

Ross

Coach — Mike Gilbert (Sixth year, 93-32)

Last year's record — 18-10 (5-5 defunct Great Lakes League)

Last year's tourney — Lost to Clay in district semifinal

Key returnees — Miranda Steinberger (Sr., P), Sara Hoffman (Sr., P), Rachel Hammer (Sr., RF), Nicole Marroquin (Sr., CF), Rachael Daugherty (Jr., LF), Shannon Hickey (Sr., 3B), Jaymelee Glaspy (Sr., SS)

Outlook — Gilbert returns both of his top pitchers from last year's sectional-championship squad. Steinberger, a second-team GLL pick, finished 13-7 with a 1.86 ERA, and Hoffman was 5-3 with a 2.17 ERA. "I've got two very good pitchers, and that is the key to this game," Gilbert said. Ross also returns a pair of top-notch hitters. Hickey, the team's clean-up batter, was a first-team all-GLL pick after hitting .352 last season. Hammer, who hit .346, was a first-team pick as well. Glaspy will be the Little Giants' lead-off hitter. Despite being without one of his top players — junior Paige Kingsborough, who tore her ACL during the basketball season — Gilbert expects the Little Giants to be near the top of the new Greater Buckeye Conference.

ROUNDUP

Giants KO the champs

Ross tops power Anthony Wayne

The sign in left-center field didn't intimidate the Fremont Ross softball team at all.

Maybe that's a sign this is going to be a special season.

Playing at the home of defending Division I champion Anthony Wayne, which honored its 2003 season with a banner in the outfield, the Little Giants pulled out an impressive 3-1 eight-inning victory.

"We've had some big wins," said sixth-year Ross coach Mike Gilbert, "but this is definitely right up there near the top."

Jaymelee Glaspy and Jenny King opened the top of the eighth inning with back-to-back singles for Ross (2-0).

Glaspy eventually scored on an error, and King scored on a sacrifice fly by Rachel Hammer.

Anthony Wayne got runners on first and second with no outs in the eighth, but winning pitcher Miranda Steinberger shut the door.

First baseman Sara Hoffman fielded a soft liner and stepped on the bag to close the victory.

"You always want to beat somebody that good," Gilbert said. "They were very pumped. It was a gut-wrenching game."

Steinberger (2-0) allowed just four hits and one run. She struck out seven and walked one.

"I have to give Miranda and (catcher) Jessica White a bunch of credit," Gilbert said. "They did a heck of a job."

White put Ross ahead 1-0 with a two-out single in the fourth inning.

Anthony Wayne scored a run in the sixth inning to send the game into the extra frame.

"This feels really good," Gilbert said. "This is a tremendous win."

"She's gritty. Nothing fazes her, and she's not gun-shy. She's a warrior."

— Ross coach
Mike Gilbert
on Miranda
Steinberger

ROSS 8, LIMA SENIOR 2

Steinberger, Ross stop Lima

By MATTHEW HORN
Sports Writer

Little Giants roll to win in GBC opener

One of the first times Fremont Ross coach Mike Gilbert saw pitcher Miranda Steinberger throw in middle school, the hurler completely missed the wall that was serving as a backstop.

The senior likely could have picked out a particular brick on Friday in the Little Giants' first ever Greater Buckeye Conference game.

Assuming the chosen brick was near the bottom.

Steinberger served up a steady stream of drop balls and held Lima Senior to two hits and two unearned runs as Ross won 8-2. She walked one and struck out 13, including five girls twice each, in the complete-game effort.

"We kid her now because she has such great control," Gilbert said. "She's gritty. Nothing fazes her, and she's not gun-shy. She's a warrior."

Ross (3-0, 1-0) is coming off an eight-inning victory over defending state champion Anthony Wayne.

"I was concerned about being too high," Gilbert said, "but they didn't take Lima Senior for granted."

This season marks Steinberger's third as the Giants' top pitcher, but that doesn't mean her preparation has tapered even slightly. She works with Gilbert three

times a week for two hours a session during the summer, in addition to her own workouts, and often throws for up to two hours the day she pitches.

