

# SECTIONAL CHAMPIONS 2004

High School Softball Tournament: Ross 6, Ashland 0



FREMONT ROSS players, from left, Miranda Steinberger, Sara Hoffman, Tara McAfee and Erica Wolfe greet teammate Jaymelee Glaspy after she scored the first run of the game Tuesday at Alumni Field.

## Top-seeded Arrows quiver, fall to Giants

Ross advances on Steinberger's one-hitter

By TIMOTHY R. WOLF, RUM  
Sports editor

The Fremont Ross softball team already knew how to beat top-seeded Ashland coming into Tuesday's Division I sectional final.

The Little Giants swept the Arrows in a regular season doubleheader 10 days earlier.

But it certainly didn't hurt that Ross scored its best performance of the season for the most important game to date.

Miranda Steinberger tossed a one-hitter for the second day in a row, and Rachael Daugherty bludgeoned a three-run double as the Little Giants cruised to a 6-0 victory over the Arrows and the sectional title at Alumni Field.

"We had dominating pitching, played good defense and had clutch hitting," Ross head coach Mike Gilbert said.

"Today we did it all. It's real nice to win this way."

Ross (18-1) earned its third straight sectional championship and advances to meet Great Lakes League rival Oregon City at 5 p.m. Tuesday in a district semifinal at Ross, Calif., which swept Ross in a pair of league meetings this season.

Ranked fourth in the state, Tuesday's game against Ashland was a rematch of the May 3 doubleheader, which Ross won by scores of 10 in eight innings and 5-2 in nine.

Little Giants pitchers Sara Hoffman and Steinberger did not give up an earned run in the two games.

Ashland head coach Kim Hachoborn said the first meetings had little impact on Tuesday's game, but the Ross pitcher was just as dominant. "I don't think it really matters," Hachoborn said. "Each day is a new day, anybody can beat anybody. I don't think anything that happened last Saturday has an effect on this game."

"We just weren't there confident. We



MIRANDA STEINBERGER of Ross drives to the plate during Tuesday's sectional final at Alumni Field. Steinberger struck out 12 and walked none on her way to a second straight tournament one-hitter.

watched too many strikes go by. Then we got in the hole, and it's hard to get out against a good pitcher." Steinberger had a perfect game into the fifth inning after retiring the first 13 batters. For the game, she allowed just two baserunners, one on a fifth-inning error and the other on Ashland's only hit by ninth-inning Tessa Hamilton in the ninth inning. Steinberger struck out 12 and walked none. "We was the best game she threw all year,"

Gilbert said of Steinberger, who declined comment after the game. "She was dominating. Once you get a 6-0 lead, you can start challenging."

The Ross offense began rolling in the third inning. Leadoff hitter Jaymelee Glaspy beat out an infield single to open the inning, stole second and came home on a two-out single by Paige Kingsborough.

The Little Giants came up with two more in the fifth. Erica Wolfe and Glaspy began the inning with singles. Wolfe moved to third on Glaspy's single, and Glaspy stole second. Wolfe came home on an infield single by Shannon Hickey, and a Kingsborough bunt brought home Glaspy.

Daugherty's home-clearing double removed all doubt in the sixth. Nicole Marroquin singled, Tara McAfee walked and Wolfe moved on a fielder's choice to load the bases.

With one out, Daugherty jumped on the first pitch from Ashland pitcher Kelly Clark, ripping the ball into the left-center field gap.

"Everyone kept saying, 'You can do it,' Daugherty said. "I just went out there thinking it's a win-win. If I hit it, we'll score. I was nervous. I had someone tell me to swing at the first pitch because she was throwing strikes first, so that's what I did."

See ROSS, B3



N-M photo/Ben French

ROSS FIRST baseman Tara McAfee stretches to make an out as Ashland's Gretchen Handley runs through the bag during Tuesday's Division sectional final at Alumni Field.

## Ross coasts, takes crown

Continued From B1

Daugherty and Glaspy each went 2-for-4 to lead Ross's eight-hit attack.

Gilbert said the sectional title was an impressive accomplishment for a team that struggled to a .500 GLL mark.

