thompson scattered seven Oak Harbor hits for the pitching victory.

Rick Ferguson had three hits, including a double, for Oak Harbor, 2-5.

Port Clinton 5, Huron 2

Joe Lawley hit two-run homers in the fourth and seventh innings to power the Redskins to their third win in six games. The home runs were Lawley's third and fourth of the season.

Winning pitcher Troy Grindstaff had nine strikeouts, one walk and gave up five hits.

Perkins 7, Margaretta 3

Ed Muffler homered and winning pitcher Mike Wheeler recorded 10 strikeouts to lead the Pirates' win.

Perkins scored twice in both the second and third innings and iced the win with single runs in the fourth, fifth and sixth.

Steve Birmingham homered for Margaretta, 4-2 and winless in a pair of SBC games.

New Riegel 10, Bettsville 8

New Riegel used five of the eight errors by Bettsville to score eight runs in the first three innings.

Joe Wank had three hits and three RBI for New Riegel.

Bill Nye had three hits and two RBI and Bettsville teammates Ron Wise, Eric McNutt and Brett Lee had two hits apiece.

New Riegel is 3-3 and the Bobcats 1-3.

Ross 12, Old Fort 2

Craig Raney and Shawn Overmyer combined on a two-hitter and added good performances at the plate to help the Little Giants even their record to 6-6.

Raney, the winning pitcher, helped his own cause by going 2-for-2 at the plate with a double and three RBI.

Overmyer also had a double among his two hits and also drove in three runs.

Bob Hrynciw added two doubles, Chris Corthell doubled, and John Stierwalt had a triple and single for Ross.

Old Fort fell to 2-8 for the year.

Ross sweeps nemesis Bowling Green

Gibsonburg defeats New Riegel; Woodmore splits wild twinbill with Cleveland CC

News-Messenger Reports

Fremont Ross avenged three losses to Bowling Green last season with a double-header sweep Saturday at Anderson Field.

The Little Giants took the first game 12-2 and came back in the second for a 4-2 victory.

In other games, Gibsonburg defeated New Riegel 12-6 and Woodmore split a wild-scoring double-header with Cleveland Central Catholic, losing 22-16 in the first game but winning the second 19-18.

Bowling Green defeated the Little Giants three times last season while on its way to a 24-1 record. But this season is another story.

John Stierwalt hammered a grand slam home run in the first inning to give winning pitcher Andy Peterson all the runs he needed.

Stierwalt finished with two hits and five RBI. Peterson tossed a three-hitter, allowing no earned runs, striking out six and walking four.

Bob Hrynciw doubled twice and singled and Rick Egbert had two hits and three RBI

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to lead the Little Giants' 10-hit attack.

In the second game, Hrynciw's two-run double in the bottom of the sixth increased the Ross lead to 4-1. Stierwalt, 2-1, scattered six Bowling Green hits for the win.

The Little Giants are 8-6 while Bowling Green dropped to 1-9.

Gibsonburg 12, New Riegel 6

Craig Balsizer and Jaime Mancha hit home runs as Gibsonburg climbed to 7-3.

Tom Angelone doubled twice to drive in three runs and Mark Younker had two hits for Gibsonburg. Kevin Keene had two RBI.

Starter Brent Liskai pitched four innings, striking out five, walking one and allowing four runs. Tim Haney pitched the last three innings, giving up two hits, striking out four and walking one.

Cleveland CC 22, Woodmore 16

Woodmore 19, Cleveland CC 18

In the first game at Elmore, Cleveland CC survived 13 errors to defeat the Wildcats.

Woodmore committed 10 errors.

"The wind was blowing, the hats were blowing, it was something to behold," Woodmore Coach Vic Welch said. "We began at 11 (a.m.) and got through at 6:30 (p.m.) after a half-hour off to eat."

Woodmore scored 12 runs in the final two innings of the first game to make it close. Steve Schmeltz, Nathan Overmyer, Keith Traver, John Schowchow, Mike Pasty and Chuck Almroth had two hits apiece in Woodmore's 15-hit attack. Overmyer drove in five runs.

The Wildcats used a 15-run second inning to get a lead but had to score a run in the bottom of the seventh to win the second game.

