

VOLLEYBALL DROPS ITS SEASON-OPENER IN FOUR SETS

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Aug 22, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)

The Fremont Ross volleyball season started on the right foot Monday night, but a third-set lull derailed the Lady Giants' opener at Tiffin Columbian.

After winning the opening set 25-23, Ross lost the following three sets, 22-25, 10-25, and 20-25.

"We had quick offense and defensively contained their top two hitters in Sets 1, 2, and 4," coach Kari Shull said. "We strayed from our game plan in Set 3 and struggled to make our plays."

Ross opens its home schedule on Thursday at 7:30 against Bellevue.

VOLLEYBALL TEAM'S FAST START FADES IN LOSS TO BELLEVUE

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Aug 24, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)

FREMONT – For the second time in the season's opening week, the Fremont Ross volleyball team began a match in fine form. Ultimately, however, the Lady Giants' fast start did not carry over into the game, as Ross dropped to 0-2 on the young season in a 3-1 loss to Bellevue Thursday night, 25-19, 8-25, 17-25, 20-25. Monday's match against Tiffin Columbian saw much the same story, as Ross won the first set then lost three straight. While on Thursday, the Lady Giants lost the second set by a lopsided score, on Monday, the same thing happened in Set 3. "Tiffin Columbian could have gone either way to me," coach Kari Shull said. "But we had that ugly set in Set 3 against Tiffin Columbian, and it was Set 2 last night for us. It's like a switch is flipped and all of a sudden we can't pass and it takes us forever to snap back out of that."

Ross' fast starts followed by lulls are in stark contrast to last season's tendency for the Lady Giants to begin matches slowly before battling back and being more competitive after digging themselves a hole. Shull is hopeful the early-season miscues do not become another season-long trend.

"I'm hoping this isn't going to be a consistent theme, obviously," she said. "It hadn't been a theme in our scrimmages. We might have had an eight-point run (against) here and there, but by the end of our four scrimmages, we'd started to eliminate some of those kinds of. So, it's disappointing now that they're hopping onto a court and that's what's happening, that the passing seems to fade after that first set."

The Lady Giants are 0-2 and return to the court Monday at home against Lake at 6:30.

Due to technical complications, stats from Thursday's match are not yet available.

LADY GIANTS COME FROM BEHIND TO WIN 5-SET THRILLER AGAINST LAKE

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Aug 28, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)

FREMONT – Having climbed out of a two-set hole and forcing a fifth and final set Monday night in a sweltering Purple Pit, the Lady Giant volleyball team was going to finish what they started.



Olivia DeRodes



Hayley Lawrence

And while their comeback had been hard-fought, back-and-forth battles the Lady Giants wasted no time putting the Lake Flyers away.

Carrying all the momentum from the previous two sets, Ross rolled easily in the fifth set to complete the comeback, winning 3-2 over Lake, 15-25, 23-25, 25-22, 25-23, 15-4.

“It is a huge win, we had to fight really, really hard,” said senior Olivia DeRodes.

“But we knew we weren’t playing to our potential in Games 1 and 2 and we knew we had to pick up our energy and that’s what we did.

“I’m just really proud of my team.”

After starting slowly, dropping the first two sets, Ross found itself in a 10-5 hole in the third set before the Lady Giants finally found their rhythm. They scored the next five points to tie the set and soon after led 15-13 after a powerful kill by AnneMarie Moses off a Kelsey Weickert assist.

Ross maintained its two-point lead until a Lake timeout at 20-18.

“We talked a lot about game plans today and sticking to our game plans and having energy both on the bench and on the court,” said coach Kari Shull. “That’s usually what I saw in most timeouts, reminding them of the game plan and what our goal was coming in.”



AnneMarie Moses



Mia Boda

Back-to-back blocks by Moses closed out the game and continued the match to a fourth set.

In the fourth, Ross held a 23-16 lead, but Lake didn't go down quietly. Lake scored seven of the next eight points to climb within one, 23-24, but the Flyers hit the ball out of the bounds and the Lady Giants were celebrating a tied match.

