

Ross arms allow 4 hits

News-Messenger reports

WHITEHOUSE — Three Fremont Ross pitchers combined to pitch a four-hitter as the Little Giants defeated host Anthony Wayne 9-3.

Billy Sheets, Aaron Coonrod and Dan Cobb combined for 10 strikeouts as Ross opened with a win.

“Our pitchers did a real nice job,” Ross coach Chuck Lindsey said. “We also played real nice defense.”

Mike Hickey homered for the Little Giants. Hickey, Spencer Root, Brett Hufford and Cody Franks each had two hits in the win.

BASEBALL

Lozano, Hickey lift Ross

News Messenger reports

TIFFIN— Fremont Ross scored two runs in the sixth and two more in the seventh to top host Tiffin Columbian 6-2 Thursday in a non-league game.

Sophomore catcher Josh Lozano hit a pair of two-run home runs and senior Mike Hickey broke a 2-2 tie with a sixth inning single.

Ross improved to 2-0. Columbian is 1-1.

Aaron Bates and Dan Cobb combined to hold the Tornadoes to four hits.

“Our pitching has been outstanding, as I figured it would be,” said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey.

Columbian took a 1-0 lead in the first, but Lozano followed an Aaron Root walk with a home run to give the Little Giants the lead.

The Tornadoes tied the game in the fifth, but Ross rallied in the top of the sixth. Cody Franks singled and Jason Frawley reached on an error. Mack Cole then drew a walk and Hickey followed with a two-run single up the middle to put Ross ahead.

Lozano’s second homer in the seventh made it 6-2.

BASEBALL

Mistakes hurt Ross in GLL opener

News Messenger reports

FINDLAY— Mistakes in the field and on the basepaths cost Fremont Ross, as it opened its Great Lakes League season with a 7-1 loss to Findlay.

“This was one of those games where everything that could go wrong, did go wrong,” said Ross coach Chuck Lindsay.

In the top of the fifth, Josh Lozano was hit by a pitch and Roy Nino drew a walk. Mike Hickey followed with a single but Nino was thrown out trying for third.

BASEBALL

Clay spoils Giants' home opener

Fremont Ross hurt by miscues in 10-5 GLL loss

By MICHAEL PIDANICK
Staff writer

Oregon Clay made the big plays while Fremont Ross made the big mistakes, resulting in a 10-5 win for the Eagles.

Clay used aggressive base running and timely hitting and took advantage of ill-timed Little Giants' errors to spoil Ross's home opener.

"We made crucial mistakes at crucial times," said Ross coach

Chuck Lindsey. "It seemed like every time we walked someone or made an error, they would come up with a big hit."

Ross (2-2) has dropped its first two Great Lakes League contests.

The Eagles scored in five of the seven innings and were in control most of the way.

"We played a solid all-around game," said Clay second baseman Jim Downour, who reached base all four times he batted and scored two runs. "We played well on offense and defense and we played all seven innings."

Clay coach Karl Knierim was pleased with the win.

"It's a real good win for us to come to Fremont and beat them," he said. "That's a real good ball club."

The Eagles were effective on the base paths, stealing six bases and advancing on three wild pitches.

"We have some aggressive runners and we did a nice job today," Knierim said.

Ross, however, had three innings end when runners were thrown out trying to advance.

Tim Haynes was 3-for-5 with three RBI for Clay. Andy Schlageter also had two hits for the Eagles.

Roy Nino was 3-for-3 for Ross with a run scored and two RBI.

"It seemed like every time we walked someone or made an error, they would come up with a big hit."

— Ross coach Chuck Lindsey

The Eagles manufactured a run in the first. Ross pitcher Aaron Coonrod hit lead-off batter Jason Halka with a pitch. Halka stole second, advanced to third on an infield single and scored on a two-out wild pitch.

In the bottom of the first, Patchen retired the first two Ross batters. Little Giants' first baseman Brett Hufford followed with a bloop single but was

thrown out easily as he tried to stretch it into a double.

Ross loaded the bases in the bottom of the second, but Patchen got Jason Frawley to fly out to left to end the threat.

The Eagles pushed their lead to 3-0 in the third. With one out, Haynes and Jeff Hoss came through with consecutive singles. Coonrod struck out Ron Henneman, but Schlageter followed with a line drive single up the middle to score both runners.

In the fourth, the Eagles added two more runs on just one hit, due in large part to a pair of

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Ross drops GLL game against Clay

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walks and a key error. Clay tacked on three more in the fifth. Henneman opened with a single, stole second and scored on an errant pickoff attempt. A pair of walks, a successful suicide squeeze bunt by Joel Byers and an RBI single by Patchen gave the visitors a commanding 8-0 advantage.

Ross rallied in the sixth. With one out Hufford drew a walk and Coonrod followed with a single. One out later, Nino came through with a two-run single. Catcher Julian Domiray followed with an RBI double, bringing the Little

Giants within 8-3 and. Josh Lozano lined relief pitcher Adam Pfieffer's first pitch to left field for a base hit. But Domiray was thrown out at the plate by Byers to end the inning.

Doug Miller and Jeff Wassil each had two hits for the Golden Bears.

The Eagles added two runs in the top of the seventh on a two-run single by Haynes.

Ross added two more in the bottom of the seventh, but Pfieffer was able to close the door.

"Give (Ross) a lot of credit," Knierim said. "They didn't quit and put up a fight until the end."

Relaxed Ross routs Bedford; Lakota holds off Woodmore

News-Messenger reports

BEDFORD, Mich. — Prior to Wednesday's Great Lakes League game at Bedford, the Fremont Ross baseball team had a team meeting.

