

News-Messenger reports

The three-time reigning Division IV state softball champions started their season in style on Monday.

"If that is any idea of what the season is going to be like, I'm excited," Gibsonburg coach Erika Foster said after the Golden Bears' 8-0 victory at Toledo Christian.

Ali Warren struck out nine in the shutout victory and went 2-for-3 with a double.

Gibsonburg, which had eight players record hits, scored two first-inning runs to set the tone.

"One of the key things to work on this season is our hitting, and we hit well," Foster said. "Our goal is to score in the first inning, and we did that."

"I liked what I saw."

Lady Red roll by Rockets

Bellevue exploded for 10 fifth-inning runs en route to an 11-1 win over Oak Harbor.

Kelli Nasonti earned the win for Bellevue, striking out eight batters while allowing just a run in six innings. Nasonti also was 2-for-3 with two RBI.

Oak Harbor got a triple off the bat of Julie Edge.

Michelle Drunkenmiller suffered the defeat for the Rockets (0-1), walking seven batters and surrendering three hits in 4½ innings.

Hopewell routs Woodmore

Hopewell-Loudon assaulted Woodmore 16-4, scoring 10 runs in the first two innings to set the tone.

Jenna Beam took the defeat for the Wildcats.

Betsy Deitemyer was 1-for-3 and scored a run, while Tarah Jacobs was 1-for-3 with a double and two RBI. Anna Giles was 1-for-3 with an RBI for Woodmore (0-1).

Hopewell-Loudon (1-0) recorded 12 hits.

Bettsville dominated

Monroeville scored five first-inning runs and cruised to a 10-1 victory over Bettsville.

Jill Schumm, who struck out eight and walked nine, suffered the loss for the Bobcats.

Baseball.....

Ross ties Perkins

Fremont Ross had one final chance. And made it count.

The Little Giants entered what umpires determined would be the final inning trailing by a run.

Kyle Cook tripled and scored on Doug Henkel's RBI groundout in the top half of the sixth inning as Ross's game with Sandusky Perkins was suspended tied 3-3 after the frame.

Cook struck out eight while allowing no hits and three unearned runs in five innings pitched.

The Giants stranded nine runners, including seven in the first three innings, to five for Perkins.

Henkel singled, stole second and third and scored on a single by Kyle Briggs in the first. Joey Garza led off the fifth with a double, advanced to third on a single by Briggs and scored on a groundout by Cody Ruiz.

"We left too many guys on base," Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller said. "Ruiz did get the runner home with a nice piece of situational hitting. We picked up the ones we needed late in the game but missed a shot to break things open at the beginning."

Dyer delivers for 'Cats

Billy Dyer pitched and hit his Woodmore squad to an opening-day 4-1 victory over Hopewell-Loudon.

Dyer struck out 12 and scattered five hits in the complete-game win. Dyer, who walked just two, also was 2-for-2 with two RBI.

The Wildcats' offensive highlight was a fifth-inning two-run single by Dyer.

"Our team played real well in the bad weather," Woodmore coach Scott Smith said. "We played great defensively, and Billy was tough to hit. This was a good way for our team to start the season."

Linder lifts Bellevue

In a rain-shortened contest, Bellevue prevailed 5-1 over visiting Oak Harbor in 4½ innings.

Drew Linder earned the win for Bellevue, allowing just three hits in three scoreless innings. Linder also went 2-for-3 at the dish for the Redmen (1-0).

Matt Bentlage suffered the loss for the Rockets (0-1), surrendering two runs on just one hit in three innings.

Dave Foos had a run-scoring double for Bellevue.

Bettsville silenced

Bettsville allowed two first-inning runs and four runs in the first three innings and couldn't catch up in a 5-1 loss to Monroeville.

Dan Ambrose and Greg Weller notched hits for the Bobcats (0-1).

Austin Windau allowed five runs in six innings. He struck out 10 and walked just one.

News-Messenger reports

Charles Jones established a Fremont Ross record in the 100-meter dash (10.4 seconds) on Saturday as the Little Giant boys annihilated Libby 127-10. Ross won every event.

The Ross girls won 75-49 as Allison Adams won the 100 and 300 hurdles and Ashley Fischer took the 800 and 1,600.

Adam Wilhelm won the 200 and 400 and was on the winning 800 and 1,600 relay. Elon Simms won the 110 hurdles and was a member of the two relays.

Jordan Edwards also ran in both relays with Jones rounding out the 800 and Tim Burris the 1,600. Burris also took the 800 and high jump.

Jay Ohms won the 1,600, Jorge Perez the discus, Adam Shearn the pole vault and 300 hurdles, Rob Durnwald the shot put and Derek Hill captured the 3,200 for Ross.

The Giants' 400 relay of Austin Young, Keith Williams, Edwards and Jones and the 3,200-relay group comprised of David Guardiola, Erik Esparza, Jyrik Fields and Hill also won.

Amy Price won the pole vault, Alyssa Bowerman the 3,200, Betsy Quick the discus, Emily Grayson the high jump and Stephanie Kayser took the shot put for the Giant girls. The 3,200 relay comprised of Bowerman, Ashley Bowerman, Fischer and Shanne Bulger also won.

Gibsonburg girls win

Mallory Fleming won the 800 and high jump as the Gibsonburg girls scored 68 points to win a triangular meet with Old Fort (49) and St. Mary (47).

The Gibsonburg boys (49) finished second as St. Mary won with 61. The Stockaders had 47.

Rebekah Paul won the 200 and Betsy Wonderly the 300 hurdles for the Bear girls. Gina Bowen, Libby McDermott, Fleming and Paul comprised the winning 800 relay and Bowen, Samantha Legg, Wonderly and McDermott made up the winning 400 relay.

The Stockader girls won the 3,200, 100 hurdles, 3,200 relay, 1,600 and Cara Bass won the discus.

Drew Williamson won the 1,600 and 3,200 for the Bear boys. Brent Hiser won the 800, Aaron Sherard the discus and the 3,200 relay and shot put events also went to Gibsonburg.

Greg Burks won the 400 and was on the winning 1,600 relay for the Old Fort boys. Jeremy Gregg won the long jump and 300 hurdles and Jimmy Sisi won the 200 and high jump.

The Stockaders also won the 1,600 relay.

Baseball.....

SJCC earns split

Two Woodmore sophomores and the team's ace combined to allow only one unearned run as the Wildcats split a doubleheader with St. Joseph Central Catholic on Saturday.

Woodmore (2-1) won the first game 3-2 before losing 11-1.

Sophomore Jordan Shaw drew the starting nod in the Wildcats' victory, only his second varsity start. He struck out five and allowed five hits and one earned run in four innings.

Sophomore Matt Deal saw his first varsity action as he relieved Shaw to start the fifth. Deal (1-0) allowed one unearned run and one hit in two innings.

Billy Dyer, the team's top starter, finished by striking out each of the three batters he faced for the save.

Corey Swaisgood drove in both Streak runs with a two-run double, and he and Shawn Rusch each had two hits. Rusch (0-1) struck out four and allowed three runs, one earned, in six innings while taking the loss.