"It feels great. We fought our hardest," junior Hayley Lawrence said. "We said 'We did not come this far to lose.' We had to keep pushing and get every single point."

With the match knotted at two sets a piece, the Lady Giants put the foot down on the Flyers. Ross jumped out to a 6-0 lead thanks to a block and kill by Moses, a pair of service aces by Lawrence, and a great diving dig by Mia Boda, which landed for a point.

A few minutes later, DeRodes set up a cross-court pass for Lawrence whose kill ended the set and the match, completing the comeback for the Lady Giants.

"It's exciting," Shull said. "I think it took quite a few team members to get us there tonight. I changed the lineup and who was doing what, and even their roles in Set 3, to try to sneak a win. These kids deserve to get a win, and we tried to get them there. It took a whole team effort to do that."

The victory is Ross' first of the season (1-2 overall). The Lady Giants will look to make it two in a row on Thursday when they travel to Lima Senior.

Junior varsity

The JV Lady Giants also came up victories, defeating Lake 2-0 by scores of 25-18 and 25-21.

LADY GIANTS TAKE A THREE-SET SWEEP FROM LIMA SENIOR

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Aug 31, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)



Olivia Baptista

Ross was sluggish from start to finish, even though the Lady Giants won 3-0 by scores of 25-18, 25-18, 27-25.

“I think they kind of walked into the gym thinking they could make easy work of this game, and they just struggled,” coach Kari Shull said. “Lima played a slower ball, a slower pace, and I think we struggled to put our game together.”

Given the warm temperatures of late and the start of classes this week, Shull believes her team is showing signs of fatigue.

“It was really hot in our gym (Wednesday) night, and I think with school starting and all that stuff, I just think we have a set of tired kids,” Shull said. “We’ve been going for about a month now, and then you throw in school on top with a different kind of routine, and I think the kids were a little tired, a little slow at practice last night, and it carried into today.”

The Lady Giants are also monitoring the ankle of junior Hayley Lawrence. Lawrence first injured her ankle Monday night against Lake, though she returned to the match. Though she was fine in warm-ups, once Thursday’s match began, the ankle started to bother her. Shull removed her as not to aggravate it any worse.



Hayley Lawrence

“We have a little bit of a break coming up here (with Labor Day weekend) and we want to take advantage of that and get it healed,” Shull said.

With Lawrence out, Shull said Olivia Baptista and Kennedy Bohannon provided Ross with a spark. “I thought Olivia Baptista and Kennedy Bohannon really stepped up to the plate today and really helped carry our team through to victory.”

The Lady Giants are back on the court next Thursday at home against St. Ursula.

VOLLEYBALL STRUGGLES TO FIND CONSISTENT OFFENSE IN LOSS TO ST. URSULA

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Sep 7, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)

FREMONT – There is never a good time to be without two key players. But being shorthanded when a league power like St. Ursula comes to town is certainly less than ideal.

With Haley Lawrence nursing an ankle injury and Brooklyn Baptista out with illness, the Lady Giants’ volleyball team struggled to mount consistent offense in a three-set sweep at the hands of the Arrows, losing by scores of 25-16, 25-11, 25-7. Despite their personnel shortcomings, Kari Shull told her team beforehand that the Lady Giants wouldn’t make excuses.

“I talked to the kids about this last night at practice that when we played Lima, I thought we walked in there like, ‘Oh, it’s Lima, we’re going to get a win,’ and

maybe St. Ursula rolls in that way, maybe they don't," Shull said. "But, at the end of the day, they're still going to show up to play, and so do we. For me, it doesn't matter who is on the other side of the court; it's a jersey and a girl. I can't control what they do, but I can control what happens on my court, and that's what we have to be in control of, and we couldn't."

The Lady Giants were beset by problems passing the ball consistently. Without regular passes, offense was hard to come by.

"I swapped out the libero every single set, and it just didn't matter," Shull said. "I couldn't get consecutive passes out of anybody, individually or as a team.