"The kids needed to relax out there and they had been reading and hearing about how good they were supposed to be," said coach Chuck Lindsey. "They were thinking about not making mistakes. I told them to just go out and have fun."

The Little Giants had a lot fun in the game, pounding out 12 hits and routing the Kicking Mules 11-4.

Senior pitcher Billy Sheets got the win and helped his own cause by going 2-for-4 with a home run, double and four RBI.

"Billy threw a great game," Lindsey said. "Out of the nine hits he allowed, at least seven of them came after a two-strike pitch that just missed the corner. So the stats don't really show how great he was today."

Josh Lozano was 3-for-4 with five RBI, Julian Domiray was 3-for-4 and Spencer Root was 2-for-4 for the Little Giants, who improved to 3-2 overall and 1-2 in the GLL.

Lindsey was also pleased with his team's play in the field.

The Little Giants host Margaretta in a non-league contest today. Monday, Ross will play at top-ranked Toledo Start.

In other games Thursday:

BASEBALL

Lakota 10, Woodmore 7

KANSAS — Lakota jumped out to an early 9-0 lead and held on to beat Woodmore.

Dan Burdette pitched a hitless four innings and recorded the win for the Raiders. He struck out four and walked three. Jared Lowery pitched the final three innings.

The Wildcats did not get their first hit until the top of the sixth, but went on to score three runs in that inning and four more in the seventh to close the gap.

"The kids didn't quit," Woodmore coach Bruce Hammersmith said. "We put some hits and some walks together in the last couple innings, so you couldn't ask for more."

Woodmore travels to New Riegel today. Lakota is off until Monday, when it hosts Eastwood.

St. Joe vs. Hopewell-Loudon, ppd.

The Midland Athletic League game between St. Joseph Central Catholic and Hopewell-Loudon at Conner Park was postponed because of wet field conditions.

No makeup date has been announced.

The Crimson Streaks game with Northwood originally scheduled for today has been rescheduled.

Top-ranked Start edges Little Giants

News-Messenger reports

TOLEDO — Fremont Ross came within a run of the nation's best high school baseball team Monday.

Toledo Start, ranked first in the USA TODAY high school baseball poll, defeated the visiting Little Giants 2-1.

The Spartans remained unbeaten in eight games while the Little Giants, who had four hits, dropped to 3-3.

"We were playing the No. 1 team in the nation and did a

BASEBALL

great job hanging tough," Ross coach Chuck Lindsey said.

Billy Sheets went 2-for-3, Julian Domiray doubled and Mike Hickey singled for the Little Giants' hits. Dan Cobb took the loss.

In other games Monday:

Oak Harbor 3, Margaretta 1

CASTALIA — Ed Diefenthaler pitched a three-hitter and Jeff Harbal doubled Monday, leading

Oak Harbor to a 3-1 Sandusky Bay Conference victory over Margaretta.

The Polar Bears scored a run in the first inning but couldn't reach Diefenthaler the rest of the way.

"He had good command of his pitches," Oak Harbor coach Tim Harbal said. "We also had some timely hits."

The Rockets scored single runs in the fourth, fifth and sixth innings and improved to 2-4 and 1-0 in the SBC.

Diefenthaler and Jacob Radick both hit singles for Oak Harbor, which travels to Port Clinton on Wednesday.

Lakota 4, Eastwood 1

PEMBERVILLE — Adam Gnepper pitched a two-hitter and Shawn Babcock went 2-for-3 and scored twice for the Raiders.

Gnepper, who improved to 3-0, lost his shutout in the bottom of the seventh inning.

Lakota, which also got an RBI single from Joel Crawford, improved to 7-1 and 3-0 in the

Suburban Lakes League.

Eastwood fell to 4-2 and 1-1 in the league.

Gibsonburg 15, Lake 5

MILLBURY — The Golden Bears remained in a tie for first place in the SLL with the win, which ran their record to 7-2 and 3-0 in the league.

Every starter had at least one hit and Larry LaSavia pitched a complete-game eight-hitter for Gibsonburg. LaSavia struck out

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nine and walked four.

Doug Miller, LaSavia and Andy Bricker all hit home runs for the Bears, who finished with 13 hits. Doug Miller collected three hits and Brian Reidmaier, Nick Kaemming and Dave Mason had two apiece.

Ross's Coonrod fans 14 in win

News-Messenger reports

FOSTORIA — Fremont Ross' Aaron Coonrod struck out 14 batters Monday as Ross edged Fostoria in a Great Lakes League battle.

Coonrod allowed two hits and two walks as the Little Giants improved to 4-3 overall and 2-2 in the league.

"He threw an outstanding game," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey.

"He has been working a lot on improving his control."

Ross took the lead in the second as catcher Julian Domiray scored on a passed ball. The Giants extended their lead in the sixth as Coonrod's RBI ground out scored Aaron Root.

Seneca East 13 St. Joe 1

For the first three innings St. Joseph Central Catholic played solid baseball. Then things came apart.

Seneca East scored 13 runs in the fourth and fifth innings and routed the Crimson Streaks.

"We started out real well," said St. Joe coach Rick Barbour. "But it went down hill quick."

The Streaks suffered a double loss in the game, as A.J. O'Neal, the team's leading hitter, went down in the first inning with a hip injury. Barbour said a doctor feels it might be arthritis.

BASEBALL

St. Joe fell to 6-4 overall and 0-3 in the league. Seneca East is 13-1 and 3-0 in the league.