"It usually takes me a while to warm up," she said. "I threw a lot of drop balls and kept the ball low. I keep the ball low and make them hit it on the ground."

See STEINBERGER, B2

Steinberger shines for Little Giants

Continued From B1

Gilbert said Steinberger has a rise-ball in the arsenal, but her game repertoire is determined by the strengths of the opposition hitters. And Lima Senior's strong suit does not appear to be low in the strike zone.

"You're less likely to get hurt low," Gilbert said. "You get hurt when it's higher in the strike zone. If you keep the ball low you're going to be in good shape."

The Giants were at their best on Friday against Lima Senior starting pitcher Jessica Stinebock. Ross touched Stinebock for seven runs in the first two innings.

Steinberger doubled to score Rachel Hammer and Jessica White, who each reached on singles, in the bottom of the first inning.

White drove in Shannon Hickey, who had also singled, and Jaymelee Glaspy scored on an error after bunting for a hit.

Hammer singled to score Rachael Daugherty, and Glaspy and Sara Hoffman added runs in the second.

Dawn Cheney replaced Stinebock to start the third, and the Giants managed only three hits off the reliever.

"Her motion was a big change," Hammer said. "We weren't used to it. It was something new, but we started to

catch on."

Hammer went 3-for-3 with two runs, a stolen base and a RBI.

"(Hammer's) the No. 5 (hitter), so we're hoping for RBI," Gilbert said. "Her speed is tremendous. She can hit for power and bunt. If she gets on first base, we'll normally try to have her stealing second. Just like Jaymelee."

Glaspy, the team's leadoff batter who scored the Giants' second run in the 3-1 victory over Anthony Wayne, reached base twice on Friday and scored in unorthodox fashion each time.

She bunted for a single and later scored from first on what should have been a routine groundout and reached on an error, moved to second on a groundout and eventually scored on a botched rundown.

"We expect her on just about every at-bat," Hammer said. "She's quick, sees the ball and always makes contact."

Megan Wasserman added an RBI single that scored Hammer in the fifth and Jenny King, who singled and scored the insurance run against Anthony Wayne on a sacrifice fly by Hammer, singled. Each was 1-for-1 in the game.

"Everybody contributed versus Anthony Wayne," Gilbert said, "and everybody contributed tonight."

Five of Ross's eight runs came with two outs.

"We play well under pressure," Gilbert said. "They seem to come through in pressure situations."

Softball

Little Giants lose first game

Sara Hoffman allowed no runs and struck out five as Ross defeated Maumee 1-0 before losing its first game 4-1.

Jaymelee Glaspy tripled and Shannon Hickey scored the only run in the victory.

Miranda Steinberger (3-1) lost for the first time while allowing two earned runs.

Rachel Hammer went 2-for-3 with a run and Steinberger added two hits as the Little Giants record slipped to 4-1.

Ross suffers tough loss

Ross allowed two unearned

runs in the top of the seventh inning in a 2-1 Greater Buckeye Conference loss to visiting Marion Harding.

Miranda Steinberger (3-2) suffered the tough-luck loss. She allowed just two hits and three walks and struck out four.

Jaymelee Glaspy opened up the bottom of the sixth with a single and eventually scored on a wild pitch for the Giants (4-2, 1-1).

**ROSS 13,
WAITE 0**

Glaspy guides Giants

Speedy senior
is a fast learner

By **NICK MATHEWS**
Sports Editor

Jaymelee Glaspy didn't start playing organized fast-pitch softball until her freshman year.

But — fittingly — she picked it up quickly.

When it comes to competitive sports, the Fremont Ross senior seemingly does everything at breakneck speed.

Glaspy finished 3-for-4 with two RBI, three runs scored and three stolen bases to lead the Little Giants to a 13-0 victory over visiting Toledo Waite on Wednesday.