Kyle Szymanowski went 4-for-4 with a RBI, Kevin Rusch was 2-for-3 with a RBI, Rob Roth hit a three-run double, Nate Kerr was 2-for-2 and Shawn Rusch doubled in the Game 2 victory for SJCC (1-1).

Kevin Wammes started and struck out three in one inning and Cory Miller (1-0) relieved and pitched three innings for the win. Miller issued no walks and struck out three.

Mike Dufendock took the loss in Game 2 as Shiner went 2-for-2 with a home run and Dyer added a double.

After seeing the first four games called off due to poor weather, Streak coach Rick Barbour was simply happy to actually get a game in.

Ross rebounds in style

The Ross baseball team knows how to rebound. In the first games since their embarrassing season opener, the Little Giants dominated Lima Senior in a doubleheader sweep.

Ross topped Lima 11-1 in its first-ever game in

the Greater Buckeye Conference. The Giants shut out Lima 10-0 in the second game, a non-conference contest.

"This was really nice," Ross coach Schimmoeller said. "Much, much better."

This past Wednesday, the Little Giants opened their season with a 13-0 five-inning loss to visiting Anthony Wayne. They had one hit and eight errors in the game.

On Saturday, they pounded out a combined 24 hits and were flawless in the field.

Kyle Cook and Kyle Spriggs led the attack. Cook went 6-for-8 with five runs scored, three doubles, two triples and six stolen bases, and Spriggs finished 3-for-5 with six RBIs.

Doug Henkel (1-0) struck out 14 in a complete-game victory in the opener. He allowed one run and five hits.

Henkel also went 2-for-4 with two RBI in Game 1.

Brad Cobb (1-0) threw four shutout innings to get the win in the nightcap.

Mager impact

Zak Magers walked two and struck out seven in 3 2/3 innings of work as Old Fort defeated Gibsonburg 8-6.

Alex Black (1-1) took the loss while striking out eight in four innings.

Justin Witte went 2-for-4 with two runs for the Golden Bears (2-1-1).

The Stockaders evened their record at 1-1.

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.

Bork hits stride

Jamie Bork had four hits, two runs, a triple and two RBI as St. Joseph Central Catholic split a doubleheader with Woodmore, winning 10-8 and losing 7-1.

Woodmore (1-2) scored seven runs in the sixth inning of Game 1 as Tarah Jacobs earned the win with nine strikeouts and no walks.

SJCC's Danielle Dickman (0-1) took the loss.

Jacobs led Woodmore's offense in addition to her success in the circle, going 2-for-4 and scoring a run.

Stephanie Costantini was 2-for-3 with an RBI and a run scored. Andrea Keller and Anna Giles each went 2-for-4 with a RBI and a run, while Ashley Deitemyer was 1-for-2 with two RBI and a run scored.

In the second game, SJCC (1-2) scored seven runs in the final two innings to overpower the Wildcats.

Emily Miller earned the win for the Crimson Streaks despite issuing seven walks. Jenna Beam took the loss for the Wildcats, with four strikeouts and a walk.

Alyssa Dickman went 4-for-4 with three runs while Deitemyer led the Wildcats with a hit, two RBI and a run.

"We tried kids in different positions," SJCC coach Bill Bork said. "We have more questions than we have answers."

Katy Hasselbach moved from first to second, Bork was at shortstop instead of center, Alyssa Dickman played shortstop when not pitching and Melissa Taylor switched to first base.

Nasonti on target

Kelli Nasonti (2-0) allowed one run and two hits in seven innings and added an RBI in Bellevue's 3-1 victory over Clyde.

Ashley Meyers scored two runs and Mandy Spears had two RBI for the Lady Red (2-0).

Angie Powell took the loss but did manage a hit for the Fliers (0-1).

Oak Harbor falls

Six Rocket errors led to four unearned runs as Tiffin Columbian blanked Oak Harbor 4-0.

Columbian's Amber Gosche recorded nine strikeouts to earn the win while Oak Harbor's Brooke Sprouse struck out five and walked four in the defeat.

The Rockets, which recorded two hits, fall to 0-3 on the season while Columbian is 1-0.

Little Giants are Cookin'

News-Messenger reports

Kyle Cook allowed three hits in a complete-game shutout in Fremont Ross's 4-0 victory over Lexington on Monday.

Cook (1-0) struck out nine and walked one in shutting down one of last season's Division II regional finalists.

"It was just a dominating pitching performance," Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller said. "(Lexington) lost only two seniors from last year. The kids are playing good baseball right now."

Jon Franks went 2-for-4 with a home run and two RBI, Kyle Spriggs was 2-for-3 with a run, RBI and stolen base and Doug Henkel went 2-for-4 with two runs for the Little Giants (3-1).

Softball

Warren leads Golden Bears

Ali Warren and Gibsonburg ran their records to 4-1 with a 6-1 victory over Cardinal Stritch.

Warren struck out 11 and Aisha Kaemming went 2-for-5 with a double for the Golden Bears.

Julie Beaschler added a double for Gibsonburg.

Mohawk trims Crimson Streaks

Division III defending state champion Mohawk held St. Joseph Central Catholic to only two hits in an 11-0 victory to open MAL play.

Alyssa Dickman (0-2) pitched seven innings, and she and Megan Boukissen each collected one

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller may have a problem today.

"I will be passing out a lot of award stickers," Schimmoeller said after the Little Giants' 23-0 five-inning romp at Liberty Center on Tuesday.

He may run out of stickers.

The Little Giants (4-1) had 17 hits and tallied the highest run total in at least six years.

"They were having a lot of fun tonight," Schimmoeller said. "Everything we hit fell. It was impressive."

Losing pitcher Jan Stewart didn't even record an out.

Ross tagged him for eight first-inning runs.

Cody Myers' two-run homer capped the frame.

The Giants added three in the second, two in the third and 10 in the fourth.

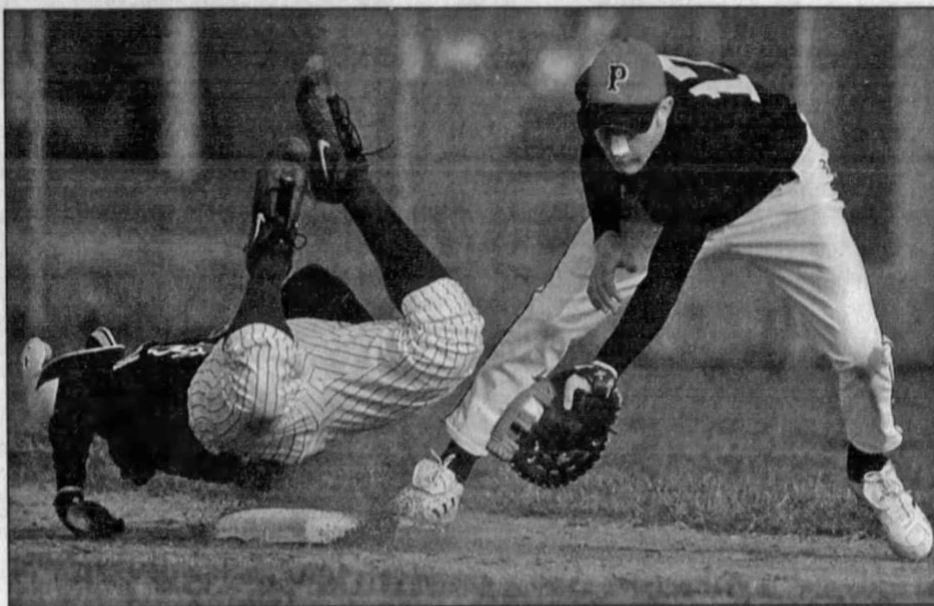
Robbie Hall homered and had four RBI and Aaron Opelt finished 3-for-4 with four RBI for the Giants.