Barbour doesn't think there is any way the Tigers will lose three games in the MAL, meaning the Streaks hopes for the league title are slim.

"We'll just concentrate on the state tournament and the St. Mary's Tournament (May 16 and 23)," Barbour said. "And maybe we can be a spoiler in the MAL, too."

Otsego 19, Gibsonburg 4

GIBSONBURG — Otsego scored 11 runs in the third and buried Gibsonburg.

Brian Riedmaier went 2-for-3 for the Golden Bears.

Gibsonburg is 7-5, and 3-3 in the Suburban Lakes League.

Perkins 12, Clyde 4

CLYDE — Perkins scored five runs in the top of the first and never looked back in a rout of Clyde.

Lyle Brown homered for the Fliers, who fell to 1-11, and 0-4 in the Sandusky Bay Conference.

Northwood 10, Lakota 7

KANSAS — A five-run fifth propelled Northwood over Lakota in the SLL.

Jared Lowery went 2-for-4 for

the Raiders, who fell to 8-4, 3-3.

N. Baltimore 7 Old Fort 1

OLD FORT — Winning pitcher Ryan Clark homered to help his own cause as North Baltimore topped Old Fort in the MAL.

Tony Lawrence accounted for both Stockaders runs with a two-run single in the fifth.

Old Fort fell to 3-4 in the MAL.

Genoa 5 Woodmore 1

GENOA — Genoa used a four-run rally in the third inning to top Woodmore, 5-1, in an Suburban Lakes League contest.

After an 0-3 SLL start, the Comets have rebounded to win two in a row. They are 5-4 overall.

"Starting to roll," said Genoa coach Gary Nissen. "We are finally starting to get going get after a tough start."

Woodmore fell to 3-6, 1-4.

Joe Buehler led off the third inning with a home run. Jeff Keaton folowed with a walk. Nathan Egbert laid down a sacrifice bunt and the Wildcats threw the ball away allowing Keaton to get to third. After a walk to Jon Dunn, Genoa executed a double steal and Keaton stole home. Eric McDaniel followed with a sacrifice fly.

Genoa is at Lake on Wednesday. Woodmore travels to Oak Harbor today.

Ben's pitching and us playing good defense. We had a tremendous effort on defense.

"We made diving catches and had kids going to the hole knocking the ball down. With no errors, that's a plus. You can win some ballgames when you don't have any errors."

Oak Harbor hosts Clyde today while Woodmore travels to Port Clinton on Thursday.

In other games Tuesday:

Ross 15 Napoleon 8

NAPOLEON — Fremont Ross hit the ball hard and often in a 15-8 win over Napoleon.

The Little Giants improved to 5-3 on the season, as they pounded out 14 hits.

"Offensively we played real well," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey. "Defensively we played pretty well too. We made a few errors, but mentally we made smart plays."

Aaron Coonrod went 4-for-4 with five RBI. Josh Lozano hit two doubles and scored two runs.

Spencer Root and Brett Huford also had two hits and Cody

Franks drove in three runs for the Little Giants.

Lindsey feels his team is headed in the right direction.

"This team is really starting to come together and grow as a group," he said.

The sectional pairings will be determined at a meeting today and Lindsey said his team is confident they can play with anyone.

"I asked them who they wanted me to draw," the coach said. "They said let's play the number one team."

Ross will travel to Mansfield Thursday to play Madison, the sixth-ranked team in the state. The Giants return home Friday to play Whitmer.

Northwood 6 Old Fort 2

OLD FORT — Northwood scored four runs in the top of the first and topped Old Fort.

Old Fort's Tony Florence ripped a two-run single in the bottom of the fifth for the only Stockaders offense.

Losing pitcher John Weslow

See LAKOTA, B2

ting stroke.

Radsick ripped a two-run home run to left center in the eighth inning to rally Oak Harbor past St. Joseph Central Catholic in a non-league game.

"He's been in a slump all year. He got loose tonight," said Rockets coach Tim Harbal.

"He came through when he had to. Maybe this will give him a jump start."

St. Joe had taken the lead in the top of the eighth on a home run by Mike Abdoo. His shot to right center off of Mike Lippus bounced off the top of the fence and went over.

But Oak Harbor's Jon Layton walked off of losing pitcher Matt Gabel in bottom of the eighth and Radsick followed with a drive to left center for his first home run of the season.

Timely hitting by them was the difference," said St. Joe coach Rick Barbour. "They didn't have many hits (five) but they made them count."

Abdoo went 3-for-4 and drove in three runs for St. Joe. Tony Lenhart was 2-for-4 for the Streaks.

Gabel pitched eight innings and struck out 11, allowed five hits and walked four. His record is now 2-2.

"He pitched real well and did not deserve to lose," Barbour said. "Hopefully he doesn't get down from this."

Lippus got the win as he also went the distance, striking out two and walking only one.

Oak Harbor scored three in the top of the first. But Gabel calmed down after that and at one point retired eight straight Rocket batters.

The Streaks rallied with a run in the second and three more in the fourth to take the lead. The Rockets tied the game in the fifth.

In other games Thursday:

Madison 15, Ross 3
MANSFIELD — Fremont Ross

played with the sixth-ranked team in Ohio for the first four innings.

Then the wheels came off.

Mansfield Madison scored nine runs in the bottom of the fifth and topped the Little Giants 15-3 in a non-league game.

"They just started hitting the ball," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey. "They are the sixth-ranked team for a reason."

Dan Cobb took the loss on the mound to fall to 1-2. His other loss this season came against Toledo Start, then the number one ranked team in the country in the USA TODAY poll.