"When she gets on base, that makes us go," Ross coach Mike Gilbert said of his jet-quick lead-off hitter. "She's definitely a key."

Winning pitcher Miranda Steinberger and Nicole Marroquin each had two hits and Rachel Hammer added a pair of RBI as Ross got its offense back on track.

The Little Giants (5-2) — who had scored just three runs in the last three games, two of them losses — set the tone with a six-run first inning and finished with 12 hits.

"It was really starting to tick us all off," Glaspy said. "We weren't hitting at all. Coach was getting disappointed in us, and we were disappointed in ourselves."

"It feels good to start hitting again."

In addition to being one of the fastest softball players in the area, Glaspy is also a speedster in the pool.

Glaspy, who has been swimming since she was 10 years old, was a district qualifier this past winter.

Swimming, however, has been replaced as her favorite sport. It is now just a hobby in which she happens to excel.

Glaspy — who made up for lost time in softball by working with her father, Jim, and teammates during the summers — plans to try to walk on to Bowling Green State University's team.



GLASPY

See **GLASPY, B3**

Glaspy helps offense get back on track

Continued From B1

"She's just a great athlete," Gilbert said.

Glaspy didn't have a great start to the game on Wednesday. But even a strikeout couldn't keep her off the bases.

She struck out for the first time this season in her first at-bat. She, however, reached base when the ball popped out of Waite catcher Jackie Kamelesky's glove.

Glaspy then stole second base and reached third on a wild pitch.

No. 2 hitter Rachael Daugherty singled in Glaspy to open the scoring.

"I know when I get on base,"

Glaspy said, "no matter what, that they are going to bring me in."

The Little Giants had six hits and sent 11 batters to the plate in the first inning.

"They are not that bad," Gilbert said of Waite, which fell to 3-2. "We made them look worse than they really are. We hit the ball really well.

"And we hope it's back for a while," he continued.

Glaspy also made the defensive play of the game at shortstop.

Waite's Chelsea Vargyas hit a liner of Steinberger's glove, and it bounced up the middle near second base. Glaspy sprinted toward the ball and threw it across her body to first to barely get Vargyas.

"She has been playing really good defense," Gilbert said, "and that's what you need because sometimes you don't hit like we did today."

Steinberger (4-2) and Sara Hoffman combined to shut down Waite's offense.

Steinberger allowed just two hits and struck out five in four innings, and Hoffman allowed just one hit and struck out six in three innings.

Waite coach Tiffany Turner was certainly impressed with the Little Giants.

"They are a really strong team," she said. "We are an up-and-coming team, and we enjoy playing talented teams — and they are a very talented team."

Softball

Giants sweep

Ross dominated a double-header sweep on Saturday, outscoring Toledo Central Catholic a combined 21-2.

Miranda Steinberger threw a two-hit shutout and went 2-for-4 with two RBI in Game 1, a 13-0 victory.

Stephanie Nagle went 4-for-5 with two doubles, two RBI and four runs scored in the opener. Shannon Hickey added two hits and an RBI.

Sara Hoffman allowed just one earned run and six hits in the 8-2 victory in the nightcap.

Jaymelee Glaspy went 2-for-2 with a triple, an RBI and three stolen bases in Game 2. Megan Wasserman added two hits.

Ross improved to 7-2.

Little Giants fall

St. Ursula scored a run in the top of the seventh inning to down Fremont Ross 3-2.

Miranda Steinberger, who struck out nine and allowed just one walk and six hits, took the loss as the Little Giants fell to 7-3.

ROSS 2, FINDLAY 0

D's the key

Teammates back stellar hurler in win

By NICK MATHEWS
Sports Editor

In preparation for Friday's game against Greater Buckeye Conference rival Findlay, Fremont Ross coach Mike Gilbert made sure to remind his Little Giants of their recent history with the Trojans.

Last season, Ross had a combined nine errors in a pair of one-run losses to Findlay.

"He told us, 'I'm mad about last year's games,'" Ross senior Shannon Hickey said.