Aurelio Ruiz and Jake Kingsborough each added three RBI.

Kory Decker allowed two hits for the complete-game victory.

Liberty Center fell to 2-2.

ROSS 6, PERKINS 5



News-Messenger/David Distelhorst

FREMONT ROSS'S Jake Kingsborough dives safely into first base. Perkins' Tyler Speer mans the bag on Thursday. Kingsborough struck out but reached base on a passed ball. The Little Giants beat Perkins 6-5 and improved to 5-1 on the season.

Rolling Ross

Confident Giants rally past Perkins

By NICK MATHEWS
Sports Editor

Frankly, Jon Franks wasn't worried at all.

Fremont Ross was in a four-run hole, but Franks knew it was just a matter of time until the Little Giants' offense got on a roll.

"It was no big deal," Franks said. "My confidence was never down."

The cool Franks hit a two-run double that capped off a five-run fourth inning as the Little Giants rallied for a 6-5 victory over regional powerhouse Sandusky Perkins on Thursday.

"I am really impressed with the boys. They've played pretty well. It's been a great start."

— Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller

Ross has now scored 54 runs — including 23 in a recent shutout victory over Liberty Center — during its stellar 5-1 start. That's an average of nine runs a game.

"We've hit the ball all year," Franks said. "I knew we were going to come through sooner or later."

A two-out fourth-inning error proved to doom Perkins (3-2), which has won five of the last six Sandusky Bay Conference titles.

Cody Myers reached on the error, and No. 9 hitter Robbie Hall followed with his second hit of the game.

After Jared Dickman walked, Aurelio Ruiz hit a bases-loaded, two-run single up the middle to pull the Giants within 4-3.

"That was a huge hit," Franks said.

Franks followed Ruiz with his double in the right-center gap, and he eventually scored on an error.

"We just had to sit back and wait for our chances," Franks said. "They gave us one too many chances, and we took advantage of it."

Perkins got one run in the seventh and had runners on first and third with one out.

Relief pitcher Doug Henkel, though, struck out clean-up hitter Paul Carroll and forced Tyler Speer to pop up to earn his first save of the season.

"This is a big win for us," Franks said. "This is the biggest win we've had all year. We wanted to get them," he continued. "We were coming out ready to play this game."

Well, not really. The first four batters to face winning pitcher Brad Cobb (2-0) scored.

Only one of the runs, however, was earned as the Little Giants committed three errors in the first inning.

"The kids know that when Brad is on the mound, he's go-

ing to throw strikes and the other team is going to hit it," Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller said. "They have to make the plays."

Defense has been the one question mark this season.

The Little Giants have a stellar pitching staff to go with their explosive offense.

Ross has allowed just two earned runs — including two on Thursday — in six games.

"Our pitching has been our stronghold this season," Franks said.

Cobb allowed six hits and struck out three in his 5¹/₂ innings.

Henkel relived Cobb with two runners on and one out in the sixth inning. He struck out two straight hitters to get out of the jam.

Henkel allowed two hits in the final 1¹/₂ innings.

"Doug is a senior, and he's very confident," Schimmoeller said. "And the team is very confident when he's on the mound."

When asked if he was more pleased with his pitching or hitting, Schimmoeller laughed and said, "Oh, I don't know."

"I am really impressed with the boys," he said. "They've played pretty well. It's been a great start."

More preps, Page B2

■ SJCC's bats come to life in a 10-3 softball rout of Margaretta.

■ Tyler Kimmel throws a one-hitter to lead Clyde to a victory.

■ Old Fort sweeps a track tri-meet with Danbury and Bettsville.

News-Messenger reports

During a team meeting on Saturday, Fremont Ross coach Cathy Esposito told her boys squad that she was tired of getting the "little trophies."

"I wanted the big one," she implored.

The Little Giants delivered.

Ross, runner-up the last two years at the Bobcat Relays, turned in a dominating performance, winning eight events and tallying 137 points in the run-away victory.

Defiance finished second with 97 points.

"This was a lot of fun," Esposito said. "It wasn't a contest."

Adam Wilhelm and Jordan Edwards led the way for the boys, winning four events apiece.

They each were on the 400-, 800- and 1,600-meter relays and the sprint medley.

Elon Simms (110 hurdles, 800 and 1,600 relays) and Charles Jones (sprint medley, 400 and 800 relays) each earned three victories for the Ross boys.

The Ross girls finished last with 17 points. Napoleon won the girls division with 108 points.

Baseball

Giants are dreamin'

Ross continued its success on the "Field of Dreams," sweeping a double header with Huron.

The Little Giants won 5-2 and 15-5 in Vickery on the field that has the same dimensions as Detroit's old Tiger Stadium.

Ross is now 5-0 on the field.

"The kids really enjoyed the experience," Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller said. "They want to schedule more games there."

Doug Henkel went 4-for-4 with two doubles, a home run and four RBI in Game 2. His fourth-

inning blast went over the 350-foot wall in left-center field.

Cody Ruiz had two hits and four RBI and Jared Dickman had three RBI in that game.

In the opener, Aurelio Ruiz continued his clutch hitting with a two-run single in the fifth inning. Ruiz had a two-run single in the Little Giants' 6-5 win over regional powerhouse Sandusky Perkins on Thursday.

Kyle Cook (2-0) earned the victory in Game 1, allowing four hits and two runs (none earned) in the complete-game effort. Cook has gone 19 innings without allowing an earned run.

Kory Decker (2-1) won Game 2, allowing four hits and five runs (two earned).

The Little Giants' team ERA is just 0.77 during their stellar 7-1 start.

'Cats split with Waite

Woodmore scored three runs in the top of the seventh inning in Game 1 to salvage a double-header split with Toledo Waite.

Chandler Shirer hit a two-run triple and scored on a single by winning pitcher Billy Dyer in the Wildcats' 5-2 victory.

Dyer finished 3-for-4 with a solo homer and two RBI and allowed just three hits and struck out eight in the complete-game effort.

Dyer added four RBI — three on a bases-clearing double — in the 9-7 loss in Game 2.

Woodmore is now 4-4.

Oak Harbor swept

Bowling Green earned a pair of 6-5 victories over Oak Harbor in a double header.

Matt Bentlage took the defeat in the first game for the Rockets (2-4).

Ross defe

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross stranded 10 runners, including the bases loaded twice, but used stellar defense and solid pitching to defeat Bellevue 2-1 out of conference on Wednesday.

Each team made only one error.

"We left the bases loaded with no outs once," Rob Schimmoller said. "Bellevue played really well defensively. We were patient at the plate, and we put the ball in play. Both teams hit the ball and both fielded the ball well."

Only one Little Giant was retired via a strikeout.

