

1994 DISTRICT TOURNAMENT

Ross takes on Sandusky

By **BOB MARKER**
Sports editor

Fremont Ross will play Sandusky in a matchup of a pair of top 20 teams in the Division I district volleyball tournament at Arlington High School Saturday.

The Little Giants, 18-3, play the Blue Streaks, 15-6, at approximately 3:30 p.m.

In the most recent Ohio High School Volleyball Coaches Poll, Sandusky was ranked 16th and Ross 17th.

A Ross win could possibly put the Little Giants into the finals against top-ranked Mansfield Madison, 20-0.

Beth Muffler, Ross coach, points out Sandusky comes first.

"We have to continually attack them and play good defense," Muffler said.

Sandusky has good height keyed by an excellent server, Stephanie Berry.

"She has missed only two serves all season," Muffler said. "She is like 150-for-152. She hits a floater...it's not real hard.

"Sandusky has a good attack and some big girls who block well.

"We have to be at the top of our game," Muffler said.

Muffler said her team, while on its way to the best record in the history of the sport at Ross, has surprised her in some areas.

"Our serve receive has been better than I expected," she said, "and our serving has been phenomenal. We are serving at 95 percent as a team...that has been great.

"Another key for us has been our front-line attack. We can attack in at least four of our six rotations from any spot," Muffler said.

She declined to say if any of her players has stepped forward and performed above expectations.

"At this point of the year, I

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don't want to pick any one kid out," she explained. "What they are doing right now as a team, the chemistry they have and camaraderie they have is what is making them successful."

The Little Giants advanced to the district semifinals with a 15-4, 15-12 win over Tiffin Columbian last Saturday. Columbian had one win in the regular season, one less than the year before when it had upset the Little Giants in the first round of the sectional tourney.

"Actually, it was the best thing that could happen to us," Muffler said, "because we got upset last year and the kids had something to prove...they were not going to allow it to happen again."

In other district semifinals, Woodmore and Fremont St. Joseph Central Catholic play at Hopewell-Loudon High School in Division IV and Clyde is in the Division II district, also at Hopewell-Loudon.

Woodmore, 12-9, faces the unenviable task of playing top-ranked Hopewell-Loudon, 21-0 at 11 a.m. while St. Joe, 18-3, faces Cardinal Stritch at approximately 12:30 p.m.

Clyde takes on Lexington at approximately 3:30 p.m.

DIRECTIONS: To Arlington High School, take Ohio 53 south to Ohio 12. Turn right and go to Main St. (Ohio 68) in Findlay. Turn left on Ohio 68 south to Arlington. Go past light two streets and turn right at the Lutheran Church. Go one block and turn left to back of school.

To Hopewell-Loudon High School, take Ohio 53 south to Ohio 12. Turn right on Ohio 12 through Bettsville to Ohio 635. South on 635 and Hopewell-Loudon High School is approximately at block past Ohio 18 on 635.

Blue Streaks oust Ross from district tourney

By **BOB MARKER**
Sports editor

ARLINGTON — The Sandusky Blue Streaks had their backs against wall, but it was not a time to panic.

Fremont Ross had won the first game 15-7 in the Division I District Volleyball Tournament at Arlington High School and was up 8-1 in the second, just seven points away from advancing to the finals.

But a pointed talk brought Sandusky back to a 15-13 win and the Blue Streaks went to win the third game 15-2, ousting Ross from the tourney. Mansfield Madison defeated Sandusky in the finals 15-5, 15-5.

Sandusky coach James Fisher called timeout as his team appeared to be falling apart. Fisher admitted he did something distasteful at that point.

"When we got down 8-1 — I hate doing this," Fisher said while pointing to the bench, "but we brought our kids over here and I just got into their faces.

"What caused it was we had a pass that was made and nobody went for it...it hit the floor. We had just gotten beaten first game and looking bad doing it...down 8-1 in the second and hey, the bus is warmed up and we are on out way home."

Not quite, Fisher still had his timeout talk.

Led by hitters Libby Lochotzki, Andrea Basske and Kim Bailey, the Blue Streaks won 12 of the next 16 points to lead 13-12. Lochotzki had three kills and a service ace, Baaske three kills and a point off a block and Bailey had a block and two service points in the run.

Ross never recovered from the Blue Streak's reversal. After seven sidesout, Lochotzki's spike gave Sandusky a 14-12 lead. Ross averted game point momentarily on freshman Emily Dowell's dink, cutting the margin to 14-13, but Brenna Bess's dink got Sandusky a sidesout and on Monica Wood's serve, Ross was called for a net violation and the match was even at a game apiece.

"We started making mistakes," Ross coach Beth Muffler said. "We played good sidesout ball but we were not playing good offense."

It was no contest in the final game. Sandusky ran off 10 points before Ross, 18-4, stopped the run. Stephanie Berry served in the 10-point run. Berry had one ace but the Little Giants were their own worst enemies, netting five returns and being called from a net violation to go along with a pair of spikes that went out-of-bounds.

"We took ourselves out of the game," Muffler said. "It's tough to win a game when your

attack system falls apart."

Ross made it 11-2 but Lochotzki's serve was not returned, Baaske had two spikes for points and Hope Prophet's spike finished off the Little Giants.

In the first game, Ross fell behind 3-0 before Holly Pelfrey, Michelle Smith and Tressa Young got the Little Giants rolling. Amber Brenneman served for three straight point before Sandusky went up 5-3.

Ross came back to tie 5-5 and took the lead on a dink and a kill by Young wrapped around Baaske's netted kill. Another kill by Young made it 8-5 and the Little Giants took seven of the final nine points for the win. Erica Radeloff's block off Bailey's spike was the final point for Ross.

Smith had eight service points, Brenneman and Jessica Rollins six each for Ross. Donna Steinberger was 13 for 15 in serve reception, Ragan Rusch 9-for-10 and Rollins 15-for-18. Pelfrey was 37 of 37 setting with 13 assists to kill. Rollins had nine digs to go with seven kills. Young and dSmith has six kills each and Radeloff five blocks.

Ross closed the season 18-4.

■ **Clyde, St. Joe results, B3**