Mike Hickey and Roy Nino each had two hits for Ross, which fell to 5-4.

The Little Giants are home today against Whitmer.

"Hopefully we can keep our heads up and go out and play," Lindsey said. "Hopefully we can get a nice fan turnout."

Lakota 11, Old Fort 10

KANSAS — Lakota took advantage of five Old Fort errors and topped the Stockaders 11-10 in a non-league game.

Jon Marshall doubled and singled and drove in two runs as Lakota improved to 11-4.

Dan Burdette pitched 2 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings in relief and held Old Fort to just one run as he picked up his fourth win.

John Weslow went 3-for-4 with two doubles and two RBI for Old Fort.

Woodmore 8, Port Clinton 4

PORT CLINTON — Woodmore used the long ball in a non-league win over Port Clinton.

Jon Blechinger and Andy Wend homered as the Wildcats improved to 4-7.

Winning pitcher Jason Kelley went the distance, yielding seven hits and striking out six. The Wildcats broke a 4-4 tie with four runs in the top of the sixth.

Giants defeat Panthers

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross rebounded from Thursday's loss at Mansfield Madison with an 8-5 Great Lakes League win against Toledo Whitmer.

The Little Giants (6-4, 3-2) got a home run from Cody Franks and Aaron Coonrod and three RBI from Julian Domiray.

"We came up and got guys on base and the kids came through," Ross coach Chuck Lindsey said. "We had been hitting well but we had not been coming up with the big hits."

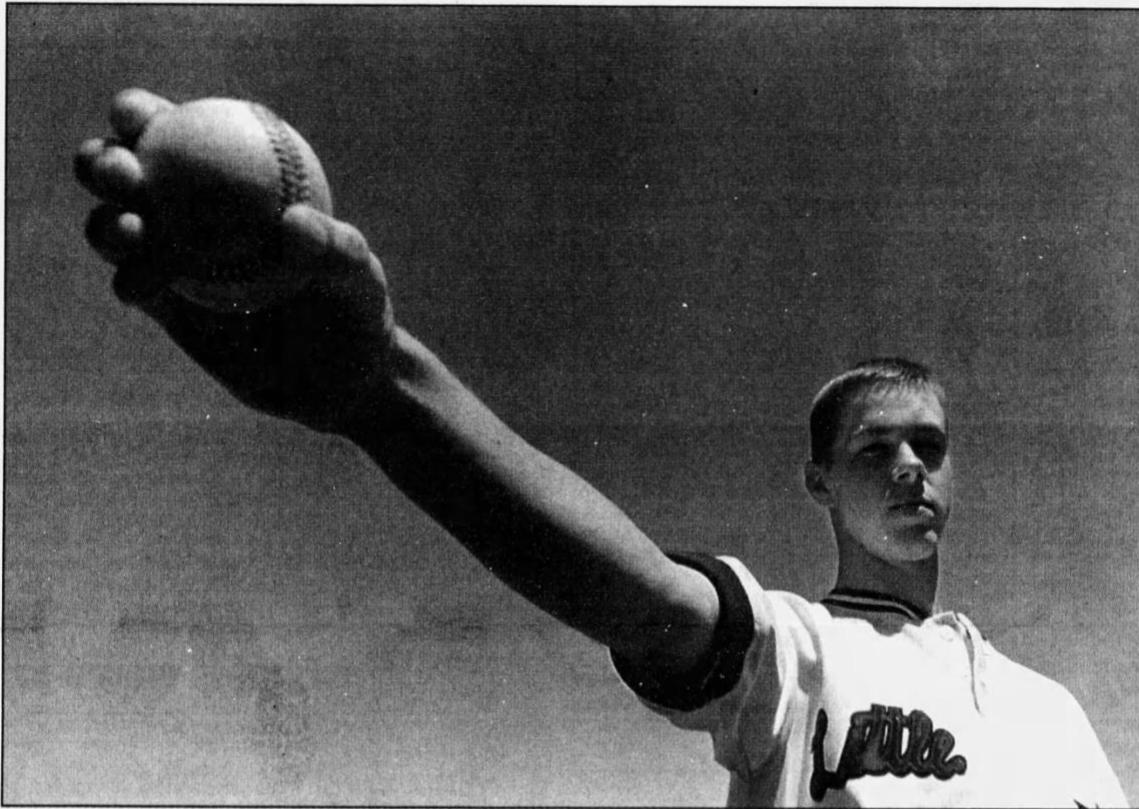
Billy Sheets pitched the first five innings for the win. Aaron Coonrod struck out six batters in two innings of relief.

"Our pitching is keeping us in games, and defensively we're doing a good job," Lindsey said.

BASEBALL

In other games Tuesday...

Sheets pitches past pain



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

BILLY SHEETS of Fremont Ross has struck out 22 batters while walking just seven this year en route to a 4-1 record.

Ross senior dedicates year to Dad

By BRIAN SPIESS
Sports editor

Roy Sheets Jr. witnessed every step of his son Billy's baseball career — from the backyard to the tee-ball fields to the high school diamonds.

And in 1998 the older Sheets was expected to watch his son become Fremont Ross's most reliable starting pitcher.

But on Feb. 18, Roy Sheets Jr. died of a heart attack at age 56.

"I dedicated this season to him," Billy Sheets said. "He came to every game and we would practice out in the yard. We were really close. Sometimes I still see him over there watching."

Sheets, The News-Messenger's Athlete of the Week, has won four consecutive games for the Little Giants since a season-opening loss at Findlay.

Ross coach Chuck Lindsey,

"He's the type of kid you'd like to take home with you."

