

## Sports

# Little Giants face outdoor test in tennis season debut at Tiffin

Fremont Ross will open the high school tennis season today at Tiffin against Columbian and by the time the last ball sails over the net, the Little Giants will probably have been outside longer than they had during two weeks of practice.

"We have had approximately one hour and 33 minutes outside," Michaels said. "That was last Monday at Rodger Young Park. I got as cold as I have ever been."

"There were only two nets up and it was rather difficult having practice with 17 kids," he explained. "This has been the most difficult year in my 25 years of coaching that we have had when it comes to getting outside practice time."

The Ross coach tried to console himself by adding, "I am assuming that this cold weather has af-

fectured every team around here."

Five lettermen return for Michaels including the top two singles players, seniors Chris Shirvis and Jon Ickes. Both are expected to be at those positions with Shirvis in the first court and Ickes playing in the second singles spot.

The other lettermen, senior Kurt Swartzlander and juniors Brian Dierksheide and Rodney Smith, lettered while playing doubles. Swartzlander and Dierksheide played the first court doubles for Ross in 1983.

Michaels pointed out that the lineup against Columbian will be one that he selects from the few minutes of drills outside and the hours spent inside. There have been no challenge matches. "I will be putting them where I think

they can play," the Ross coach pointed out.

Michaels is looking at exchange student Andres Vernengo, a junior, in the number three singles. Vernengo is from Argentina and has shown good playing ability according to Michaels.

Swartzlander and Dierksheide are expected to get the early call in the first doubles but the Ross coach expects that twosome to be pressed to keep that spot when warm weather allows for a flexible practice schedule.

The second doubles team will come from a pair of freshmen or a sophomore. John Battles is the sophomore and Tom Myers and Ramon Eichert are the ninth graders.

Also on the squad, and, as

Michaels said, in the running for starting slots once challenge matches can be played are juniors Ryan Brant, Doug Peterson, Curt Inks and Troy Laird, sophomores Brian Casselman, Tom Herlihy and Tom Denman and freshman Tom Bowlus.

"We have some experience — probably the most that we have had in quite awhile," Michaels smiled, "but we are under continual construction at this point."

"I also feel this is the youngest team in some time with possibly a couple of freshmen and a sophomore capable of breaking into the starting lineup."

After the match against Columbian today, Ross will be at Sandusky Perkins Thursday.

# Columbian topples Ross

TIFFIN — Columbian defeated Ross 4-1 in the season opening high school boys tennis match for both teams Monday.

"We got beat by a very fine team," Ross Coach Pete Michaels said. "They were 19-1 last season and won their league title and they lost only one doubles team from that team."

The single Ross match point came from a young second doubles duo of sophomore John Battles and freshman Tom Myers. The Little Giants pair stopped Rob Kirklin and Curt Knutson 6-3 and 6-4.

"I was impressed with them" Michaels said. "They played well together and were in control of the match practically all the way."

In other matches, Clay Lewis of Columbian defeated Chris Shirvis 6-3 and 6-3 in the first court singles

and Ross's Jon Ickes lost to Greg Kim 6-3, 4-6 and 4-6 in the second singles. After winning the first set, Ickes' serve deserted him according Michaels.

Jon Talbert of Columbian defeated Andres Vernengo 6-0 and 6-2 in the third singles.

Jim Cook and Lee Learned of Columbian, after trailing 5-1 in the first set, came back for a 7-5, 6-4 win over Kurt Sartzlander and Brian Dierksheide in the first court doubles.

In a pair of exhibition wins, Ramon Eichert of Ross defeated Brian Little in a pro set, 8-1. The Ross doubles team of Ryan Brant and Tom Herlihy stopped Kevin Fulk and Mark Zimmerman 8-5.

Ross is idle until traveling to Sandusky Thursday to play Perkins.

## ***Ross netters dust off Clay***

The Oregon Clay tennis team came into Fremont Wednesday with a sparkling 4-1 early season record, but the Eagles left town with some of the shine taken off it.

The Ross Little Giants provided the dimmer by polishing off the Eagles 4-1 at Rodger Young Park.

In one other area tennis match yesterday, Clyde was blanked by Perkins 5-0.

At RYP, the Little Giants came up with their impressive win via two close matches and two blowouts.

In the close matches, Chris Shirvis came from behind to edge Juan Martinez 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 in No. 1 singles and Jon Ickes held off John Kidd 6-1, 7-6 in No. 2 singles.