Mike Slates had five hits in six at bats, drove in three runs and scored the winning run. Schmeltz, Dean Epling, Overmyer, Traver and Jon Lenox had three hits apiece as the Wildcats collected 23. Schmeltz tripled and doubled.

Epling, Overmyer, Lenox and Lance Geldien drove in three runs apiece.

Streaks stay unbeaten in MAL action

News-Messenger Reports

Jeff Blanton and the St. Joe Crimson Streaks are enjoying their first trip through the Midland Athletic League baseball season.

On Tuesday, St. Joe remained unbeaten in MAL play and Blanton played a large part as

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the Streaks beat St. Wendelin 10-4 in Fremont. The win lifts St. Joe to 4-0 in the league, 5-3 overall.

Blanton, 3-1 for the year, is 3-0 in the MAL. He struck out five and walked one, holding the Mohawks to seven singles. But Blanton didn't stop there, hitting three doubles in three plate appearances to lead St. Joe's 14-hit attack.

Grant Beckley was 3-for-4 with three RBI to add to the St. Joe attack and Brad Young also had three hits, one a double.

St. Wendelin, 6-2 and 2-1 in the MAL, was led by Rob Fry's 3-for-3 effort.

In other games Tuesday, Ross beat Clyde 9-2, Genoa topped Gibsonburg 6-0, Port Clinton downed Oak Harbor 5-2, Otsego blanked Woodmore 4-0, and Old Fort nipped North Baltimore 8-7 in eight innings.

Ross 9, Clyde 2

Talbot Aldrich hit a two-run homer and Craig Raney had three hits as Ross moved to 9-6

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Baseball

Continued From B-1

for the season.

John Stierwalt added two doubles for the Little Giants and Rick Egbert had two hits, one a triple, to back the pitching of winner Tony Patrick. Egbert worked the last two innings for the save.

Genoa 6, Gibsonburg 0

Todd Hanely scattered nine hits over seven innings to get the shutout in Suburban Lakes

League action.

Jim Plantz was 3-for-4 to lead the Comet offense, hitting a three-run homer.

Otsego 4, Woodmore 0

The Wildcats fell to 0-7 in the SLL as Rick Donald pitched a five-hitter for the Knights.

Steve Schmeltz had a double for Woodmore, which is now 2-11 overall.

O. Fort 8, N. Balt. 7

Kevin Guth, who had three RBI, hit an RBI single in the eighth for the winning margin for the Stockaders.

Little Giants down Whitmer 7-2 for 5th straight win; Streaks roll

News-Messenger Reports

Fremont Ross won its fifth consecutive game, stopping Toledo Whitmer 7-2 at windswept Anderson Field Wednesday.

In other area games, St. Joseph Central Catholic outscored Lakota 16-11, Clyde nipped Oak Harbor 3-2, Perkins stopped Port Clinton 8-6, and Huron slipped past Margaretta 9-8.

Bob Hrynciw's leadoff home run got Ross, 10-6, started to a 2-0 first-inning lead. Whitmer, 12-5, tied it with single runs in the second and fifth but the Little Giants scored twice in the fifth and iced the game with three in the sixth.

Winning pitcher Andy Peterson, 3-2, scattered five hits while striking out seven and walking two.

John Stierwalt tripled and singled and Hrynciw drove in two runs with a pair of hits. Craig Raney was two-for-three for the Little Giants.

St. Joe 16, Lakota 11

St. Joe collected 17 hits but had to weather a five-run seventh inning by Lakota for its

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sixth win in nine games.

Brad Young, Jeff Overmyer and Doug Young had three hits apiece for the Streaks. Jeff Radde homered and doubled and Brad Young tripled and Overmyer drove in three runs for St. Joe.

Nestor Hernandez had three hits and Brian Lippert tripled and singled for Lakota, 4-8.

St. Joe took a 16-6 lead into the final inning.

Huron 9, Margaretta 8

Huron scored five runs in the sixth and two in bottom of the seventh to nip the Polar Bears, 5-5 but winless in four Sandusky Bay Conference games.

Jim Peters' two-run singles and Pat Lagando's three-run homer accounted for Huron's sixth inning runs. Lagando came back to driving in the tying and winning run with a single in the seventh.

Margaretta had built up an 8-2 lead before Huron rallied.