— Ross assistant coach Roger Hetrick

who describes Sheets as "just a super kid," talked with Sheets about his dad prior to the season.

"I told him, 'You should try to do what (dad) would want you to do,'" Lindsey said. "And I think your dad would want you to play."

Sheets has allowed just 2.9 earned runs per game while striking out 22 batters and allowing just seven walks.

"He's our most consistent pitcher," Lindsey said. "He can throw a curveball with a full count. And if you can throw a curveball with a full count, you are a good pitcher."

Sheets uses a fastball and

curveball to set up his strikeout pitch — the slider.

Sheets, who started playing tee-ball at age 5 and has pitched ever since he was old enough, learned the slider from current teammate Brett Hufford when both were playing on a team for 13 year olds at Rodger Young Park.

Lindsey said the pitch can do about anything.

"He does not always throw the slider for a strike," Lindsey said, "but it must look like one because they swing at it."

"Not too many people can hit the slider," said Ross catcher Julian Domiray, who has confidence in his fellow senior.

"When Billy's pitching, you know that it is a win," Domiray said. "If we just give him some runs he can do the job for us."

Sheets' ability to change pitches was too much for

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Bill Sheets profile

School: Fremont Ross
Grade: Senior
Sport: Baseball (Pitcher)
Hobbies: Swimming, rollerblading
Family: Father Roy (deceased); mother Nancy; brother Troy Sachs, 30; sister Mindy Fritz, 30.

Whitmer Friday in Ross's 8-5 win.

"That was my highlight because we hadn't beaten Whitmer in like 10 years," Sheets said.

The toughest part of pitching is the pressure of controlling a big part of the game's outcome, Sheets said. But he tries to turn that back on opposing batters by throwing strikes and forcing them to put the ball in play.

See SHEETS, B2

Sheets wants to be close to home

Continued from B1

When Sheets is off the mound, his demeanor is so unassuming that the coaches cannot always locate him.

"The other day we were halfway to Mansfield and I asked, 'Is Billy on the bus,'" Lindsey said.

Sheets' mother Nancy attends all of his games, and the Ross pitcher hopes to play college baseball close to home, possibly at Heidelberg, so he

can be close to his mother. If there are no scholarship offers, he plans to attend Bowling Green State University.

"I hope somebody out there is interested in a great kid who can help their program," Lindsey said. "Whoever gets him is not only getting a good athlete, but a good person."

Assistant coach Roger Hetrick could not agree more.

"He's the type of kid you'd like to take home with you," Hetrick said.

Giants edge Sandusky

News-Messenger reports

SANDUSKY -- Fremont Ross earned its fourth straight Great Lakes League victory with a 6-4 decision at rival Sandusky.

Catcher Julian Domiray doubled and tripled for the Little Giants, who improved to 7-4 overall and 4-2 in the Great Lakes League. Josh Lozano continued his solid hitting, going 2-for-4 with a double.

"Julian has really come on strong after the first two games and Josh has been hitting the ball all year," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey.

Winning pitcher Dan Cobb improved his record to 2-2. Aaron Coonrod recorded the final two outs to pick up the save.

Sandusky fell to 6-5 and 3-3.

Ross hosts Bowling Green today and GLL rival Findlay Wednesday.

BASEBALL

Then Perkins showed why it is undefeated.

The Pirates scored three runs in the sixth inning, three in the seventh and one in the eighth and beat the Rockets 7-6 in a Sandusky Bay Conference contest.

Jeff Lipstraw was 2-for-5 and scored twice, Nathan Gaines was 1-for-4 with two runs scored and two RBI and Jon Layton was 1-for-4 with an RBI.

St. Joe 6, Bettsville 1

St. Joseph Central Catholic took advantage of Bettsville's wildness and won in the Midland Athletic League.

"They walked 10 batters, that was kind of the story," said St. Joe coach Rick Barbour.

The Crimson Streaks broke the game open in the fifth as Pete Lewton delivered a three-run double down the

Bates gets first win

News-Messenger reports

Aaron Bates pitched $5\frac{1}{3}$ innings for his first varsity win as Fremont Ross topped Bowling Green, 6-5, in a non-league contest.

"He pitched a nice game," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey. "He has been very patient and he earned this."

Bates was in control for five innings before running into trouble in the sixth. But Billy Sheets came in and closed the door for the Little Giants.