In the blowouts, Andres Vernengo drilled Mike Wells in No. 3 singles and Jon Battles and Tom Myers bombed Dennie Romstadt and Jeff Taylor in No. 2 doubles, both by 6-0, 6-1 scores.

The win was the first of the season out of two matches for the Giants.

At Clyde, unbeaten Perkins won four straight-set matches and one three-setter to shut out the Fliers.

Clyde's No. 3 singles player Kevin Zepernick provided his team's closest match, falling 5-7, 6-4, 6-1 to Steve Stockdale.

Perkins is now 4-0 overall and 2-0 in the Sandusky Bay Conference while Clyde is 0-3, 0-2.

# Ross netters achieve a 'first' with victory

It's been a classic case of "one good turn deserves another" for the Ross tennis team this week, and the Little Giants continued that trend with another impressive performance Friday afternoon.

The Giants, who beat a couple of outstanding opponents in Oregon Clay Wednesday and Sandusky Perkins Thursday, came up with the topper Friday by beating Sylvania Northview 4-1 at Rodger Young Park.

The win marked the first time a Ross tennis team has ever beaten the perennially tough Wildcats, according to longtime Little Giant mentor Pete Michaels.

"I've been coaching tennis at Ross on and off since 1958, and we've never beaten them in that time," said an ecstatic Michaels. "It's been well worth waiting for it, though. The kids did it in fine shape."

The Little Giants' doubles teams led the way with a sweep in that category.

In No. 1 doubles, Brian Dierksheide joined with a new partner, freshman Ramon Eickert, to beat Deke Keating and Scott Powder 6-2, 6-4, while in No. 2 doubles, Jon Battles and Tom Myers outlasted Craig Miller and Hans Hartkopf 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

In singles, Ross's Nos. 2 and 3 men, Jon Ickes and Andres Vernengo, were successful. Ickes beat Eric Hilfinger 6-2, 6-4 and Vernengo downed Jerel Hess 6-3, 6-3.

Ross's only defeat came in No. 1 singles where Chris Shirvis lost 6-1, 6-3 to Jeff Gersten.

"The kids played very well," said Michaels. "I think we

shocked them. I'm very pleased."

It was the first loss in three matches for Northview while it was the third win out of four for Ross.

In one other area tennis match Friday, Clyde picked up its first win of the season with a 3-2 decision over St. Mary's in Sandusky.

No. 2 and No. 3 singles players Dwayne Rinard and Kevin Zepernick picked up a pair of narrow wins to lead the way for the Fliers. Rinard edged Jim McKenna 6-4, 6-4 while Zepernick outlasted Matt Kridler 7-6, 7-6.

The other win for Clyde came in No. 1 doubles where Paul Hohenstein and Jerry Garcia downed Matt Lewis and Mark Blakely 6-1, 7-5.

Clyde is now 1-3 overall and 1-2 in the Sandusky Bay Conference.

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## ***Ross wins 4th straight***

MARION — The Ross tennis team won its fourth straight match by blanking the Marion Harding Presidents 5-0 in their Buckeye Conference opener here Thursday.

The Little Giants, now 4-1 overall and 1-0 in the BC, picked up all their wins in straight sets.

In singles, Chris Shirvis defeated Tom Alexander 6-4, 6-4,

Jon Ickes topped Dave Donithen 6-1, 6-1, and Andres Vernengo beat Lamont Thurston 6-1, 6-1.

In doubles, Brian Dierksheide and Ramon Eickert downed Mike Gorham and Jeff Convath 6-4, 6-2, and Jon Battles and Tom Myers whipped Matt Alexander and Joe Gorham 6-0, 6-0.

Marion is now 3-4 overall and 0-2 in the BC.

## ***Ross win streak ends***

SANDUSKY — A four-match winning streak and a bid to win the Ohio Tennis Coaches Association Tournament came to a halt for the Ross tennis team Tuesday afternoon as the Sandusky Blue Streaks edged the Little Giants 3-2 in very untennis-like weather here.

The match was a second-round battle in the season-long OTCA tourney, which involves teams from all around the state.

Chris Shirvis and Jon Ickes, the Little Giants' top two singles players, picked up their club's lone wins. Shirvis romped past Rick Waldock 6-1, 6-2, while Ickes outlasted Chad Johnson 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.

In third singles, Ross's Andres Vernengo was edged 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 by Pat Ortner.