Kyle Spriggs' fourth-inning home run was followed by a double from Kyle Cook. Aaron Opelt drove home Cook with a two-out single.

The Redmen got the leadoff hitter aboard in the seventh but Brad Cobb (3-0) struck out the next batter before allowing a double to put runners on second and third with one out. Doug Henkel relieved and struck out the final two hitters.

Cobb allowed one run in 6¹/₂ innings. Henkel notched his second save and Jared Dickman added a double for Ross (8-1).

Alex Malott was 2-for-3 with a double and run and Robbie Smith drove in a run for Bellevue. Drew Linder allowed four hits and struck out one in four innings.

Baseball

Fireman Henkel

Ross's Doug Henkel is equally adept at starting and putting out fires.

Henkel notched his third save, striking out each of the five batters he faced, and went 4-for-4 with a home run, three RBI and two runs as the Little Giants defeated New Riegel 11-7 out of conference.

Ross has won nine of its first 10 games primarily on the strength of its pitching. The Giants have allowed seven earned runs so far this season and their strikeout to walk ratio is 4:1.

Ross's staff entered with a combined ERA of 0.64 and only one of New Riegel's runs was earned.

"The pitching staff has really done their job," coach Rob Schimmoeller said.

Ross's defense abandoned it against New Riegel, committing eight errors, but this time the offense came to the rescue by compiling 12 hits.

The Giants scored seven runs in the final three innings.

Aaron Opelt drove in the Giants' eighth run with a sacrifice fly and Jon Franks gave the team two insurance runs with a homer in the seventh inning.

Ross's nine wins are only two shy of last season's total.

News-Messenger reports

Alex Black is making his mark for the Gibsonburg baseball team.

Black got the win with 6 2/3 innings of work on the mound and added two hits and three RBI as the Golden Bears defeated Genoa 9-8 for their second consecutive Suburban Lakes League victory on Friday.

Black (2-1) allowed eight runs while walking two and striking out four. Wyatt Kiser finished for the save as the Golden Bears (6-3-1, 2-0) survived five seventh-inning runs from Genoa.

Wes Milleson went 2-for-3 with a triple, three runs, three steals and an RBI, and Josh Kerbel and Tyler Donnell each was 2-for-4.

Donnell added two runs, Andy Gruner tripled and drove in a run and Kevin Davis singled, scored once and had an RBI.

Prior to Wednesday's victory over Woodmore the Bears hadn't won an SLL game in two years. Gibsonburg has already matched last year's win total.

Ross slips in GBC

Jared Dickman tripled and scored three runs, but Findlay defeated Fremont Ross 8-4 in the Greater Buckeye Conference.

Kyle Cook drove in two runs and Jon Franks and Dickman each added an RBI for the Little Giants (9-2, 1-1).

Findlay (5-3, 2-0) scored eight runs — including five unearned — in the first three innings.

"After that we played defense, and they didn't score," coach Rob Schimmoller said.

Cook (2-1) took the loss allowing eight runs, three earned, in three innings.

Tyler Curlis (2-1) notched the win pitching seven innings for Findlay.

Aurelio Ruiz relieved Cook and worked three innings, striking out five and allowing two hits but Ross's two-run seventh-inning rally fell short.

Woodmore explodes

Woodmore scored two dozen runs in four innings to top Lakota 24-3 in the Suburban Lakes League.

Jordan Shaw struck out seven in five innings and went 3-for-3 with two doubles and four RBI at the plate for the Wildcats (6-5, 1-1).

Matt Gerwin was 3-for-5 with four RBI and Dana Wend added two of Woodmore's 18 hits.

Brett Golightley, James Shaffer, Shane Paule and Mike Dufendock each had two hits for the Wildcats.

Baseball

23 in two

Fremont Ross allowed 23 run in two games, losing to Defiance 11-8 and tying Tiffin Columbian 12-12 following two lightning delays.

Doug Henkel doubled and drove in a run, Jon Franks had two hits, two runs and two RBI and Kyle Cook drove in two runs in the loss. Kyle Spriggs added a home run.

Jared Dickman went 3-for-4 with a homer, five RBI and three runs, Robbie Hall was 3-for-3 with a double, RBI and four runs and Joey Garza went 3-for-4 with a double and three RBI in the tie. Aaron Opelt had three hits and an RBI.

"The kids hit the ball hard and never quit," coach Rob Schimmoeller said. "We knew coming in that we had a lot of tired arms and would have to score a lot of runs. We had a shot to win Game 1 in the top of the seventh, but Kyle Cook was thrown out at the plate and Defiance came back with three runs."

The Little Giants are 9-3-1.

"We'll get our arms rested and be ready to go," Schimmoeller said. "We had a tough stretch with five games in four days."

Giants ranked in state

Ross No. 4 in first
AP baseball poll

News-Messenger reports

The Fremont Ross baseball players immediately wanted to know how special their new No. 4 state ranking was.

"The first thing they asked was, 'Has Ross ever been ranked before?'" Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller said.

The answer? No. At least not in recent memory.

Longtime assistant coach Roger Hetrick, who's been around the program since the 1970s, doesn't recall Ross ever being ranked.

Neither does athletic director Art Bucci.

"The kids were really excited," Schimmoeller said. "It's pretty cool."

"I thought maybe we would possibly be in the top 10," he continued. "I didn't think we would be that high."

The Little Giants (9-3-1) were behind only Springfield North, Celina and Hamilton in the initial Division I Associated Press coaches poll released on Monday.

They also received one first-place vote.

"It was really exciting that somebody voted us No. 1," Schimmoeller said.

Unfortunately for the Giants, they have gone 1-1-1 since the voting on Friday.

They hope to rebound today against Greater Buckeye Conference foe Napoleon.

"We need to get right back on track," Schimmoeller said. "We should be good to go."

No. 3 hurler Brad Cobb, who has the best statistics of any Ross hurler, will throw today.

Cobb is 3-0 with an amazing 0.36 ERA in 19½ innings.

He leads the stellar pitching staff, which has a combined ERA of 1.95.

Kyle Cook and Kory Decker each have two wins for the Giants.

Lead-off hitter Jared Dickman sparks the offense with his .609 on-base percentage and team-high 20 runs scored.

Aaron Opelt has a team-high .457 batting average, and Jon Franks has a team-best 15 RBI.



SCHIMMOELLER

Defense dooms Ross

Ross had four errors and allowed eight runs — six unearned — in the first two innings of a 9-3 loss to Greater Buckeye Conference foe Napoleon.

"It's frustrating," Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller said of the defensive woes.

Brad Cobb suffered the loss as the Little Giants, ranked No. 4 in the Associated Press Division I coaches poll, fell to 9-4-1 overall and 1-2 in the league.

Jared Dickman went 2-for-4 with two RBI and Doug Henkel had three hits for Ross.

ROSS D. OAK HARBOR 3-2 (8), 10-0 (5)

Show-stopper

Myers gives Little Giants needed relief

By MATTHEW HORN
Sports Writer

The Fremont Ross baseball team had lost its way after finding out it was the fourth ranked team in Division I.

Cody Myers may have helped it find its compass on Saturday.

Four losses and one tie sandwiching the unveiling of last Monday's state rankings had pressure building up on the Little Giants' shoulders.