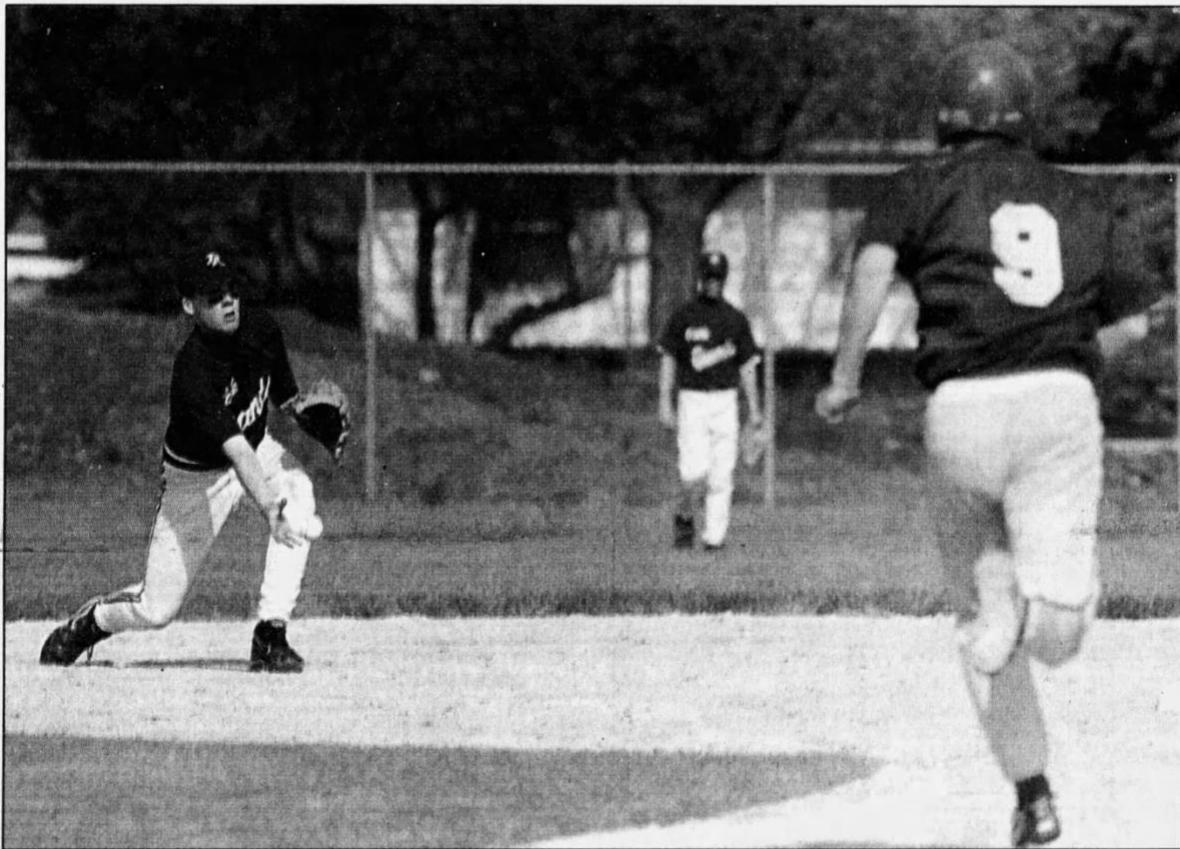
Mike Hickey, Josh Lozano, Cody Franks, Spencer Root and Aaron Coonrod collected two hits apiece for the Little Giants (8-4).

Bob Love was 2-for-3 for Bowling Green.

The Little Giants will host Great Lakes League-rival Findlay today.

BASEBALL

Ross on a roll in GLL



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

MIKE HICKEY of Fremont Ross flips the ball to second base to force Findlay's Nick Evans Wednesday during the first inning of the Little Giants' 3-1 win.

Little Giants top Findlay for 5th straight league win

By MICHAEL PIDANICK
Staff writer

Fremont Ross has learned to believe in itself. Now the Little Giants are forcing the rest of the Great Lakes League to believe in them as well.

After dropping their first two GLL games, the Little Giants have rebounded to win five straight, including a 3-1 victory Wednesday over Findlay at Joe Lotycz Memorial Field.

"We have really come together and we are gaining confidence," said coach Chuck Lindsey. "They players believe in me and I believe in them. We have really come together and we have a solid nucleus."

The first time Ross faced Findlay on April 3, almost everything went wrong for the

BASEBALL

Little Giants in a 7-1 loss.

But Wednesday Ross got solid pitching, clutch defense, smart baserunning and key hitting and improved to 9-4 overall and 5-2 in the league.

"The last time we weren't ready to play," Lindsey said. "But we are pitching well, hitting the ball like we can and fielding well."

Aaron Coonrod pitched a complete game, yielding just three hits and one unearned run. He now has thrown 11 straight innings without allowing an earned run.

"I was able to spot my pitches," said Coonrod, who struck out six in the contest. "I just

threw the ball over the plate and let my defense make plays."

Lindsey was pleased with the performance of the junior right-hander.

"He pitched a great game today," the coach said. "We have been working hard on his mechanics and he has a lot more confidence."

Findlay led 1-0 entering the bottom of the third inning when Ross rallied. Roy Nino drew a one-out walk and Billy Sheets followed with a double. After an error loaded the bases, Brett Hufford ripped an RBI single to left field to tie the game.

In the fourth, Josh Lozano opened with a double and scored when Spencer Root hit an RBI single to right. Root

advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt by Cody Franks, went to third on a passed ball and scored on an error.

Coonrod did not allow a hit after the third inning. He ran into trouble in the seventh after back-to-back errors with one out, but he got Ben Roethlisberger and Matt Sacket to ground out to end the game.

"Coonrod pitched a heck of a ball game," said Findlay coach Jack Foltz, who's team fell to 11-5 and 3-3. "When you only get three hits you're not going to win very many baseball games."

The Trojans took the lead in the top of the first. Marc Bosworth struck out to start the

See ROSS, B3

Ross's Root stops rally with diving catch

Continued from B1

BASEBALL

game, but reached on a passed ball on the third strike. Bosworth was sacrificed to second by Ted Bacon, went to third on Nick Evans's infield single and scored on a fielder's choice ground out by Matt Hull.

Findlay had a chance to extend its lead in the second inning when Paul Beck led off with a double. But Coonrod retired the next three batters to get out of the inning.

In the third inning, Bosworth opened with a double before Coonrod struck out the next two

batters. Then center fielder Spencer Root made a diving catch to take an RBI away from Hull.

"It kind of hung up there for me," Root said. "I got a good jump and being left-handed helped me out too."

Lindsey said that play was the result of hard work.

"We practice a lot on getting good jumps," he said. "Don't think that stuff like that just happens. We work hard at making plays like that."