In doubles, Sandusky picked up a pair of straight-set victories. Tim Putnam and Mike Buller downed Kurt Swartzlander and Brian Dierksheide 6-2, 6-1, and Mike Almowh and Gerrad Coiffard beat Jon Battles and Tom Myers 6-3, 6-4.

Ross is now 4-2 and Sandusky 6-2.

It wasn't a good day for three area tennis teams Wednesday even though two of them came very close to reversing that trend.

In the close matches, Ross lost 4-1 to Findlay in a match that wasn't as lopsided as the final score indicated, and Clyde dropped a couple three-set decisions on its way to a 3-2 loss to Tiffin Calvert.

In the other match, St. Joe fell 4-1 to St. Mary's.

At Rodger Young Park, Findlay came up with some clutch performances to nip the Little Giants.

In third singles, Ross's Andres Vernengo and Findlay's Todd Stiles split the first two sets before Vernengo roared to a 3-0 lead in the final set. But Stiles reeled off six straight games to stun the Ross netter 3-6, 6-1, 6-3.

In second doubles, Ross's Jon Battles and Tom Myers worked their way to a 5-4 lead in the first set over Findlay's Keith Olson and Greg Everett. But the Trojan

duo won the next three games to capture the first set 7-5. They then won the second set 6-4 to take the match.

Ross also suffered a tough loss in second singles where Jon Ickes fell 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 to Findlay's Bob Cook.

The Little Giants' other loss came in first doubles where Findlay's Monte Schaefer and Chris Weaver beat Kurt Swartzlander and Brian Dierksheide 6-1; 6-1.

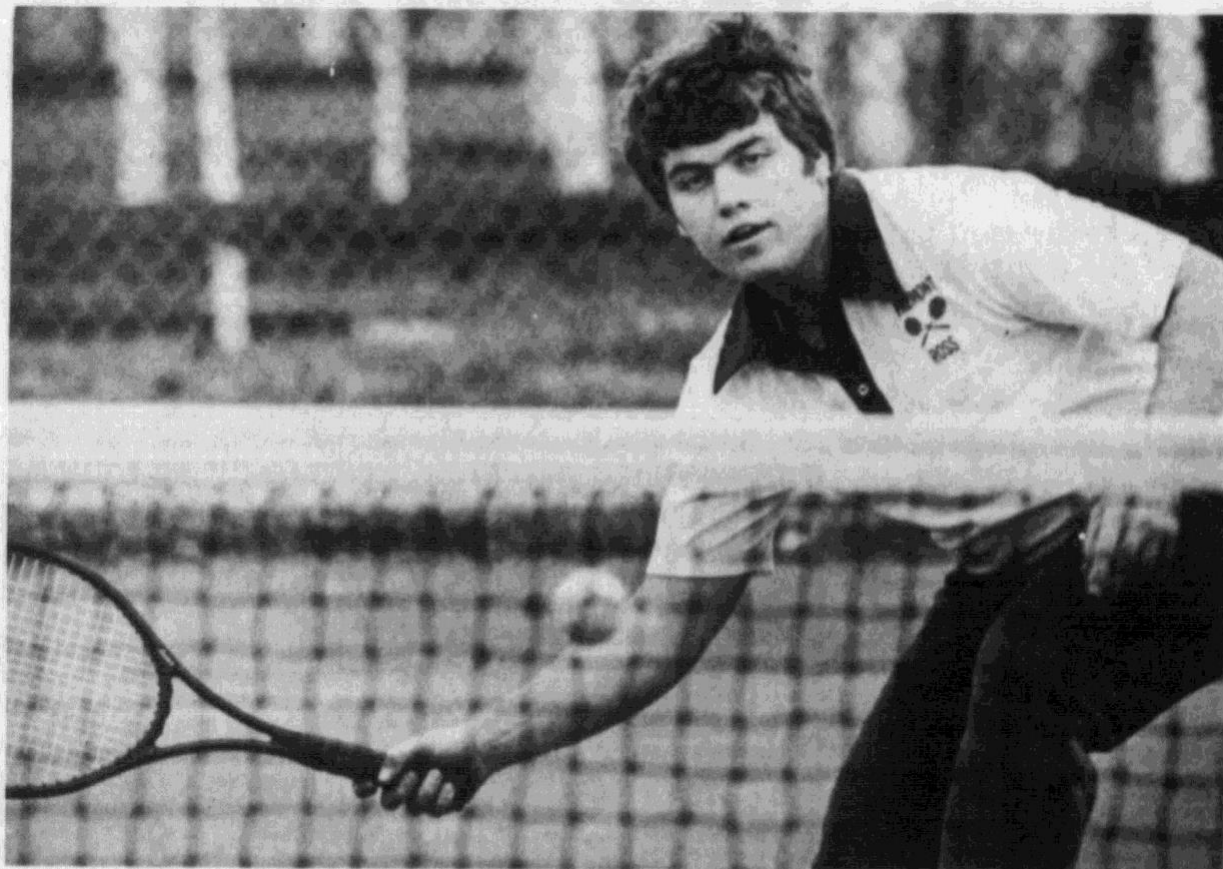
Meanwhile, their lone win came in first singles where Chris Shirvis rolled past Brad Trask 6-2, 6-1.