Scott Lehrer hit a two-run homer for Margaretta in its five-run fifth.

Oak Harbor 3, Clyde 2

Don St. Clair's RBI double in the bottom of the fifth was the margin of victory for the Rockets in the Sandusky Bay Conference game.

Dave Behrens was the winning pitcher and St. Clair got the last two outs to get the save for the Rockets, who lifted their record to 5-6 overall and 3-2 in the SBC. Behrens and St. Clair combined on a three-hitter.

Clyde, which got doubles from Ken Davis and Steve Miracle, fell to 6-8 overall, 2-2 in the conference.

Perkins 8, Port Clinton 6

The Redskins had their seven-game winning streak snapped by stranding 12 base runners, losing for the first time in SBC play.

Mike Schell's two-run homer in the first inning evened the game for the Pirates and they scored three more in the second to lead the rest of the way. Perkins is 4-4, 3-1 in the league.

Port Clinton, now 7-4, 4-1, was led by Paul Fisher, who was 2-for-3 with a double and three RBI. Dave Grady and Mike Williamson were also 2-for-3 for the Redskins.

Ross 5, Sandusky 3

Talbot Aldrich was 3-for-4 with two doubles and Andy Shaul was 2-for-2 with three RBI to lead the Little Giants.

Ross is now 11-6, while the Blue Streaks are 11-5.

Andy Peterson, 4-2, got the win and John Stierwalt came on to get his second save for Ross.

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SPORTS

Whitmer outscores Ross; Old Fort, Bettsville win in tourney

News-Messenger Reports

Toledo Whitmer scored four runs in the bottom of the sixth inning to overtake Ross and win 12-9 Wednesday afternoon.

In tournament games yesterday, Old Fort defeated Danbury 15-9 in the Class A sectional at Old Fort High School and Bettsville defeated Calvert 15-3 in the A sectional at New Riegel.

In a pair of Sandusky Bay Conference clashes that went eight innings, Clyde was edged by Edison 2-1 and Port Clinton defeated Huron 6-5.

Ross scored three times in the top of the sixth for a 9-8 lead before the Panthers staged their

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winning rally in the bottom of the inning. Whitmer is now 14-6 and Ross is 11-7.

The Little Giants out-hit Whitmer 14-12 with Shawn Overmyer getting a homer and two singles and John Stierwalt collecting a double, two singles and three RBI. Bob Hrynciw, Craig Raney and Rick Egbert had two hits apiece for Ross.

Brad Haupricht tripled twice to lead Whitmer.

Ross will play Port Clinton at 4:30 today at Anderson Field.

Old Fort 15, Danbury 9

The Stockaders led 15-4 before Danbury scored five times in the bottom of the seventh.

Bob Copley and Ryan Fry had two hits apiece with Darrin Critchet and Joe Cantu getting a hit and two RBI for Old Fort, 6-10. Critchet, Ned Joseph and Cantu doubled.

Brian Nixon doubled and singled and Gary Monak had two hits for Danbury, 5-7-1.

Old Fort will play St. Joseph Central Catholic at 12:30 p.m., Saturday in the sectional finals.

Bettsville 15, Calvert 3
Ron Wise had four hits in four at-bats to lead Bettsville's 21-hit

attack.

The Bobcats, 4-9, led 5-2 at the end of three innings before a five-run fourth inning gave them breathing room. Jim Wohlgamuth hit a three-run homer to lead the rally.

Eric McNitt and Brett Lee had three hits each for Bettsville with teammates Bill Nye, Mike Wise and Tony Hausman getting two hits each.

Bettsville will play St. Wendelin at noon, Saturday, for the sectional title.

Edison 2, Clyde 1
Two singles, a stolen base, an advancement on a dropped third strike and another hit produced

Edison's winning run in the bottom of the eighth.

The run spoiled the six-hit, 12-strikeout pitching of Clyde's Ken Davis but gave Edison's Dave Rensch the win. Rensch allowed five hits, striking out six and walking three.

Clyde scored in the second on a double steal. Edison tied it with a run in the bottom of the fifth.

The Fliers fell to 6-12 and 2-5 in

the Sandusky Bay Conference race.