Gilbert got his point across.

Miranda Steinberger fired a two-hitter

and the Little Giants played phenomenal, error-free defense behind her in a 2-0 victory over the visiting Trojans.

"Nobody is too fond of Findlay,"

said Hickey, who made a pair of outstanding plays at third base. "This is a big win for us. This is nice to finally beat them."

Steinberger accounted for both runs as the Little Giants improved to 8-3 overall and 2-1 in the conference.

The senior standout had an RBI single and later scored on an error in the first inning to put the conference-favorite Trojans (3-3, 1-1) in an early hole.

Lightning-quick lead-off hitter Jaymelee Glaspy drew a full-count walk, moved to second on a wild pitch and stole third base.

Steinberger hit a bloop single to right field to plate Glaspy. Steinberger advanced to second on a wild pitch, stole third and scored when catcher Erin Werling's throw sailed into left field.

Losing pitcher Rachel Komosinski (0-3) allowed only one other hit — a single by Megan Wasserman — the rest of the game.

Steinberger, meanwhile, had a perfect game going until the fifth inning and allowed only one Trojan to reach third base.

"Miranda definitely had a good game," Hickey said. "We are expecting a lot of good things from her."

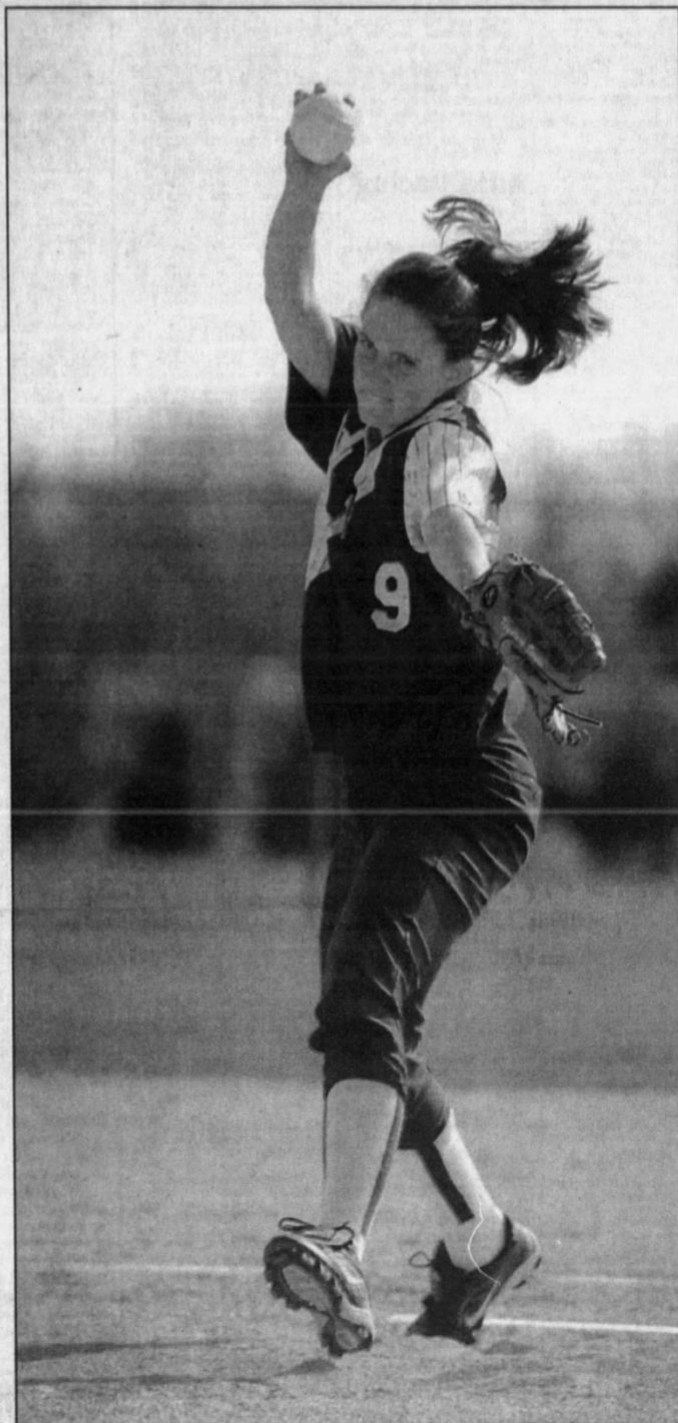
Steinberger (6-3) struck out seven and walked none.