Ross is now 4-3 and Findlay is 5-1.

### **Calvert 3, Clyde 2**

At Clyde, the Fliers dropped a hard-fought decision to a very good Calvert team. The Senecas are now 4-2 overall and 3-1 in the Sandusky Bay Conference while Clyde is 2-5, 1-4.

In first singles, Clyde sophomore John Stahl gave



(N-M photo by Bob Marker)

CHRIS SHIRVIS OF ROSS RETURNS A SHOT FROM PERKINS' JOE BROWN DURING THEIR MATCH THURSDAY

## Ross netters win 'a big one'

Is the Ross tennis team for real? Coach Pete Michaels is beginning to think so after Thursday afternoon's 3-2 victory over previously undefeated and highly regarded Sandusky Perkins at Rodger Young Park.

"That was a big one for us," said Michaels. "I am very pleased because Perkins is a very strong team. We won it in singles."

The Pirates were 5-0 entering the match but were swept in all three singles matches to suffer

their first defeat of the young season.

And the Ross singles lineup of Chris Shirvis, Jon Ickes and Andres Vernengo did it in impressive style, winning each match in straight sets.

Shirvis drilled Joe Brown 6-0, 6-1, Ickes pounded Jeff Stevens 6-0, 6-4 and Vernengo downed Jim Swain 6-3, 6-4.

Perkins got its wins in doubles, both in straight sets.

The victory for Ross took on added meaning because it came in the first round of the season-

long Ohio Tennis Coaches State Tournament. Ross will now play the winner of the Sandusky-Huron match, which was not played as of Thursday evening.

The Little Giants, who were coming off another impressive win over Clay the day before, are now 2-1 this season.

In one other area match yesterday, St. Joe suffered a 5-0 loss to Huron.

The Streaks dropped to 0-2 overall and in the Sandusky Bay Conference while Huron is 3-1, 2-1.

## High school tennis

# *...and the sun shined in Sandusky*

"The sun was shining in Sandusky today."

Those were the words of a happy man...a VERY happy man named Pete Michaels, coach of the Ross tennis team.

And Michaels had reason to be joyous as his Little Giant netters avenged a 3-2 defeat to Sandusky earlier this week with a 5-0 whitewashing of the Blue Streaks Thursday in Sandusky.

In two other area matches yesterday, Clyde was edged by Huron and St. Joe was clipped by Norwalk St. Paul, both by 3-2 counts.

At Sandusky, Ross won all but one match in straight sets to make up for that tough loss it suffered in the second round of the Ohio Tennis Coaches Association Tournament in Sandusky on a bitter cold day Tuesday.

"I don't want to sound like I'm making excuses," said Michaels, "but it was cold Tuesday. I mean I had to go start up the van three times just to warm myself up. Today (Thursday) it was nice and sunny and we played well. I think we shocked them."

The best example of the Ross turnaround came in third singles where Andres Vernengo drilled Pat Ortnier 6-1, 6-1 yesterday after losing in three sets to Ortnier Tuesday.

Also reversing their outcomes were both Ross doubles teams. Kurt Swartzlander and Brian Dierksheide beat Tim Putnam and Mike Buller 6-2, 3-6, 6-3, and Jon Battles and Tom Myers downed Gerrad Coiffard and Bill Horn 7-5, 6-4. Both Ross teams had lost in straight sets Tuesday.

Meanwhile, repeating their Tuesday wins were the Little Giants' top two singles players Chris Shirvis and Jon Ickes. Shirvis routed Rick Waldock 6-1, 6-0 and Ickes defeated Chad Johnson 7-5, 6-1.