Port Clinton 6, Huron 5

Paul Fisher hit a sacrifice fly in the bottom of the eighth to drive in the winning run for the Redskins in SBC action.

The win lifted Port Clinton to 10-4 overall and 7-1 in the SBC. It was also Coach Dan Timmons' 98th victory at PC. Huron fell to 4-7, 4-3.

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Ross downs Sandusky; Woodmore knocks off

News-Messenger Reports

Whoever said you had to earn victories? Ross scored four unearned runs in the first inning and rode the early lead to a 7-3 win at Sandusky Tuesday.

The win gave the Little Giants a 13-8 record overall. Sandusky is now 12-7.

In other games Tuesday, Woodmore upset Eastwood 6-3, Genoa fell to Elmwood 14-10 and Lakota nipped Gibsonburg 8-7 in Suburban Lakes League action, while Danbury topped Port Clinton 9-4 and Old Fort tripped Tiffin Calvert 9-8.

Losing pitcher Todd Lange struck out four Ross

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batters in the first inning, but a passed ball after Rick Egbert struck out paved the way for the rally. Egbert stole second and scored on a double by John Stierwalt and Ross added three more, two coming on a throwing error by the Blue Streaks.

Sandusky closed to 4-3 after three innings, but another error and a two-run double by Egbert helped put the game out of reach.

Tony Patrick, now 3-2, was the winning pitcher, striking out six and walking two in 5½ innings. Andy Peterson got the save. Aaron Meade went 3-for-3 to lead Ross at the plate.

Woodmore 6, Eastwood 3

After losing 10 straight league games this season, the Wildcats pulled off one of the biggest upsets of the year to move to 4-16 overall and 1-10 in the SLL.

Eastwood, still very much in the hunt for the league crown, slipped to 17-3, 8-3 in the league.

Lance Geldien raised his record to 3-1 by scattering eight hits over seven innings. He struck

St. Joe heating up at the right time

By ROB BOUKISSEN
Staff writer

It took a couple weeks to get going, but the St. Joe baseball team is finally starting to meet its lofty preseason expectations.

And it couldn't have happened at a better time.

The Streaks, currently riding a seven-game winning string, have reached the Class A district semifinals and are nearing a Midland Athletic League championship. After a 3-3 start, they have rebounded to go 10-3 overall and 6-0 in the league.

They will begin their stretch drive for an MAL crown this Thursday afternoon at 4:30 when they travel to Old Fort.

And their next step on the tournament trail takes place Monday afternoon at 4:30 when they meet New Riegel in the districts at Hopewell-Loudon in Bascom.

It's all coming together just like first-year head coach Mike Gabel hoped it would.

"Earlier in the year, we faced some tough competition," said Gabel. "Plus we were

(practicing) inside for a whole week before our first game. But the main thing was the tough competition."

Then, all of the sudden, things turned around for the Streaks, and Gabel knows exactly why.

"Our hitting has been unbelievable," he said. "We've been scoring runs like crazy."

The numbers are extremely impressive.

In 13 games, the Streaks have scored 166 runs (12.8 per game) and have accumulated a team batting average of .376.

Leading the way are the Young brothers — Doug and Brad. Brad, a junior, has a .549 average with three home runs and 17 RBI. Doug, a senior, is close behind with a .543 average and two home runs, and he leads the team in RBI with 22.

It doesn't stop there.

The other top productive hitters for the Streaks are Grant Beckley (.442, 16 RBI), Jeff Blanton (.429, three home runs, 14 RBI), Jeff Overmyer (.429, 17 RBI), Scott Radde (.400, 11

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out two, walked just one and allowed one earned run. He also provided the winning RBI in the third inning.

Nathan Overmyer added a double to the Woodmore offense and Brian Willie and Mike Slates were each 2-for-4.

Elmwood 14, Genoa 10

The Royals rebounded from a 23-5 beating at the hands of the Comets Monday to win at home as the two teams met for the third time in four days.

The loss dropped Genoa, defending SLL champion, to 15-8 overall, 6-5 in the league.

Little Giants top Trojans; Streaks prevail

News-Messenger Reports

John Stierwalt raised his Buckeye Conference career record to 7-1 as he scattered seven hits over seven innings to lead Fremont Ross to a 5-2 victory over Findlay Thursday.