That is until Myers played the Atlas role, not simply lifting the burden but yanking it down the left-field line and

just over the fence for a walk-off home run that gave Ross a 3-2 eight-inning victory over Oak Harbor in the first game of a double header at freshly dedicated Alumni Fields.

"I didn't think it would get out with the wind blowing in," Myers said. "It was a big hit. We'd been losing so many games, it helped us relax."

The Giants won the second game 10-0 in five innings.

Findlay defeated Ross (11-5-1) in the Greater Buckeye Conference on April 16 as the Giants allowed an uncharacteristic five unearned runs. Ross made three errors in the game.

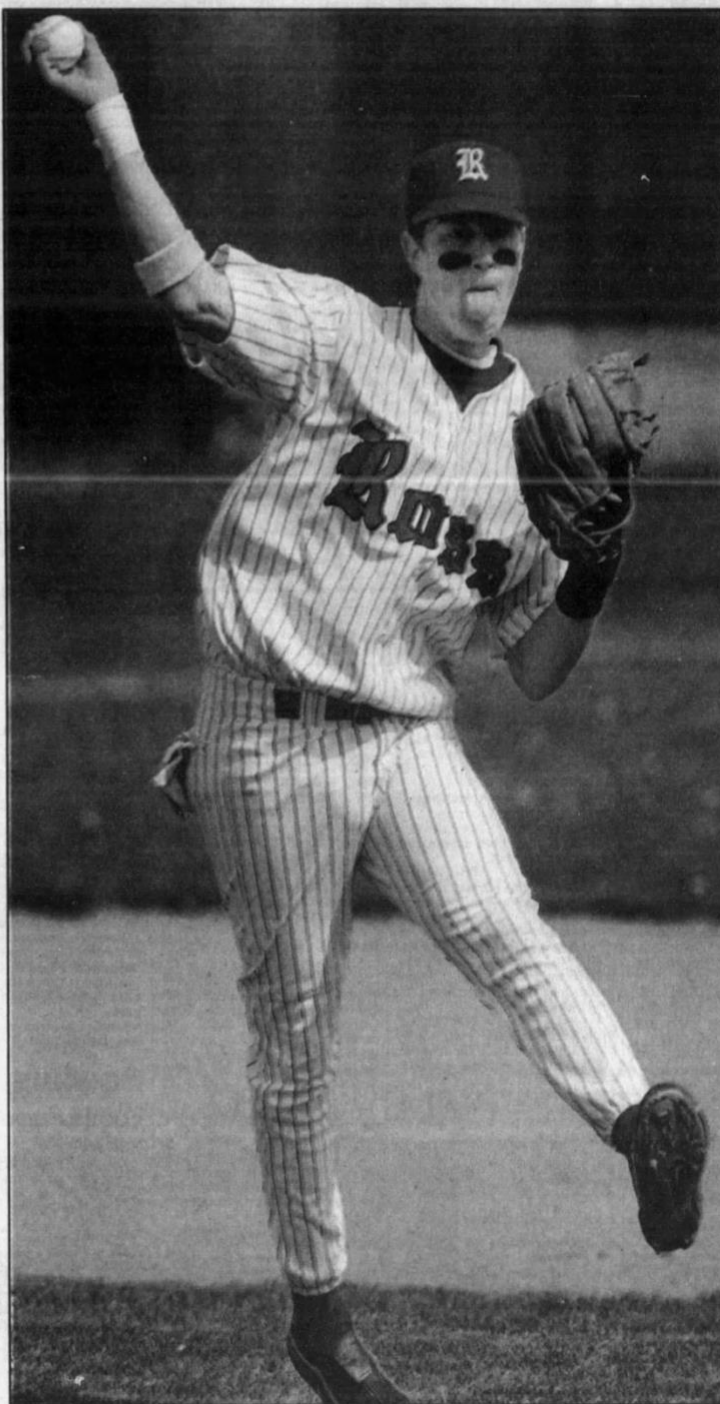
The Giants then lost the first half of a doubleheader 11-8 to Defiance and tied Tiffin Columbian 12-12 on April 17. Ross showed signs of life with four runs in the bottom of the seventh to tie Defiance but was contending with tired arms from a busy slate.

Also last week, the Giants lost another GBC game to Napoleon — allowing six unearned runs — and a one-run game to Lima Senior that virtually eliminated them from conference contention.

More preps, Page B4

■ Ross tennis team captures tournament in Sandusky.

■ Sara Hoffman fires one-hitter as Little Giants sweep twinbill.



News-Messenger/David Distelhorst
FREMONT ROSS THIRD BASEMAN Kyle Spriggs fires the ball to first base on Saturday. The Little Giants rebounded from recent struggles to sweep a double header with Oak Harbor.

See ROSS, B4



News-Messenger/David Distelhorst

DANIEL H. LEASE SR. throws the first pitch during a dedication of the varsity baseball field at Fremont Ross High School on Saturday. The field was named "Louise Ann Lease Memorial Field" in honor of his wife.

Ross rebounds, earns sweep

Continued From B1

But Ross demonstrated impressive resolve and a never-say-die attitude with the Game 1 victory on Saturday and made no errors in either game.

"We needed this for our self-confidence more than anything," coach Rob Schimmoeller said. "It was like a relief. You could almost see the sigh and the kids finally relaxed, and you saw what happened in the second game."

Robbie Hall went 2-for-3 with two RBI and Cody Ruiz added two RBI for the Giants in Game 2. Brad Cobb tripled and winning pitcher Doug Henkel doubled.

Henkel (2-0) threw three innings, allowing no runs and two hits. Brad Cobb finished with two innings of hitless relief.

Henkel was 3-for-4 with a run and stolen base, Joey Garza doubled and drove in a run and Myers added a second RBI in Game 1. Kyle Cook (3-1) notched the win going the distance.

The normally reserved Schimmoeller tried to light a fire under the Giants prior to Game 1.

"He yelled a little today," Myers said. "We kind of needed that. He doesn't get on us. When he does, you know you're doing something wrong and you need to do something right."

Myers and Schimmoeller said the key to the team's recent

struggles was a lack of focus.

"To get a win under our belts after so many losses got our heads back into it," Myers said. "We needed a win really bad. It lifted a weight off our shoulders. We're back on track."

Kory Witt went 5-for-5 on the day for Oak Harbor (6-8). Matt Bentlage (4-3) went pitch-for-pitch with Cook until Myers' blast, and T.J. Grof lost in his first varsity start in Game 2.

"Grof is an extra arm for me — that's encouraging," Oak Harbor coach Tim Fogle said. "(Witt) needed this. He's been putting the bat on the ball but not getting on base. We knew it was a matter of time before he broke loose."

Bentlage finished Friday's victory over Port Clinton for the win, and Fogle said Saturday marked his best start.

"My curve was working and I was positioning my fastball," Bentlage said. "We gave them a run for their money in the first game. Hopefully, we'll have a chance to see them again later."

Now, it's the Rockets' turn to reverse field.

"Sometimes you have to have a loss like today to learn from," Fogle said.

Schimmoeller said: "It's a long season. Everybody loses in baseball. Hopefully, it's out of our system."