In other games Wednesday:

Woodmore 7, Lakota 3

WOODVILLE — The Wildcats picked up their fifth victory in 15 games as winning pitcher Jason Kelley singled three times and Jon Blechinger drove in three runs with a pair of hits.

"We played a really good ball game," Woodmore coach Bruce Hammersmith said. "Our defense played real well and we got big hits when we needed them tonight."

Lakota is 12-6 and 5-5 in the SLL.

Old Fort 11 Bettsville 0 (5)

BETTSVILLE — Eric Miller

homered and drove in five runs as Old Fort hammered Bettsville in the Midland Athletic League.

Nick Margram hit two doubles and had three RBI as Old Fort upped its record to 5-9 and 2-3.

Winning pitcher Jason Stallard gave up just one hit and improved his record to 2-2.

Nick Kaker had the only hit for the Bobcats, who dropped to 0-16 and 0-6.

YOUR COLLEGE
DRAFT

Ross 15, Clyde 7

CLYDE — Fremont Ross collected 15 hits and rallied from a 5-0 deficit to top Clyde in a non-league battle.

Brett Hufford ripped two home runs and added a double to lead the Little Giants offensive attack. Josh Lozano was 2-for-4 with another double, Kyle Gegorski was 3-for-3 and Jason Fawley was 3-for-4 for Ross (10-4).

Cody Franks pitched four innings for the win. Spencer Root pitched the final three for the save.

Andy Brown homered for the Fliers. Brandon Bulkowski was 3-for-4 and Josh Smith and Mike Nieset added two hits apiece for the Fliers.

Baseball teams set for sectionals

Ten area teams start next week; St. Joe gets bye

By MICHAEL PIDANICK
Staff writer

Despite being in a bracket with some tough teams, Fremont Ross has taken a positive attitude as it heads into the sectional tournament.

"We still have to play the games," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey. "The kids just said 'Hey we have to beat the best sometime, might as well do it early.'"

The sectional baseball and softball tournaments begin next week.

The district tournaments will begin May 18, the regionals begin on May 27 and the State tournament is June 4-6.

The Little Giants (10-4) open the Division I tournament Wednesday against Toledo Libbey (1-10) at Bowling Green High School.

Lindsey said Libbey is a better team than its record indicates.

"They play against teams like Start and St. Francis and a lot of other good schools," he said. "The record is a little deceiving.

"The winner of that game will

play Perryburg May 13 at Bowling Green. The winner of the sectional will most likely face powerhouse St. Francis.

Ross has shown it can play with the top teams. On April 13, the Little Giants lost by a slim 2-1 margin to Toledo Start, ranked as one of the top teams in the country by USA Today.

"I talked to the Start coach (Rich Arbinger) and he said we were as tough as anyone they had faced," Lindsey said. "He said the sectional and district are often tougher than regionals."

BASEBALL

St. Joseph Central Catholic returns to Division IV tourney after several years in the Division III competition.

The top-seeded Crimson streaks will play May 11 against the winner of the May 9 contest between host Old Fort and Hopewell-Loudon.

"I'm happy to be going back to Old Fort," said St. Joe coach Rick Barbour. "We had been going to Edison, so it's nice to have to travel only 10 minutes to get there. It's easier on our fans, too."

See BASEBALL, B2

Baseball Sectionals

The sectional baseball playoffs begin Tuesday. Here are the opening games for the area teams.

Division I at Oregon Clay
Wed. Ross vs. Toledo Libbey

Division II at Perkins
Tue. Oak Harbor vs. Port Clinton
Thu. Clyde vs. Vermillion
May 9 OH/PC winner vs. Bellevue

Division III at Elmwood
Tue. Lakota vs. Mohawk
Thu. Gibsonburg vs. Eastwood

Division IV at Genoa
Tue. Margaretta vs. Northwood

Division IV at Old Fort
Sat. Hopewell-Loudon vs. Old Fort
Sat. Woodmore vs. Beltsville
May 11 St. Joe vs. H-L/OF winner

Bedford 10, Ross 5

A disastrous fifth inning cost Fremont Ross in a 10-5 loss in a Great Lakes League showdown with Bedford.

In the inning the Little Giants issued seven walks, hit a batter, and committed two fielding errors, allowing the Kicking Mules to score eight runs on just one hit.

"We just couldn't find the plate," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey. "You can't win with that many walks."

Cody Franks was 3-for-3, Brett Huf-ford was 2-for-2 and Spencer Root tagged a double for Ross, which fell to 5-3 in the GLL, one game back of Bedford. The Little Giants are 11-5 overall.

One day earlier, the Little Giants won their sectional opener in impressive fashion. But Lindsey did not feel this game was a let down.

"The kids were trying hard," he said. "We just didn't get it done. Sometimes there are going to be games like this."

Fremont Ross 8, Clay 7

Fremont Ross pitcher Dan Cobb survived nine Clay hits and four Little Giants' errors to win his third game of the season.

Cobb (3-2) yielded to Billy Sheets, who pitched the final 2/3 inning to earn the save.

"They hit real hard, but Dan kept them off balance," Ross coach Chuck Lindsey said.

The game was moved from Clay to Ross because of sectional tournament games being played at Clay, but the Little Giants were still considered the visitors.

Roy Nino had a double and three RBI and Aaron Coonrod drove in two runs for Ross, which improved to 12-5 overall and 6-3 in the Great Lakes League.

"We got ahead again early," said Lindsey, whose team scored seven of its eight runs in the first at bat. "We didn't seem like we wanted to put them away."