Ross is now 5-3 while Sandusky slipped to 7-3.

### **Huron 3, Clyde 2**

The Fliers won both doubles matches but came up empty — just barely — in the singles to fall to the Tigers in Huron.

Jerry Garcia and Paul Hohenstein teamed up to beat Dave Nelson and Seth Haplea 7-6, 6-4 in first doubles while Dwayne Rinard and Robbie Ferrell defeated Tom Mack and Mike Cozzie 7-6, 6-2 in second doubles.

The Fliers just missed getting the team win in singles as John Stahl was edged 7-6, 7-6 by Vic Krebs in first court and Kevin Zepernick fell 7-5, 7-5 to Jeff Herzog in third court.

Clyde is now 2-6.

### **St. Paul 3, St. Joe 2**

St. Paul picked up two victories in singles and one in doubles to win the battle of the winless in Norwalk.

St. Paul is now 1-4 while St. Joe dipped to 0-5.

Winning for the Streaks were Bill Guhn with a 6-2, 4-6, 6-0 decision over Cathy Creamer in third singles, and the second doubles team of Greg Hendrix and Tom Weickert with a 6-2, 6-4 triumph over Louise Polinsky and Dave Conway in second doubles.

# *Ickes' 3-set win pulls Ross to Ashland Invitational title*

ASHLAND — It was a long day, and Jon Ickes had already played more than 60 games of tennis. He was tired, and his legs and arms were beginning to tighten up.

But it was on that tired body that rested the fate of the Ross tennis team in the Ashland Invitational here late Saturday afternoon.

Ickes' teammates had already finished, as did everyone else, and all eyes were on his No. 2 singles finale against Jim Swain of Perkins.

The two players knew what was on the line. Both their teams had nine points, and the winner of their match would score the final, victorious point for his team.

And it was Ickes who came through with the triumph, a 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 thriller to lead the Little Giants to the championship of the highly regarded eight-team tourney.

"It came down to that match," Ross Coach Pete Michaels said of the Ickes-Swain duel. "Ickes ended up playing 74 games, and he was tired. But he did the job.

"Everyone played well. We scored at least one point in each division. I was very pleased with that. And I'm ecstatic that we won the whole

thing. It's an excellent tournament. There's a lot of fine players."

Ickes' title was one of two for the Little Giants. Third singles player Andres Vernengo had the other individual crown, and he won his in convincing fashion.

The Venezuelan exchange student won all three of his matches in straight sets, including a 6-4, 6-1 lashing of Ashland's Ken Held in the finals. Vernengo lost just 11 of 47 games the entire day.

The other top finish for Ross was registered by ace Chris Shirvis, who came in second place on No. 1 court. Perkins' Joe Brown defeated Shirvis 6-1, 0-6, 6-3 in the finals.

Meanwhile, the Ross doubles teams of Brian Dierksheide-Kurt Swartzlander and Jon Battles-Tom Myers did not finish in the top two, but they did each win one match to provide two important team points.

The final team standings were: Ross 10, Perkins and Ashland 9 each, Sandusky 7, Mansfield Malabar 3, and Galion, Mansfield Madison and Ashland JVs 2 each.

The matches were played at three sites — Brookside Park, Ashland College and Ashland Country Club.

## *Ross netters win easily*

The Ross tennis team romped to its sixth win in nine matches by blanking Marion Harding 5-0 at Rodger Young Park Wednesday.

In other tennis action yesterday, Clyde edged Norwalk St. Paul 3-2 and St. Joe fell to Huron 5-0.

At RYP, the Little Giants got straight-set wins from singles players Chris Shirvis and Andres Vernengo and the doubles tandems of Kurt Swartzlander-Brian Dierksheide and Jon Battles-Tom Myers.

Only No. 2 singles player Jon Ickes was extended to three sets. He came back to beat Dave Donithen 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, however.

## Ross is runnerup in BC tennis

SANDUSKY — Lightly regarded Ross nearly pulled the Buckeye Conference shocker Saturday but a couple of hard fought matches went the other way and the Little Giants had to settle for second in the conference tennis tournament.

All three singles and both doubles team scored for the Little Giants as Ross racked up 80 points, 10 shy of conference champ Admiral King. Lorain Senior and Findlay tied for third with 70 while Sandusky, Elyria and Marion Harding rounded out the field.