Baseball

Ross powers to win

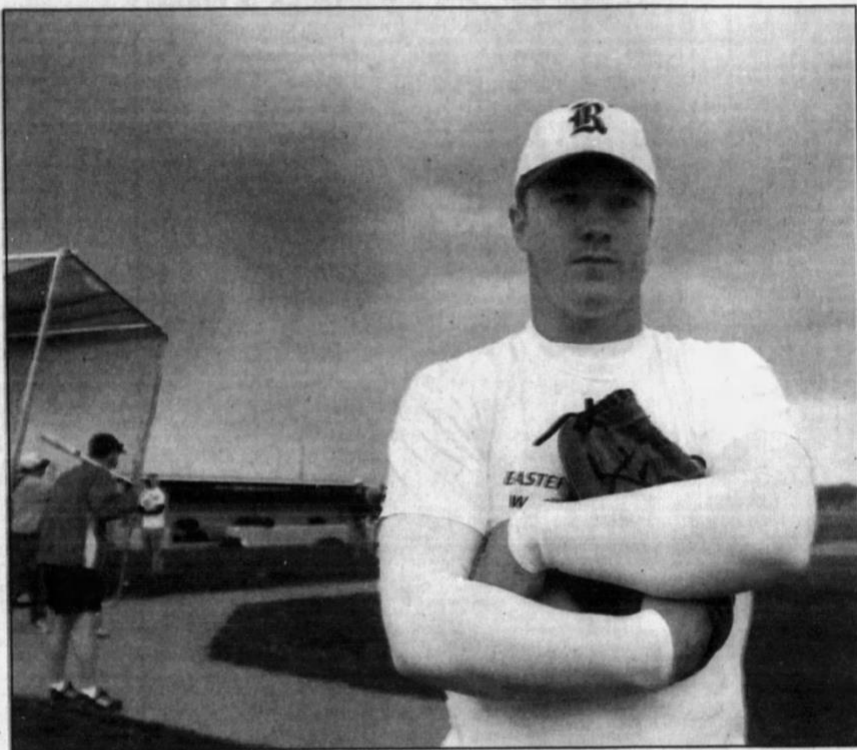
Jon Franks hit a solo homer and Jared Dickman hit a three-run shot in the seventh inning as Fremont Ross topped Marion Harding 10-9.

The Little Giants (12-5-1, 2-3) scored five runs in the frame to rally past their Greater Buckeye Conference counterparts.

Doug Henkel also homered and finished 2-for-4 for Ross.

Cody Myers had two hits and two RBI, and winning pitcher Aurelio Ruiz tallied two hits and an RBI.

Ruiz (1-0) allowed two hits and struck out three in 1 2/3 innings of relief.



News-Messenger/David Diethorst

LEADOFF HITTER JARED Dickman, who owns a team-best .545 on-base percentage, guides Fremont Ross into the Division I postseason tournament. The Little Giants play Mansfield Senior in Monday's sectional opener.

Top-notch

Dickman shines in leadoff spot for Little Giants

By **MATTHEW HORN**
Sports Writer

Fremont Ross leadoff hitter Jared Dickman enjoys his freedom at the top of the order.

And he has done nothing this season to indicate he shouldn't be trusted with his license.

Dickman has a team-high .545 on-base percentage and 19 walks. He has stolen 13 bases without being caught.

"I have the freedom to bunt, hit away, steal and do what I think will help the team," he said. "I see a lot of pitches, and I walk a lot."

"My job is to get on base," Dickman continued. "I feel I'm doing my job to the fullest."

Dickman leads Ross into the Division I postseason tournament this week. The Little Giants (12-5) open sectional play on Monday against Mansfield Senior.

The postseason begins today with seven area baseball teams and three area softball teams scheduled to play.

There was some concern in the fall as to whether Dickman would be healthy enough to play chauffeur on the baseball team. He partially tore the

Today's playoff openers

BASEBALL Division II

At Sandusky Perkins

Port Clinton at Oak Harbor, 10 a.m.

Perkins vs. Clyde, 1 p.m.

Fostoria vs. Bellevue, 4 p.m.

Division III

At Edison

Huron vs. Lakota, noon

At Genoa

Woodmore vs. Evergreen, 10:30 a.m.

Division IV

At Old Fort

Gibsonburg vs. Old Fort, 1 p.m.

Bettsville vs. Danbury, 30 minutes later

SOFTBALL

Division II

At Maumee

Oak Harbor vs. Rossford, 11 a.m.

Division III

At Margaretta

Margaretta vs. Edison, noon

Division IV

At Old Fort

Old Fort vs. Sandusky St. Mary, noon

■ Full postseason slate, **Page B3**

MCL in his left knee the second day of football contact drills in August.

Dickman, who was projected to be one of the team's top running backs, returned and had a solid performance against Benedictine but reinjured the knee the next game against St. Charles and couldn't finish the season.

Dickman had a moment of trepidation during a preseason baseball scrimmage with Ottawa Hills when he thought he hurt his knee again. Instead, he tweaked his left hamstring, an injury that continues to linger but has not kept Dickman out of the lineup.

"He's still stealing bases with a bad hamstring," Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller said. "He's definitely not at full speed, but he's such a smart baserunner that he steals off the pitcher and not the catcher."

Dickman has reached base 36 times via a walk or hit and scored a team-high 24 runs.

Schimmoeller said Dickman's patience and personality enable him to thrive setting the table.

"If he has less than two strikes he won't swing at a pitch unless it's a pitch he hits well," Schimmoeller said. "He's very outgoing. Everybody seems to gravitate toward him. He's very personable, and that makes him a natural leader."

Doug Henkel bats second and buoys the startling rate of execution. Henkel leads the team with 28 hits, 17 RBI and 41 total bases.

"I'm 100 percent confident I'll score when I get on," Dickman said. "There's no reason I can't score every time. The No. 2 hitter hits to the opposite field and takes swings away from himself so I can steal. You can't ask for a better second hitter. He does his job."

See **DICKMAN, B3**

Dickman guides Little Giants into the postseason

Continued From B1

Henkel (2-0, 3 saves) has also fulfilled his responsibilities on the mound. He has allowed only five earned runs and struck out 33 batters in 20 innings.

"I've had good command with my fastball this year — two-seam and four," Henkel said.

Schimmoeller said Henkel's curve has been the key.

"When he throws his curve for strikes his fastball becomes nearly unhittable," Schimmoeller said. "He's been a bulldog.

Whenever we needed an out and brought him in, he's got it — and most times by strikeout. He's been a great senior leader."

The Giants' proficiency at the top of the order enables the other batters to see what an opposing pitcher has in his arsenal that day and often provides the team's stellar pitching and defense with a cushion to operate with. The team ERA is 2.26.

"When we score first, it seems like the guys self-confidence goes up even higher," Schimmoeller said.

Ross ascended to the fourth spot in the initial Associated Press Division I coaches

rankings two weeks ago, but shoddy defense, subpar pitching and a bevy of runners left on base saw the team fall behind early often and go winless in five games.

But Dickman said the team is back on track after a double-header sweep of Oak Harbor this past Saturday.