Ross plays at Whitmer today and hosts Sandusky Tuesday. The Little Giants play Perrysburg at 5 p.m. Wednesday in a sectional final at Clay.

Ross beats Whitmer again

News-Messenger reports

WHITMER — It's been a while since Fremont Ross beat Whitmer twice in a season, but the Little Giants pulled it off Monday with an 11-6 Great Lakes League win.

"I'm very excited about the team win," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey. "We haven't beaten Whitmer twice in a long time. We stayed in the game. It was exciting to see the kids get fired up again after losing to Bedford."

Billy Sheets went 2-for-2 and Josh Lozano went 2-for-4 for Ross (13-5, 7-3 GLL).

Winning pitcher Aaron Coonrod earned his third win of the year.

"Coonrod threw well tonight," Lindsey said. "He kept them off balance."

BASEBALL

defense and timely hitting."

Gibsonburg trailed 1-0 entering the bottom of the third but Larry LaSalvia delivered a three-run triple to put the Bears on top.

Oak Harbor 4, St. Mary's 1

OAK HARBOR — Freshman Tracy Gaines threw a two-hitter for his second varsity win as Oak Harbor topped St. Mary's in the Sandusky Bay Conference.

Gaines's brother Nathan and Jeff Lipstraw homered for the Rockets (12-7, 7-3).

Edison 8, Clyde 3

CLYDE — Edison took advantage

BASEBALL

Ross 20, Sandusky 9

Ross coach Chuck Lindsey was glad to get a win but hopes his team still has something left for its sectional final today.

The Little Giants scored 20 runs and collected 18 hits in a Great Lakes League rout of Sandusky.

"Overall it was a decent game for us," Lindsey said. "But its not really what we wanted the day before we play Perrysburg (today in the sectional final at Oregon Clay)."

Mike Hickey went 4-for-6 and Spencer Root went 3-for-4 for Ross. Brett Hufford, Josh Lozano and Julian Domiray each added a pair of hits.

Fremont Ross 13, Fostoria 3

FOSTORIA — Fremont Ross closed out a successful season on a high note with a win over Great Lakes League rival Fostoria.

Josh Lozano was 2-for-2 with a home run, Mack Cole was 2-for-3 and Mike Hickey and Cody Franks were each 2-for-4 as the Little Giants finished the season at 15-6 overall and 9-3 in the GLL.

Aaron Coonrod won his fourth game of the season as he fanned eight and walked just two for Ross.

The Little Giants put the game away with four runs in the fourth, two in the fifth and five in the sixth.

Giants close with victory

Oak Harbor wins in SBC

News-Messenger reports

TOLEDO — Fremont Ross won its 17th baseball game of the season with a four-run first inning to beat Toledo Central Catholic 5-3 Wednesday.

Senior Billy Sheets got the win on the mound and improved to 6-2.

Brett Hufford, Spencer Root, Aaron Coonrod, Jason Foley and Sheets each had a base hit for the Little Giants, who end the season at 17-6.

"The seniors did an outstanding job the last two days," said coach Chuck Lindsey. "With the hot weather they could have given up but they didn't. Sheets did great on the mound. The key to our success this season was the senior leadership."

BASEBALL

Brandon Schwind, Nathan Gaines and Jeff Lipstraw all homered for the Rockets.

"The wind was blowing out," Harbal said. "They were pretty good shots, all in left to left-center field. Everybody but one kid had a hit tonight."

Schwind hit his first homer of the year, a three-run shot, in Oak Harbor's five-run first inning. Lipstraw added a two-run homer, his second, in the fourth and Gaines hit a two-run homer in the fourth inning. It was the fourth homer of the season for Gaines.

Dan Miller hit a two-run single in the first inning, Jeff Harbal

1998 ALL-GLL BASEBALL

First Team

Jeremy Dirkmaat, Bedford, P, Sr.; Justin Elinger, Whitmer, P, Sr.; Matt Hull, Findlay, C, Sr.; Paul Beck, Findlay, 1B, Jr.; Rusty Calmes, Whitmer, 2B, Sr.; Jeff Hess, Clay, 3B; Michael Meinhart, Bedford, SS, Sr.; Kris Barnswell, Whitmer, OF, Sr.; Paul Young, Bedford, OF, Sr.; Brock Porter, Findlay, OF, Sr.; Josh Lozano, Fremont, DH, So.; Brad Hennessey, Whitmer, Utility, Sr.

Second Team

Chris McDaniel, Findlay, P; Kevin Stock, Bedford, P; Andy Schlageter, Clay, C; Brett Hufford, Fremont, 1B; Scott Feldmann, Bedford, 2B; Mick Evans, Findlay, 3B; Mike Hickey, Fremont, SS; Ryan Donley, Clay, OF; Doug Bringman, Fostoria, OF; John Garrow, Whitmer, OF; Nick Eaton, Whitmer, DH; Spencer Root, Fremont, Util.

Honorable Mention

Bedford: Gregg Hubbard, Mike Shradler, Josh Smalley, Mike Soda; Clay: Adam Pfeiffer, Joe Romano, Tim Haynes; Findlay: Ted Baron; Fostoria: Aaron Wagner, Randall Bradner, Ryan Gerritsen; Fremont: Aaron Coonrod, Roy Nino, Billy Sheets; Sandusky: Ryan Camella, Brandon Sartor, Chris Kurtz, Chad Cotton; Whitmer: Matt Harris, Justin Cook, Mike Meridieth.

Player of the Year: Miek Meinhart, Bedford; Coach of the Year: Craig Trychel, Bedford.