"When we strung a nice pass and a nice set together, we had some great swings and some kills. But it just wasn't going to happen (consistently)."

Ross falls to 2-3 overall, 1-1 in the TRAC. The Lady Giants are back in action Saturday afternoon when they host Oak Harbor and Carey, beginning at 1 p.m.

LADY GIANTS' PASSING STRUGGLES CONTINUE IN PAIR OF LOSSES SATURDAY

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Sep 8, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)

FREMONT – A familiar foe foiled the Lady Giant volleyball team Saturday afternoon.

The adversary who doomed Ross, however, was neither Carey nor Oak Harbor, the day's opponents. Rather, it was the Lady Giants' own passing, which has been a season-long issue of concern.

The Lady Giant offense moved in spurts and stops, starting and stopping based on how they passed from one point to the next. Ultimately, Ross' offense proved too inconsistent as the Lady Giants lost to Carey, 18-25, 25-27, and Oak Harbor, 14-25, 15-25.

"Struggled to pass today and couldn't string enough good passes together consistently to keep momentum or push points," coach Kari Shull said. "Without consistent, good passing, we're struggling to run our offense.

"When we had a good pass, we had a good set and swing and we can execute. (We) just didn't do it consistently."

The Lady Giants played once again without Hayley Lawrence, nursing an injury, and Brooklyn Baptista, due to illness. Shull, however, noted the play of AnneMarie Moses, Kelsey Weickert, and Izzy Held.

The Lady Giants are now 2-5 overall this season and will return to action Monday at Clyde.

IMPROVED OFFENSE NOT ENOUGH TO LIFT VOLLEYBALL TO WIN AT CLYDE

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Sep 11, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)



CLYDE – With two key players returning to the lineup after a week away, Ross volleyball coach Kari Shull was worried the Lady Giants might be out of sync as they got reacquainted with one another.

That wasn't the case. The Lady Giants' offense was a much-improved, more cohesive unit than it was without Hayley Lawrence and Brooklyn Baptista, but their returns still weren't enough to get Ross over the hump in a four-set loss to Clyde, 25-23, 22-25, 18-25, 16-25.

"We had our lineup back together tonight, and I was impressed by how well they meshed together on the court and played together," Shull said. "I thought our passing was a lot better tonight. I think we're taking big swings when we're supposed to."

With her full roster intact, Shull shortened her bench, foregoing a libero on the court, and saw the benefits of an improved night of passing, which has been the Lady Giants' biggest issue this season.

"We basically ran with seven kids tonight," Shull said. "I think (continuing to limit the bench) that's going to depend on how people do with the pass. Passing is going to get you on the court. And doing it consistently is going to keep you on the court."

While pleased with what she saw from her team and its improved offensive performance, the loss still disappointed.

“It was a loud gym, it was a packed gym, so it was a fun, small-gym, whole-town environment,” Shull said. “So, it’s definitely a tough loss to take.

“But for having everybody back together, I was afraid any momentum we had built for a week and a half would come to a screeching halt, and we’d have to start back over. But I didn’t feel like we had to go back to the starting pole, we picked up where we were, and we’re going to keep moving.”

The Lady Giants (2-6 overall) return to action Thursday at Whitmer.

VOLLEYBALL SNAPS OUT OF SLOW START TO GO 2-1 IN SANDUSKY TOURNAMENT

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Sep 15, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)

SANDUSKY – A day that began with a slow start turned into a net-positive for the Lady Giant volleyball team Saturday afternoon. Fremont Ross got its day off on the wrong foot, dropping its first-round match of the MBK Invitational at Sandusky High School, but the Lady Giants rebounded to finish the day with a 2-1 record.

The Lady Giants began the morning with a 21-25, 18-25 loss to Sandusky St. Mary’s, in a match coach Kari Shull said her team couldn’t find the gas pedal. “I think that was a match we should have won. We were just slow,” Shull said. “Slow. Strolling, not hustling on the court. Just slow.”