"Our pitching keeps us in games," Dickman said. "We're capable of scoring 10 runs per game, no matter who the pitcher is. We have to score runs. The capabilities of this team are endless. If we keep fielding, hitting and pitching, there's no reason we can't go to state."

Ross gets eliminated in opener

Giants stunned by Mansfield Senior

News-Messenger reports

The Fremont Ross baseball team started the season 9-1 and earned a nice, shiny No. 4 ranking in the initial Associated Press Division I coaches' poll.

The Little Giants had dreams of a memorable season.

It has turned into more of a nightmare year.

Ross was eliminated from the postseason with an 8-6 loss to lowly Mansfield Senior in Monday's sectional opener at Mansfield Madison.

"This is very disappointing," said Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller on his cell phone while riding back to Fremont. "The guys are pretty quiet on the bus right now.

"It's a big-time downer," he continued.

Ross fell to 12-6-1.

Mansfield (3-12) scored three first-inning runs — all with two outs — to set the tone and finished with 10 hits — all singles.

"It seemed like everything they hit tonight had eyes," Schimmoeller said. "We hit the ball hard, just right at people."

Joey Garza had a two-run double and Doug Henkel had a two-run single as the Little Giants tallied five in the fifth inning to pull within 7-6.

They, however, couldn't get any closer.

Jared Dickman hit a first-inning solo home run for the Little Giants.

Kyle Cook (3-2) took the loss. He allowed six runs and six hits in 4¹/₃ innings.

Cook struck out eight and walked four.

Jared Frederici, who went 2-for-2 with two runs scored, earned the complete-game victory.

"It's all really frustrating," Schimmoeller said.

See ROUNDUP, B3

Ross gets eliminated in opener

Giants stunned by Mansfield Senior

News-Messenger reports

The Fremont Ross baseball team started the season 9-1 and earned a nice, shiny No. 4 ranking in the initial Associated Press Division I coaches' poll.

The Little Giants had dreams of a memorable season.

It has turned into more of a nightmare year.

Ross was eliminated from the postseason with an 8-6 loss to lowly Mansfield Senior in Monday's sectional opener at Mansfield Madison.

"This is very disappointing," said Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller on his cell phone while riding back to Fremont. "The guys are pretty quiet on the bus right now.

"It's a big-time downer," he continued.

Ross fell to 12-6-1.

Mansfield (3-12) scored three first-inning runs — all with two outs — to set the tone and finished with 10 hits — all singles.

"It seemed like everything they hit tonight had eyes," Schimmoeller said. "We hit the ball hard, just right at people."

Joey Garza had a two-run double and Doug Henkel had a two-run single as the Little Giants tallied five in the fifth inning to pull within 7-6.

They, however, couldn't get any closer.

Jared Dickman hit a first-inning solo home run for the Little Giants.

Kyle Cook (3-2) took the loss. He allowed six runs and six hits in 4¹/₃ innings.

Cook struck out eight and walked four.

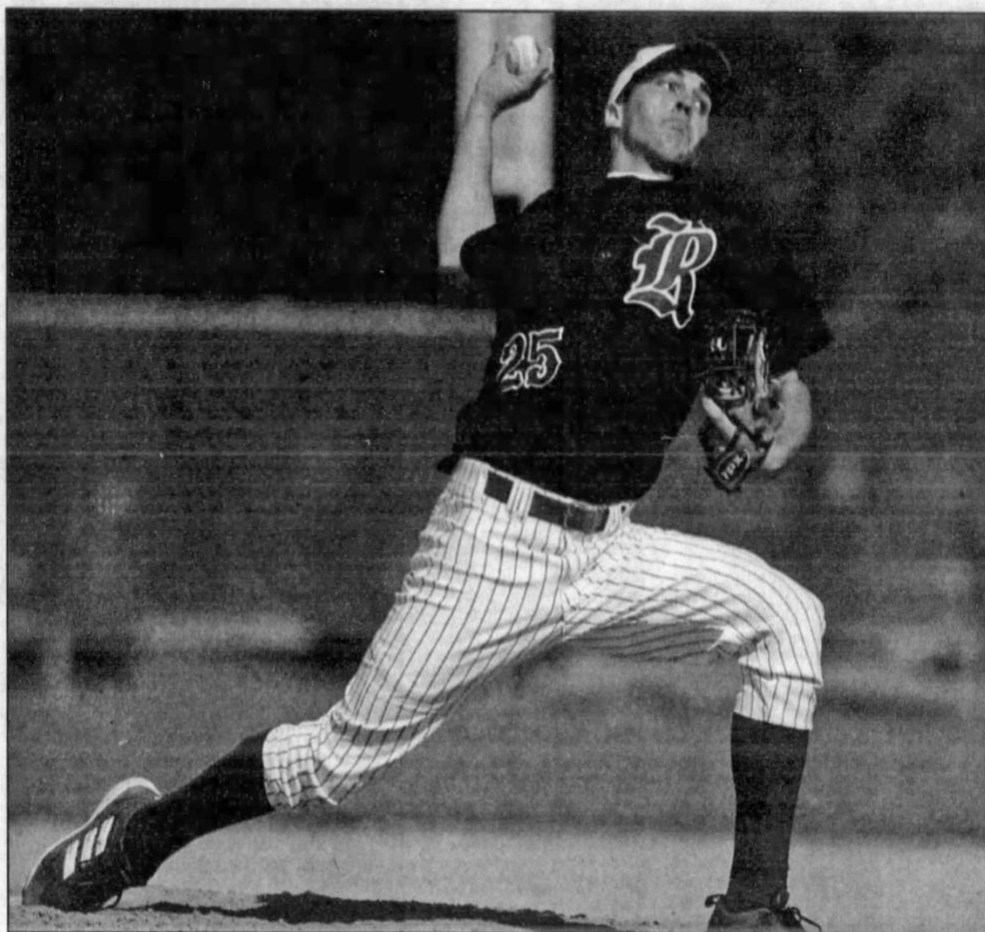
Jared Frederici, who went 2-for-2 with two runs scored, earned the complete-game victory.

"It's all really frustrating," Schimmoeller said.

See ROUNDUP, B3

ROSS 13, SANDUSKY 1

Giant rebound



News-Messenger/David Distelhorst

KORY DECKER fired a two-hitter in Fremont Ross's 13-1 five-inning victory over archrival Sandusky on Wednesday.

Ross recovers from sectional loss, rolls by rival

By NICK MATHEWS
Sports Editor

No yelling. No screaming. No scolding.

Not necessary. "I didn't have to say anything to them really," Fremont Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller said of his Little Giants' Division I sectional-opening loss to Mansfield Senior.

"They knew they didn't play well," he continued. "They knew they had to come back strong."

His squad responded from Monday's loss with one of its best practices of the season on Tuesday and a 13-1 five-in-

More preps, Page B3

- Oak Harbor tops Perkins in a 12-inning softball thriller.
- Kristen Dix comes up with another clutch hit for Gibsonburg.
- SJCC baseball team scores 22 in a victory over Bettsville.

ning rout of Sandusky on Wednesday.

The postseason is over. The season is not.

"They all want to go out in style," Schimmoeller said.

Kyle Spriggs — one of seven Ross seniors — went 3-for-3 with four RBI and Kory Decker fired a two-hitter in the rout of their rivals.