Stierwalt, 3-1 for the year, struck out six and walked one as the Little Giants raised their record to 14-8 overall and 2-0 in the BC.

Findlay fell to 9-13, 1-3.

Stierwalt was also a key contributor at the plate for Ross, highlighting a four-run first inning with a two-run double.

High School Baseball

Bob Hrynciw and Rick Egbert led off the game with singles and Stierwalt got his hit one out later. Talbot Aldrich added an RBI single in the inning and Chris Corthell drove in the fourth run with a bases-loaded groundout.

Egbert finished the game 2-for-4 while Shawn Overmyer added an insurance run with a solo home run in the seventh. Findlay scored both its runs, one of them unearned, in the fifth.

In other games Thursday, St. Joe beat Old Fort 3-2 and Genoa topped Toledo Rogers 12-10.

St. Joe 3, Old Fort 2

Tim Woolf broke a 2-2 tie with a sacrifice fly in the third and neither team scored the rest of the way as the Crimson Streaks remained unbeaten in the Midland Athletic League.

St. Joe is now 11-3 overall and 7-0 in the MAL.

Grant Beckley was 2-for-3 with a double, Scott Arndt added two hits, and Scott Radde also doubled to lead St. Joe. Jeff

Radde was the winning pitcher.

Sam Dandar was 3-for-4 for the Stockaders and Rod Wagner added a double.

Genoa 12, Rogers 10

The Comets survived despite a five-run rally by Rogers in the bottom of the seventh.

Genoa, now 16-8, pounded out 14 hits and was aided by four Rams' errors. Eric Wolfe led the assault by going 2-for-4 with a home run and five RBI. Mike Pietrowski also homered, while Jim Plantz, Dan Lowe and Eric Schmidt added two hits apiece.

Steve Cousino was the winner.

Despite being swept, Giants can still win Buckeye Conference

News-Messenger Reports

Ross controls its destiny after absorbing a twinbill loss Saturday.

Findlay handed the Little Giants 6-1 and 9-6 Buckeye Conference Western Division losses Saturday at Anderson Field. The losses dropped the Little Giants to 2-2 in the BC division race while Findlay climbed to 3-3. Ross has a double-header with Marion Harding Wednesday at Anderson Field beginning at 3 p.m.

Should Harding and Ross split, the conference race would end in a three-way tie with Ross, Findlay and Harding having 3-3 records. A sweep by either team would give that team the title.

Elsewhere Saturday, Gibsonburg outscored state-ranked Ottawa Hills 14-10 and Sylvania Southview stopped Genoa 8-5.

Brad Fife and Andy Maines homered for Findlay in the first game and Jeff Maroney stopped Ross on four hits. John Stierwalt doubled for Ross.

In the second game, Ross scored five times in the bottom of the seventh to make the game close. Maines homered again as Findlay collected a dozen hits. Gibsonburg 14, Ottawa Hills 10

Kevin Keene, Kevin Diekman and Rick Villarreal homered to lead the Golden Bears' 14-hit attack.

Villarreal hit a three-run homer and Diekman a two-run blast in Gibsonburg's six-run third inning. The Golden Bears followed up with seven runs in the fourth, the first on Keene's leadoff roundtripper.

Gibsonburg bunched seven of its nine hits to go with four walks in the fourth.

High School Baseball

Villarreal finished with two hits and four RBI with Tom Angelone getting two hits and Diekman three RBI for Gibsonburg, 11-9.

Southview 8, Genoa 5

Southview scored three runs on three hits and a Genoa error in the top of the seventh to break 5-5 deadlock.

Southview had scored five runs in the fourth and Genoa five in the bottom of the fifth.

Eric Wolfe doubled and singled to drive in three Genoa runs. Mike Pietrowski had two hits and Steve Cousino doubled for Genoa, 17-9.

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3-team race ends in 3-way tie for title

Ross, Harding, Findlay share crown after Little Giants split with Presidents

News-Messenger Reports

Dan Fought had mixed feelings about his Ross High School baseball team finishing in a three-way tie for the Buckeye Conference Western Division title.

Ross split with Harding Wednesday afternoon in a double-header at Anderson Field, winning the first game 2-1 in 11 innings but losing in the nightcap 5-4. The split put Ross at 3-3 in the conference race, the same as Harding and Findlay. There are only three teams in the division.