"Her changeup was good," Findlay coach Tim Babcock said. "It really kept us off-balance. She threw hard. She threw strikes, and they made the plays behind her."

More preps, Page B3

■ Gibsonburg baseball team continues its resurgence.

■ Kelli Nasonti and the Bellevue softball team remain perfect.



News-Messenger/David Distelhorst

FREMONT ROSS SENIOR hurler Miranda Steinberger fires a pitch during the Little Giants' 2-0 victory over visiting Findlay on Friday. Steinberger had a perfect game into the fifth inning and allowed just two hits in the shutout victory. She also had plenty of help behind her. Ross's defense didn't commit any errors.

See DEFENSE, B3

Defense shines, backs Steinberger in win over Findlay

Continued From B1

Komosinski hit a grounder through the right side of the infield for the Trojans' first hit with one out in the fifth inning.

Reserve Brittany Webb also had an infield single in the frame.

Steinberger, though, struck out Amber From with a beautiful changeup to end the inning.

"They started timing her up a little bit," Hickey said. "But our defense stepped it up."

Hickey robbed lead-off hitter Katie Ammons of a fourth-inning hit.

Ammons ripped the ball down the third-base line, but Hickey was able to knock it down and throw her out at first.

Hickey also made a nice snag on a hard grounder from cleanup hitter Laureen Hoffman to start the fifth.

Ross's reserve second baseman, Jenny King, fielded a grounder by Courtney McGonnell and made a nice underhand toss to get the first out in the seventh.

Standout shortstop Glaspy made another nice play on a hard grounder by Komosinski to end the game.

"We put it in play, but they made the plays," Babcock said.

Added Gilbert: "This was a very nerve-racking game. We played some great defense. We have been playing great, really focused."

Softball

Ross tops Columbian twice

Shannon Hickey had two hits, three runs scored, one RBI, one triple and two stolen bases as Fremont Ross beat Tiffin Columbian 6-0 and 2-1.

Miranda Steinberger (7-3) notched the shutout, allowing three hits and walking none while striking out eight.

Sara Hoffman (3-0) gave up one unearned run, two hits, walked one and struck out six to win Game 2.

Jaymelee Glaspy had two hits, scored two runs and stole three bases, Rachel Hammer had two hits and scored two runs and Jessica White drove in a run and threw out a runner trying to steal second on the day for the Little Giants (10-3).

Hammer scored Ross's second run in Game 2 and Hickey saved two runs from scoring when she snared a two-out line drive in the third inning.

Ross rolls

Miranda Steinberger fired a three-hitter and had two hits and an RBI as Fremont Ross topped Toledo Clay 6-1.

Jaymelee Glaspy and Jessica White each had two hits and an RBI for the Little Giants, who improved to 11-3.

Shannon Hickey added two hits for Ross.

Ross nips Napoleon

Jessica White singled and scored on an error in the bottom of the seventh inning as Fremont Ross nipped Greater Buckeye Conference foe Napoleon 2-1.

Miranda Steinberger (9-3) allowed five hits while striking out nine and walking none to earn the victory.

Rachel Hammer added an RBI single for the Little Giants (12-3).

Softball

Ross rolls by Lima

Rachel Hammer went 3-for-4 with a triple and three runs scored and Shannon Hickey added two hits and an RBI as Ross topped Lima Senior 10-2.

Megan Wasserman had a hit and two RBI for the Little Giants (13-3, 4-1 GBC).