Ross had three second places during the day at Sandusky High School. In the second and third singles matches, the Little Giants could have won or tied for the championship.

"We lost them in some very hard fought matches," Ross Coach Pete Michaels said. "Both Jon (Ickes) and Andres (Vernengo) played very well and very hard before losing, but both of them played against kids who have not lost."

Ickes lost to top seeded Adrian Harris of Admiral King 1-6, 6-4 and 5-7 in the championship finals. Harris entered the final match with a 21-0 record.

Vernengo, an junior exchange student from Argentina, pushed Dave Binder, 17-0, of Lorain Senior, before losing 6-7 (7-5 in the tie-breaker), 6-4 and 4-6. During the day of play, Vernengo played 13 games including 26 tie-breaker points according to Michaels.

"It was not until the final couple of matches," the Ross coach revealed, "that people realized that Ross was in there going for the championship. We knew Admiral King and Findlay were strong but our kids are competitors."

"What it came down to was if Ickes had won, we would have beaten Admiral King out and won the championship; had Andres won, we would have tied for the title, but it was not to be."

"The kids gave a good accounting of themselves; an accounting where everyone can be proud of them," Michaels praised.

In the first court doubles, the Little Giants duo of Kurth Swartzlander and Brian Dierkschiede, seeded second, lost to defending conference champs and top-seeded Chris Weaver and Monte Schaeffer of Findlay. The Findlay duo won 6-0 and 6-2.

Chris Shirvis, the first court singles player for Ross, finished in a tie for third.

The second court Little Giants doubles team did not place after winning a first round match. In the second round, Jon Battles and Tom Myers lost to the eventual champions and top-seeded Gerard Coiffard and Pat Ortner of Sandusky 6-7 (7-4 in the tie-breaker) and 0-6.

"All three singles and both doubles teams won first round matches and that gave up 30 points," Michaels said. "So you really have to call this a team effort because of that. The kids played super tennis."

Other conference champs included Jim Gray of Admiral King in the first court singles. The defending conference champ defeated Pat DeBracy of Lorain Senior 6-1 and 6-2 in the finals. In the second doubles, Coiffard and Ortner defeated Findlay's Keith Olson and Greg Everett 6-4 and 6-4.

Today, Ross is to host Port Clinton in a 4 o'clock match at Rodger Young Park.

# Little Giants netters win No. 7

Ross scored its third consecutive tennis shutout with its seventh win of the season Monday at Rodger Young Park.

Port Clinton was a 5-0 victim of the Little Giants in a match where no individual matches went past the second set.

In another high school match, Fostoria nipped St. Joe 3-2.

Number one singles player Chris Shirvis lost only one game while defeating Joe Crisologo to pace the Little Giants win. His 6-0, 6-1 victory topped the other singles courts wins by Jon Ickes and Andres Vernengo.

In the doubles, Kurt Swartzlander and Brian Dierscheide were pushed in the first set by Port Clinton's Todd Puckett and John Crisologo before

winning 7-5. In the second set, the Ross duo won 6-1

Jon Battles and Tom Myers were the second court doubles winners for the Little Giants.

Ross is 7-3 and Port Clinton 4-8.

St. Joe lost its 10th straight match of the season but it took a three-set win by the Fostoria team of Mitch Mitchell and Rick Zimmerman to secure the Redman victory.

Mitchell and Zimmerman defeated Tom Weickert and Greg Hendrix of St. Joe 6-2, 2-6 and 3-6.

The St. Joe match points came in the second and third court singles. In the second court, Eric Sullivan defeated Fostoria's Mike Eynon in straight 6-1 sets while Bill Guhn won the third court singles over Andy Piper of Fostoria 6-4, 7-5.

## *Ross netters win finale*

The Ross tennis team ended its season on a positive note by dumping the Bellevue Redmen 4-1 at Rodger Young Park Tuesday.

All four victories for the Little Giants came in straight sets.

In singles, Jon Ickes downed Darin Freeman 6-1, 6-2 while Andres Vernengo beat Mike Burns 6-2, 6-1.

In doubles, it was Kurt Swartzlander and Brian Dierksheide beating Oke Meyer and Seth Weibel 6-1, 6-1 and Jon Battles and Tom Myers defeating Doug Warns and Kyle Yost 6-4, 6-2.

Ross's lone loss came in first singles where district qualifier Jason Pressler of Bellevue beat Chris Shirvis 6-4, 6-3.

The Little Giants finished their successful season at 8-3.