"It feels great to stomp on them," Spriggs said. "We

needed that to get some confidence and have some fun."

Kyle Cook's two-run homer highlighted the 11-hit onslaught and helped the Little Giants hold out slim hope for a share of the Greater Buckeye Conference title.

Ross (13-6, 3-3) is two games behind Findlay in the league standings. The Little Giants must hope for a Findlay setback and beat the Tro-

jans at home next Friday.

"We are really disappointed with our tournament performance, but we can still make up for it by winning the league," said Spriggs, whose two-run single opened the floodgates in the first inning. "That'd be really nice. That's what we're aiming for."

On Monday, the Little Giants — who at one time were 9-1 and ranked No. 4 in the state — played one of their worst games of the season, falling 8-6 to a Mansfield Senior squad that has just three victories.

See ROSS, B3

Ross still has outside chance at league title

Continued From B1

"It seems like no matter who we play, we always play to the competition," Spriggs said. "If we are playing someone good or someone bad, we play to their level, instead of playing at our level."

"We knew all along that we were better than how we played," he continued.

They showed it on Wednesday.

Lead-off hitter Jared Dickman drew a seven-pitch walk to open the bottom of the first inning and eventually scored on Spriggs' line drive that screamed past Sandusky third baseman Tristian Sample.

Aaron Opelt followed with a two-run bloop single off freshman hurler Kevin Appell (0-3), and Ross was on its way.

The Little Giants tacked on six more in the second on five singles — including RBI hits by Robbie Hall, Joey Garza, Spriggs and Aurelio Ruiz — and four errors by Sandusky (2-14, 1-5).

Cook, Ross's No. 9 hitter, invoked the mercy-rule with his blast down the left-field line.

"We have power all of the way through the lineup," Spriggs said. "It's a good lineup. There is no real weakness."

There was no weakness on the mound on Wednesday either.

Decker gave up a single to lead-off hitter Pat McAuley in the top of the first inning but didn't allow another hit until the fifth.

Sandusky got its only run when Kevin Lasonoski drew a bases-loaded walk in the fifth.

Decker (3-3) finished with six strikeouts and five walks.

"This is how we can play," Spriggs said.

Baseball.....

Ross tallies 20 in win

No. 9 hitter Robbie Hall went 4-for-4 with five RBI as Ross crushed Marion Harding 20-2 in five innings.

It was the second time this season that the Little Giants scored at least 20 runs. They tallied 23 in a shutout win over Liberty Center earlier.

Monday's offensive explosion came a week after Ross was shocked and eliminated from the postseason by Mansfield Senior, which had just three victories, in the Division I sectional opener.

Kyle Spriggs added three hits and two RBI for the Giants (14-8-1), who scored nine runs in the second and seven in the fourth.

Joey Garza had two hits and two RBI, and Aurelio Ruiz was 2-for-4 with an RBI.

Kory Decker, Aaron Opelt and Jared Dickman each had a hit and two RBI.

Kyle Cook (4-2) got the victory, striking out seven and allowing just three hits and two walks.

Baseball

Ross falls late

Napoleon scored four runs in the top of the seventh inning to beat Fremont Ross 5-4 and eliminate the Little Giants from the Greater Buckeye Conference title race.

Ross fell to 14-9-1 overall and 4-4 in the league.

Starting pitcher Doug Henkel had a hit and two RBI for the Little Giants.

Henkel threw $5\frac{1}{3}$ hitless innings. He allowed one unearned run and walked six.

Jared Dickman was 2-for-3 with a double and an RBI for Ross.

nmpreps

Ross pounds rival

News-Messenger reports

Jared Dickman hit a lead-off home run to start the offensive fireworks and Kory Decker fired a two-hitter in Fremont Ross's 13-3 six-inning rout of rival Sandusky.

The Little Giants scored five first-inning runs to set the tone.

Ross improved to 15-9-1 overall and 5-4 in the Greater Buckeye Conference.

Decker (4-3) struck out four and allowed just one earned run.

Kyle Cook had two hits — including a triple — and three RBI and Doug Henkel had two hits and three RBI for the Little Giants.

Kyle Spriggs added a two-run double for Ross.

The Little Giants finish up their season today at home against GBC foe Findlay.

SJCC coach Bill Bork said.

SJCC has won four of its last six games to improve to 8-19.

"That's what you want to see," Bork said. "We want to be playing our best at the end of the year."

Winning pitcher Alyssa Dickman and Jamie Bork each had two hits for the Crimson Streaks.

SJCC finishes its season on Saturday with a double header at Port Clinton.

Bettsville falls

Jenny Schumm had three hits and Samantha Ludwig had two hits and three RBI, but Bettsville lost 19-5 to Toledo Christian.

Bettsville fell to 3-22.

Tennis

Area shut out in Division II

Napoleon on Wednesday.

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

Wildcats downed

Erin Stoffan's solo home run was Woodmore's only bright spot in a 10-1 loss to Genoa.

The Wildcats fell to 7-18 overall and 2-10 in the SLL.

Genoa improved to 23-5 overall and 11-3 in the SLL.

Lakota blanked

Eastwood blanked Lakota 3-0 as Hannah Bursiek suffered the loss.

Katie Dennis had a hit for the Raiders.

Baseball

Ross stumbles in finale

Fremont Ross trailed by just three runs after the fourth inning but imploded in a 17-5 season-ending loss to Findlay.

The Trojans, who captured the Greater Buckeye Conference title, scored eight runs in the fifth and seven in the sixth.

Ross, which started the season 9-1, finished the campaign

15-10-1.

"They are frustrated," Ross coach Rob Schimmoeller said. "They're upset about the way it ended."

Findlay had just three hits in the fifth inning and nine for the game.

Ross had four errors, which led to eight unearned runs.

Jared Dickman finished his career with a stellar game. The lead-off hitter went 4-for-4 with an RBI.

Kyle Spriggs homered and had three RBI and Aurelio Ruiz also homered for the Little Giants.

Robbie Hall added two hits — including a double.

The Ross junior-varsity team finished its season 19-5 overall and tied for first in the GBC with a 9-1 mark.

Gibsonburg falls

Lake scored on a squeeze bunt in the bottom of the sixth inning to beat Gibsonburg 2-1.

Gibsonburg got only three hits and fell to 13-11-1 overall.

Picked last in the Suburban Lakes League in the preseason, the Golden Bears finished 7-7 in

Awards

High School

GBC Baseball All-Conference

First Team

Patrick Rohrbaugh.....Napoleon
Sean Walton.....Findlay
Scott Drollinger.....Marion Harding
Cody Myers.....Ross
Mike Leddy.....Findlay
Aurelio Ruiz.....Ros
Kyle Spriggs.....Ross
Zach Marshall.....Lima Sr.
Jared Dickman.....Ross
Brian Almond.....Marion Harding
Greg Keller.....Napoleon
Jake Haynes.....Marion Harding

Player of the Year — Tyler Curlis (Findlay).

Coach of the Year — Jack Foltz (Findlay).

Second Team

Ross — Kyle Cook, Robbie Hall, Doug Henkel.

Honorable Mention

Ross — Jon Franks, Aaron Opelt, Kory Decker, Joey Garza.