Not helping matters for Ross, in the day’s second match, against Mansfield Senior, the Lady Giants lost Olivia DeRodes, who aggravated a back injury first sustained in Monday’s match against Clyde. The Lady Giants were already playing short-handed as senior AnneMarie Moses missed the tournament, [taking part in the Myron Cline Invite with the cross country team](#) Saturday instead.

“When you don’t have your normal people, whether it was Olivia DeRodes or AnneMarie, beside you in that back row, that requires a lot more communication; it requires communication regardless, but especially when you have two new people beside each other. We came out slow out of the gate and weren’t talking or having fun while we were playing, and that made it that much harder.”

Despite the Lady Giants playing without two of their most productive seniors, Ross began to get itself going, defeating Mansfield Senior, 25-18, 25-9.

“We started doing some things better,” Shull said. “I thought our passing was decent today, the first match against St. Mary’s, and some against Mansfield Senior, we struggled a bit with that third ball, getting people to get back behind the setter, taking big swings – it just wasn’t happening.”

Ross ended the day on a high note. The Lady Giants found their rhythm and defeated Port Clinton, 25-23, 25-10.

"I finally looked at my assistant coach at like 1:15 and said, 'Hey, we finally woke up and played as a team,'" Shull said. "That's the Fremont Ross team I know, in that last and final set."

While the day certainly had its frustrations, Ross found a way to snap itself out of its funk and end the day with a winning record. Shull was pleased to take out the positives.

"We finished 2-1, not a terrible day, so we'll take it," she said. "We didn't play our best, but good enough to get out of there with a pair of wins."

The Lady Giants are now 5-7 overall and are off until Thursday when they'll host Findlay at 7:30.

VOLLEYBALL TEAM'S BEST PLAY OF THE SEASON NOT ENOUGH TO SLIP PAST FINDLAY

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Sep 21, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)

FREMONT – The Lady Giants played perhaps their best match, from start to finish, Thursday night. So the fact Ross came out on the short end, in a 3-1 defeat, underscored the message coach Kari Shull has been telling her team.

When matches are razor-thin, so too are the factors that determine their outcome.

"Volleyball is a game of inches and centimeters," Shull said. "We sometimes didn't tip when we should have to get that easy point, or didn't stick it, and that's what I talked about with the girls at the end of the game last night," Shull said.

"This is a time when the inches and centimeters came to a head because Findlay was able to execute on them, and we were not."

The Lady Giants lost by a score of 24-26, 25-10, 21-25, 21-25 in an evenly-matched contest with TRAC rival Findlay. Despite the loss, Shull saw more of what her team is capable of on Thursday than in any other match this season.

"We didn't beat ourselves, by any means," she said. "Findlay got the win because they got the win. I think at the end of the day, when I look at the four sets, I think it's the longest string of playing where they were able to maintain the higher level of where they play at. From a passing, setting, hitting (standpoint), sometimes I get a set, sometimes I get two sets. I think they had a solid, three, three-and-a-half sets."

The deciding point of the match came midway through the fourth set. Ross held a lead, then Findlay ripped off an 11-point run, taking control of the set. The Lady Giants clawed to stay close but couldn't extend the match to a fifth set.

"There was just a little bit of a handful of everything in those 10 points, where we just couldn't get out of it," Shull said.

The Lady Giants are now 5-8 overall, 2-2 in the TRAC, and will return to action Saturday when they travel to Northview at 12:30.

LADY GIANT VOLLEYBALL RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF TOUGH SCHEDULE

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Sep 25, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)

BOWLING GREEN – Heading into the back half of its schedule, the Fremont Ross volleyball team knows it's going to be tested by high-quality programs.

And while some of the results of late haven't reflected wins on the scoreboard, coach Kari Shull is pleased with how her players are answering the challenge.

Monday night against a talented team at Bowling Green, the Lady Giants lost in three sets, 22-25, 14-25, 24-26. Except for an extended run by the Cougars in the second set, in which the Lady Giants had trouble with Bowling Green's serve, which, in turn, made it difficult to run a smooth offense.