"You can think of it as a first-place tie," Fought, the Ross coach, began, "or as a last-place tie. We think of it as the latter."

"It (the tie) is not only disappointing to me but I think it is disappointing to the players," the Ross coach said. "We had our opportunities Saturday and we did not take advantage; we were not ready to play then."

Fought was referring to a double-header sweep by Findlay at Anderson Field.

"Tonight, we played good baseball in both games but we lost the second game," Fought said.

Elsewhere, Margaretta lost 4-3 to Bucyrus in the Class AA district semifinals at Norwalk, Port Clinton clinched a tie for the Sandusky Bay Conference title with a 10-0 win over Edison, and Old Fort defeated St. Wendelin 10-1.

Bob Hrynciw's fourth hit of the game scored John Stierwalt from second with the winning run in the bottom of the 11th inning in the first game. The Ross rally began with two-out walks to Stierwalt and Craig



News-Messenger/Todd Bauders

ROSS SHORTSTOP John Stierwalt tags out Harding's Keith Blair (3) during a steal attempt.

Raney by Harding lefthander John Courtright.

Keith Blair homered leading off the game to put Harding up 1-0. The Little Giants tied it in the fifth on on a single by Chris Corthell, an error and Rick Egbert's single.

Stierwalt pitched the whole game, chalking up his fourth win in five decisions, striking out seven and walking one. Courtright fanned 18 batters and walked four. Hrynciw was 4-for-5 and Corthell 2-for-4.

Ross took a 4-1 lead into the top of the seventh of the second game, but two-run singles by Chris Crabtree and Tom Phillips

erased the Little Giants' edge. In the bottom of the inning, Ross had runners at first and second with one out but the rally died on a strikeout and a flyout.

Ross had scored twice in the first and fifth innings. RBI singles by Raney and Andy Shawl accounted for the first-inning runs and Shawl singled in both runs in the fifth.

Ross is 15-11 and Harding 11-11.

Bucyrus 4, Margaretta 3

Shawn Winkelfoos' grand slam in the fourth inning pushed the Redmen past the Polar Bears.

With the game scoreless, Glenn McKee singled leading off

the fourth for Bucyrus. Jason Laipply walked and Bruce Dolch singled to load the bases. With two outs, Winkelfoos homered to rightcenter.

Margaretta scored once in the fourth on Chad Greene's run-scoring single and twice in the sixth, both on another single by Greene.

Port Clinton 10, Edison 0

Joe Lawley and Troy Grindstaff combined on a five-hit shutout as the Redskins assured themselves of repeating as SBC champs.

Port Clinton, now 14-8 overall

See **ROUNDUP**, Page B-3

St. Francis 9, Ross 3

The Knights scored four times in the top of the seventh to break the game at Anderson Field open. The loss dropped Ross to 15-12 while St. Francis climbed to 15-10.

John Stierwalt tripled twice to extend his hitting streak to 16 games for Ross.

Ross hosts Findlay today at noon at Anderson Field in the first game of the Buckeye Conference playoffs.

Ross in playoff for BC title

Two St. Joe games postponed, one Thursday and one today

News-Messenger Reports

A playoff will determine the champion of the Buckeye Conference Western Division baseball race.

Fremont Ross, Findlay and Marion Harding, the only teams in the division, posted identical 3-3 conference records. Ross split a double-header with Marion Harding Wednesday to create the tie. A sweep of that twinbill for either team would have won the title.

In the first game of the playoff, Ross will play host to Findlay Monday at noon, with the winner having the home-field advantage against Harding on Wednesday.

"We have to have a playoff for the title," Ross Athletic Director Jack Balsizer said late Thursday.

"We had a coin flip via a conference call," he described the method used to determine which teams would play the first game and which one would get the bye. "Harding was the 'odd man' on

the flip and got the bye but lost the benefit of playing at home."

On another coin toss, Ross won the home field advantage. Just last Saturday, Findlay defeated Ross in both games of a double-header at Anderson Field.

□

Rain has forced the postponement of two St. Joe baseball games.

On Thursday the Streaks were leading New Riegel 5-0 in the first inning when lightning and rain brought the game to a halt. That game, which will play a big part in determining the Midland Athletic League champion, has not yet been rescheduled.