"It's a tribute to them," Gilbert said. "We wanted to do better in the league, there's no question about it. But they don't really get into records. I think they just like to go play. I worry about that, but they don't really care."

## Little Giants smash Streaks

Continued From B1

She then scored on a Camella groundout.

After that, the Ross offense broke through the Streak defense, which made easy outs in the first three innings.

That's the defense we'd like to play all the time, but it doesn't work out that way," Garard said. "It's kind of a key and a key time. Sometimes we're on, sometimes we're off. But Ross is a good ball club."

Ross's ninth batter, Erica Wolfe, got things started in the top of the third with a double and scored on Jaymelee Glaspy's double on the next at bat. Glaspy then scored on a Kristin Hammer bunt.

Wolfe and Glaspy were 2-for-3 and 2-for-4, respectively. Teammate Tara McAfee also went 2-for-4 with a double. Rachel Hammer and Kingsborough each added a hit.

Ross relied on bunts to advance runners who got aboard with a base hit. The strategy proved effective.

Said Gilbert, "We always try and play small ball because that's what's been successful for us in the past. To-

day we were able to get enough hits over their heads to get us into scoring position."

McAfee scored the go-ahead run in the top of the fifth inning. She led off with a double, moved to third on a Lydia Sandoval bunt and scored on a Streaks' fielder's choice. Wolfe's bunt swing worked perfectly, drawing the Streaks' defense in and then she ripped a liner to the second baseman.

In the sixth, Shannon Hickey reached first on a fielder's choice, and Kingsborough's bunt pushed Hickey to second. Hickey reached third on Rachel Hammer's fielder's choice with a double and scored on the next at bat. Hammer then stole second and Hickey scored on the pickoff attempt.

Little Giants' pinch-runner Stephanie Nagle replaced McAfee, who reached first on a single. Nagle moved to second on a passed ball and another Sandoval sacrifice bunt put her on third. Nagle laced on the final insurance run on a Wolfe single.

Meredit Barnum was the losing pitcher. She allows five runs on eight hits with a strikeout and a walk.

## Steinberger shuts down Streaks

Fremont to face Ashland today

By ALEXIS TOMASZEWSKI  
Staff writer

Earwarmers and hooded sweatshirts tried to shield the Fremont Ross softball players from the harsh elements.

The Little Giants battled the wind and the rain Monday, and then battled themselves with two errors in the first inning.

But Ross settled down and fought back to claim a 5-2 come-from-behind win over Sandusky in a Division I sectional opener.

The Little Giants (17-9) advance to play top-seeded Ashland at 5 p.m.



STEINBERGER

today at Joe Lotzky Field.

"I don't know if it was the weather or our lack of focus," Little Giants head coach Mike Gilbert said. "These kids usually rebound, but we have an inning or two like that (with errors)."

"And Sandusky is a much-improved team and we can't let that happen."

The Little Giants, behind pitcher Miranda Steinberger, weren't letting the Streaks get any hits. Steinberger carried a no-hitter into the seventh inning until Ashley Evans legged out a bunt for Sandusky's



Today Ashland at Ross 5 p.m.

long hit. Steinberger (12-6) allowed two unearned runs with two walks and seven strikeouts.

The wind was a problem for us. Streaks head coach Tom Garard said. "We seem to hit any balls out in the field. You have to tip your hat to their pitcher. It was a windy day, and I think that we broke up her no-hitter."

"Anytime you throw in bad weather, it's tough to hit. And she did a good job mixing things up to keep us off guard."

Quick errors put Sandusky (8-16) on the board first. Streak leadoff

hitter Tiffany Reed reached first on a Ross fielding error and then stole second.

Reed reached the corner on a Lindsey Camella groundout and touched home plate when Victoria Gray's fly ball was dropped.

The Streaks later scored an unearned run in the third.

During the first at bat of the inning, Little Giants catcher Amy Reiter went down after being hit by a Steinberger pitch. She was hit right on collarbone and left the game.

On the next pitch, Reed smacked a short bunt that was thrown into right field, allowing Reed to reach third.

See LITTLE GIANTS, B4