"They were just able to expose some of our sore spots or weak spots; they did a good job executing their serves, and it took us out of our system, and we weren't able to take as many big swings in Set 2," Shull said.

"The big difference between Sets 1 and 3 and Set 2 is we took a lot bigger swings in Sets 1 and 3, more aggressive swings, and hit more of our shots that we are continuing to aim on and work for instead of more of our roll shots and things that we did in Set 2."

Monday's match went along similar lines as the Lady Giants' 3-set loss to Northview, 17-25, 15-25, 21-25, though Shull said the final result doesn't indicate the quality of Ross' performance.

"We did a great job keeping their middles out of their options, because they're big and powerful," Shull said of Northview. "We did a good job hitting into those deep corners and sidelines to get around blocks and take the other team out of their system.

"That's the most that they've executed our game plan to date," she added.

"Northview was a tough, solid team. If you didn't find their holes, that ball was coming back over. You had to earn the point or you made a mistake and they the point that way."

Shull noted that her team is playing with slightly muted energy in its last few matches. But she doesn't see it as a problem, but rather an indication of the Lady Giants' concentration on the task at hand.

"Sometimes, when kids focus in like that and are really concentrating and working hard to do the things you're asking them to do to be successful, because it doesn't come naturally to them, I think they are a little bit quiet," Shull said. "So it's starting to click for them and starting to feel natural to them, and I think that energy will come back."

The Lady Giants are now 5-10 overall, but things won't get any easier. Ross hosts Notre Dame Thursday night, and then Ashland visits the Purple Pit Saturday.

"Our back half of the season schedule is really tough," Shull said. "These last three weeks are tough with Notre Dame, Clay, Perkins, Ashland, Northview, and Bowling Green; these are solid programs with big and tall kids. I think Fremont

Ross, for all the talent we have, is doing a good job keeping these teams out of their systems and hanging in there, staying in there and playing them tough.”

SHULL STEPS DOWN AS VOLLEYBALL COACH

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Sep 27, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)

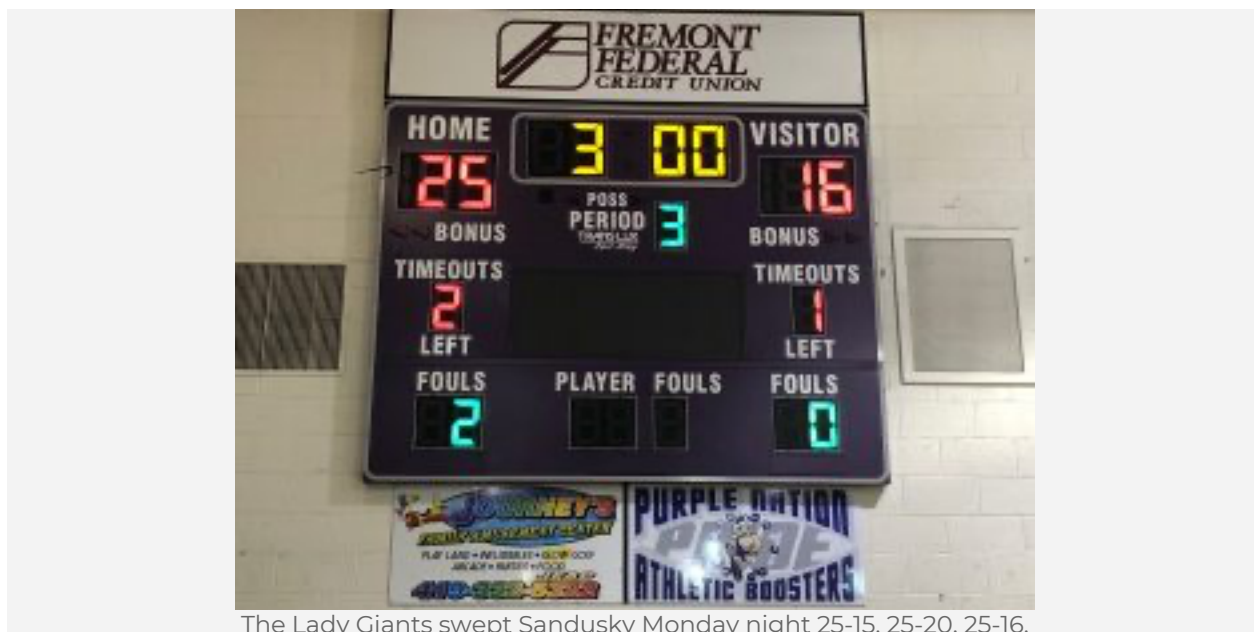
Late Wednesday afternoon, Ross volleyball coach Kari Shull announced she would be stepping away from the program. Although the timing of her departure is not ideal, Coach Shull’s decision to leave mid-season was made with the program’s best interests in mind. In her letter of resignation, Coach Shull stated that she no longer felt she was a good fit for the program and that it would be best for her to resign. In her two seasons as Little Giant head coach, Coach Shull worked extremely hard to develop a comprehensive 7-12 program. We are grateful for all of her efforts and wish her nothing but the best moving forward.