This afternoon the Streaks were scheduled to play in the Class A district final at Bascom Hopewell-Loudon, but that has been moved back to an undetermined day after yesterday's semifinal between St. Wendelin and St. Mary's was postponed due to rain. St. Joe is to meet the winner of the St. Wendelin-St. Mary's matchup.



News-Messenger/Bob Marker

JOHN STIERWALT of Ross throws a pitch Monday against Findlay at Anderson Field.

Bad and good news for the Little Giants

Findlay eliminates Ross boys team 4-0...

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

Tom Yeager pitched a one-hit, 4-0 shutout as Findlay eliminated Ross from the playoffs for supremacy in the Buckeye Conference Western Division baseball race.

The Trojans, 12-11, will entertain Marion Harding Wednesday to determine the winner. All three teams had finished the conference season with 3-3 records. Harding had a bye in the first round of the playoffs but lost home field advantage for the two-game playoffs.

The lefthanded Yeager retired the first eight batters he faced in the Monday afternoon game at Anderson Field. He did not allow a hit until Rick Egbert singled through the hole between first and second leading off the sixth inning. Ross had runners on first and second with one out in the inning but Yeager pitched out of the jam, the most serious Ross threat of the game.

Yeager used an assortment of slow curves mixed with an overhand fastball and a near submarine delivery that forced the ball to sink. The repertoire kept the Ross hitters off balance.

"One of Findlay American Legion coaches came up to me," Ross Coach Dan Fought said, "and told me, 'Yeager does not look good (pitching); he just

wins.' I have to agree with that.

"We did not use the bats," Fought continued. "We could not take advantage of any Findlay mistakes but they did not make many."

Findlay did take advantage of Little Giants' mistakes with all of the Trojans' runs unearned.

Andy Maines and Barry Pry doubled in runs as Findlay grabbed a 2-0 lead in the first inning after an error started the rally. In the fifth, another error and a stolen base preceded an RBI single by Maines. The Trojans added an insurance run in the seventh with a walk, an error and a base hit.

Yeager's effort overshadowed the 14-strikeout, one-walk pitching of John Stierwalt of Ross. The Ross senior allowed just six hits. Yeager also stopped Stierwalt's 16-game hitting streak.

The loss dropped Ross to a season-ending 15-13 record.

The St. Joseph Central Catholic baseball team will play its final game of the season Wednesday at 4:30 p.m., at New Riegel in a big Midland Athletic League contest.

St. Joe is 7-0 in the MAL and New Riegel is 6-0. The Jackets play Seneca East today in another MAL game.

...Ross girls team takes BC softball crown

News-Messenger Reports

FINDLAY — Fremont Ross captured the Buckeye Conference Western Division softball championship with a 13-2 victory over Findlay in a one-game playoff here.

Both teams ended the regular season with 4-2 conference records, necessitating the one-game playoff.

Ross broke open a close game with seven runs in the fifth

inning to take an 11-2 lead.

Kim White led the way for the Little Giants with three hits at the plate, including two doubles, and a four-hitter on the mound. She also struck out seven batters.

Aimee LeJeune and Angie Flores added three hits each and Sherrie Hathaway and Linda Borys had two apiece.

Ross finishes the season with an overall record of 11-12.

Stierwalt shares top BC award

News-Messenger Reports

John Stierwalt of Ross was named a co-player of the year in voting for the All-Buckeye Conference baseball teams Thursday.

Joining Stierwalt, an infielder, on the first team was outfielder Rick Egbert. Stierwalt, a senior, batted .435 and Egbert, also a senior, hit .322.

Stierwalt shared the Western Division player of the year honors with John Courtwright of Marion Harding. The Eastern Division player of the year was Chuck Moore of Sandusky.

On the second team for Ross were infielder Craig Raney and catcher Shawn Overmyer. Raney hit .326 and Overmyer .299.

Receiving honorable mention for the Little Giants were outfielders Bob Hrynciw, a junior with a .321 batting average, and Rob Egbert, a senior who hit .600 in four games before suffering a broken leg and missing the remainder of the season.

Bill Deming of Sandusky and Larry Merchant of Marion Harding were named co-coaches of the year.