Rachel Daugherty and Jessica White each added a hit and an RBI.

Miranda Steinberger allowed four hits and two unearned runs for the victory. She struck out 11.

Softball

Hoffman the highlight

Sara Hoffman fired a one-hit shutout to highlight two Ross victories.

Hoffman struck out seven and walked none in a 4-0 win over Notre Dame.

Jaymelee Glaspy went 2-for-3 with a home run and Nicole Marroquin and Miranda Steinberger each had an RBI in the victory.

Steinberger earned the victory in Ross's 10-6 win over Whitmer.

Stephanie Nagel and Rachel Hammer each had two RBI in the win. Glaspy and Jessica White each added two hits for the Little Giants (15-3).

Softball

Steinberger fires gem

Miranda Steinberger struck out 11 in a two-hitter as Ross avenged its only Greater Buckeye Conference loss with a 4-0 victory over Marion Harding.

Steinberger also went 2-for-3 with a double and an RBI.

Jaymelee Glaspy and Shannon Hickey each had two hits.

Ross improved to 16-3 overall and 5-1 in the GBC.

**ROSS 5-5,
SANDUSKY 0-0**

Talented tandem lifts Ross

Steinberger, Hoffman
fire shutouts in sweep

By **MATTHEW HORN**
Sports Writer

The Fremont Ross softball players routinely avoid reporters.

It's not because they're afraid credit will find its way to the wrong place. Instead, they don't want to provide an avenue by which the team's success isn't recognized as a group effort.

But like it or not, pitchers Sara Hoffman and Miranda Steinberger spearheaded matching 5-0 shutouts of Sandusky in a Greater Buckeye Conference double header on Tuesday.

Steinberger walked none and struck out eight while allowing two hits in Game 1. Hoffman walked none and struck out six while allowing three hits in the nightcap.

Ross is 18-3 overall. With a 7-1 league mark, the Little Giants can capture the GBC by winning their final two conference games.

Steinberger and Hoffman don't just give the Little Giants a formidable one-two punch. They represent a pair of aces — and a winning hand.

"Neither of them backs down from pressure," said Nicole Marroquin, who drove in one run in the first game. "They both get the job done."

And they do so with different styles, providing a change of pace that often throws a wrench in the opponents' ability to get comfortable in the batter's box. Hoffman leans on her changeup, while Steinberger's primary pitch is her drop ball.

"They get used to the drop and then they're swinging at the change the next game," Ross coach Mike Gilbert said.

Gilbert said his pitchers make each other better.

"They're very competitive," he said. "They push each other. They've worked for me for three years, year-round. You couldn't ask for a better work ethic from either."



STEINBERGER



HOFFMAN

See **PAIR OF ACES**, B3

Pair of aces provides a winning hand for the Little Giants

Continued From B1

"When two of your hardest workers are pitchers, it's a coach's dream," Gilbert continued. "Pitching is 90 percent of the game."

Steinberger was precise with her location on Tuesday.

"Her location was excellent," Gilbert said. "She picks the outside corner and her change was good enough to keep them off balance. It's always a surprise when you look at her strikeouts after the game — she always has more than you think."

Hoffman demonstrated she's

adept at varying her velocity.

"Her speed was very good tonight," Gilbert said. "Her changeup is vastly different, and they can't dig in."

Hoffman kept the ball low in the strike zone and retired the first 13 Sandusky hitters.

"The team plays great defense behind me, so they make me look great," Hoffman said.

Not that either hurler needs help in that regard.

"They have confidence in the defense," Gilbert said. "A mistake won't kill them. They bear down with runners on."

And with Jaymee Glaspy at the top of the order to manufac-

ture runs, the pair usually is working with a lead. Glaspy reached base in seven of eight plate appearances, including four walks and two singles, and scored four runs in the two games.

"That's what we stress — we don't care how you get on, just get on," Gilbert said. "She gets around the bases. It's always big if you can score in the first inning. If she gets on first, there's a good chance she'll score."