In the interim, varsity assistant coaches Karie Nowalk and Shayla Colon have agreed to step in and help fill the current vacancy at both the Freshmen and Varsity Levels.

ALL EYES FORWARD FOR LADY GIANT VOLLEYBALL IN SWEEP OF SANDUSKY

by [Rich McGowan](#) | Oct 9, 2018 | [Volleyball](#)

FREMONT – Every win feels good, but some wins are a little sweeter than others. More satisfying.



The Lady Giants swept Sandusky Monday night 25-15, 25-20, 25-16.

And no team wearing a Fremont Ross uniform in any sport this fall has enjoyed a more satisfying victory – nor a more deserved one – than the Lady Giant volleyball team’s 3-0 sweep of Sandusky Monday night, 25-15, 25-20, 25-16.

“It feels really good,” senior Olivia DeRodes said. “We’ve been working hard and really wanted this next win for a while, and it feels good to have it finally. It’s been a tough road.”

Monday night’s victory is Ross’s first since it went 2-1 in the Sandusky tournament on Sept. 15. Since then, the Lady Giants have dealt with the fallout from coach Kari Shull’s mid-season resignation two weeks ago.

But the Lady Giants looked like a different team Monday night. The Lady Giants controlled the match from start to finish, jumping out ahead early in each set and never allowing the Blue Streaks to find their footing.



Marissa Overmyer



Olivia DeRodes

Most of Sandusky's points came off Ross' own miscues, hitting shots long or out of bounds or into the net. Unlike earlier in the year, however, the Lady Giants limited those mistakes to only stretches of two or three at a time, and forced Sandusky to earn its points, which were few and far between

"I always tell them the next point is a new point, we continue to move forward," said interim coach Karie Nowak. "Don't worry about that last point you lost, just worry about the next point."

Keeping eyes ahead and forgetting about what came before sums up the Lady Giants in a nutshell over the last two weeks.

While a midseason coaching change is never ideal, the Lady Giants have used it to grow closer as a unit.

"Our team has gotten a lot closer, off the court, especially, and that, ultimately, makes you closer on the court," DeRodes said. "It's been really rough, with some crazy practices, but we've been having so much fun, and that's helped so much. All the positivity and support from everyone. It's been excellent."

The Lady Giants improve to 6-15 overall and will host Toledo Central Catholic on Thursday in Senior Night and the Lady Giants' last regular season match of the season.

While Nowak and her players admitted their energy level wasn't quite as high as they'd have liked on Monday, it undoubtedly exceeded that of their earlier matches this year. The main difference between the Lady Giants now and a month ago? Enthusiasm.

"(Energy) was low tonight," senior Marissa Overmyer said. "We've had people jumping off the bench, screaming and excited over the simplest of kills, free ball tips, even.

"It's been fun."