And potentially help the pitchers relax.

"It's a little easier to pitch when you're ahead," Gilbert said. "Both are used to pitching

in close games, and they know if it's close their teammates will scratch out a run."

Rachel Hammer had two singles, two stolen bases, two runs and one RBI in Game 1 and Megan Wasserman added two singles and one run.

Stephanie Nagle scored two runs and Shannon Hickey added two singles and an RBI in Game 2.

Pitchers keep the opposition off the board, but you have to score runs and play defense to win. And Ross doesn't want you to forget it.

"They're a team. They play like a team," Gilbert said. "That's why we're where we are."

Softball

Marroquin shines

Nicole Marroquin went 4-for-7 with five runs and an RBI as Fremont Ross split a double header with Ashland.

Sara Hoffman's record (6-0) remained unblemished as she got plenty of run support in the 10-8 Game 2 victory.

Jaymelee Glaspy was 2-for-4 with two doubles, four RBI and a run scored, and Rachel Hammer went 2-for-3 with two doubles and two runs in the second game.

Megan Wasserman had two hits and three RBI, Shannon Hickey had two hits and scored twice and Jessica White added one run scored.

Stephanie Nagle doubled and drove in a run and Kara Willoughby scored once in the win.

Miranda Steinberger (13-4) allowed only two earned runs in the 6-2 Game 1 loss.

Ross outhit Ashland 10-5 in the contest.

Glaspy drove in two runs and Nagle and Hickey each had two hits in the game for the Giants (19-4).

Findlay nips Ross

Ross missed out on an opportunity to clinch the Greater Buckeye Conference title with a 3-2 nine-inning loss to Findlay.

The Little Giants (21-5, 7-2), though, can clinch at least a share of the crown with a win at Napoleon on Wednesday.

Rachael Daugherty had two hits — including a triple — and an RBI for Ross.

Pitcher— Miranda Steinberger, Ross

THE NUMBERS: Went 16-7 with a 0.95 ERA in 155 1/3 innings. Had a school-record 155 strikeouts and walked just 21. Also had a .310 batting average and .367 on-base percentage with 12 runs scored and 13 RBI. Named GBC POY, despite Ross finishing second.

THE HIGHLIGHTS: Threw her only career no-hitter in the Giants' district semifinal victory over Oregon Clay.

THE PRAISE: "She's gritty. Nothing fazes her, and she's not gun-shy. She's a warrior." — Ross coach Mike Gilbert

Infield — Jaymelee Glaspy, Ross

THE NUMBERS: Had a .368 batting average and .495 on-base percentage from the Giants' lead-off spot. Had 35 hits, including a homer, 11 RBI and 23 stolen bases. Was a first-team GBC pick.

THE HIGHLIGHTS: Went 3-for-4 with two runs scored in 4-0 sectional final win over Marion Harding.

THE PRAISE: "When she gets on base, that makes us go. She's definitely a key." — Ross coach Mike Gilbert

Outfield — Rachel Hammer, Ross

THE NUMBERS: Had a .333 batting average and a .406 on-base percentage. Had four doubles, three triples, 14 RBI and 10 stolen bases. Was named first-team GBC.

THE HIGHLIGHTS: Went 3-for-4 with a triple and three runs scored in a 10-2 win over Lima Senior.

THE PRAISE: "Originally, she didn't even want to play softball. She is just a kid who has raw talent. She did a great job for us this year." — Ross coach Mike Gilbert

Infield — Shannon Hickey, Ross

THE NUMBERS: Had a .322 batting average and .433 on-base percentage. Had 29 hits and scored 13 runs. Played near flawless defense with a .922 fielding percentage at third. Had just six errors and 55 assists. A second-team GBC pick.

THE HIGHLIGHTS: Had two of Ross's three hits and five assists in a district semifinal victory over Oregon Clay.

THE PRAISE: "When she went up to bat we knew she was going to get a hit. When she was in the field, we knew she was going to make the plays." — Ross's Rachel Hammer