



Fremont Ross McKenzie Gallagher fields a bunt and throws to first as she is backed up by Meghan Michael during a softball game against St Ursula on Friday, Mar 30, 2012. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Young outfield key to 2013 success for Ross

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — St. Patrick's Day occurred over a week ago.

But each time Ross softball coach Mike Gilbert looks at his new outfield, he's still seeing green.

"This will be a new learning experience for me because it's been a long time since I've had to replace an entire outfield," said Gilbert, now in his 15th season.

Four-year starters McKenzie Schneider in center field and Sara Gowitzka in right graduated, as did long-time starter Sidney Swaisgood in left. In charge of replacing them will be sophomores Mo Fox, Brina Hrynciw and Odie Lopez and junior McKenna Pettiford. Hrynciw, a .310 hitter as a freshman infielder, will most likely play left field. Fox is pegged for center field with Lopez slated for right field and Pettiford filling in for any of the three throughout the

season.

"One thing they all have in common is speed," Gilbert said. "But they're also very inexperienced in the outfield. I'm hoping they're quick learners. The fact that we've been inside a lot has kind of hindered our progress thus far."

The Little Giants will be looking to build on an 18-11 record in 2012 that saw them put up a 10-7 mark in an extremely

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Softball

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competitive Three Rivers Athletic Conference. Gilbert won his 200th game and earned both district and league coach of the year honors for a team that some would say overachieved.

"I think we surprised some people," Gilbert said. "We had a very competitive group and I expect us to be that way again. I don't know that we overachieved. I know I was very pleased, though, winning 18 games. So in a way, I guess we did."

It was no surprise what Gilbert got out of returning seniors Meghan Michael and McKenzie Gallagher. Michael, a .300-plus hitter as a sophomore, earned first-team all-district and all-TRAC honors as a junior, hitting .495, which included five homers and 38 RBI's. Gallagher, a second-team all-district and first-team all-TRAC selection, hit .462 and scored 33 runs with the bat, while she was 18-11 in the circle with a 2.19 ERA.

"We're probably going to ride McKenzie, much like we did a year ago where she pitched every inning of our 29 games," Gilbert said. "She's in better shape this year and she's really looking forward to doing that again."

Junior shortstop Kelsey Ivy, a three-year varsity player, was second-team all-TRAC a year ago, batting .345. Behind the plate, Ross returns senior catcher Kiera Hall, an

honorable mention all-TRAC player. Hall didn't pick up a softball until her freshman year, but was a .308 hitter as a sophomore and provided the Little Giants with solid defense.

"Obviously, I'm looking for big things from those four players," Gilbert said. "They've played all year on travel teams and they're going to make us a strong team up the middle."

Senior Lindsay Overmyer returns at third base where she hit .262 as a junior.

Other newcomers include senior Bailey Eishen, sophomore Kortni Lagrou, and senior Kalee Royster.

"We'll probably a little more team speed than we did a year ago," Gilbert said. "But I still think we'll have a good blend of power and speed."

"So far, the girls are working hard and they're excited to be competing again."

Gilbert expects Oregon Clay, Whitmer, Toledo Central Catholic and Notre Dame Academy to be among the top competition in the TRAC.

"Clay is always going to be good and Whitmer should be good," he said. "Notre Dame went to the regional finals a year ago, so it should be up there, too, along with Central for the top four. Findlay and St. Ursula are both going to be improved and Lima, if they get some athletes and get some pitching, it'll be better, too."

"It's all about the pitching in this league."

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ROUNDUP

Softball: Fremont Ross 11, Port Clinton 0

PORT CLINTON — Mckenzie Gallagher tallied five strikeouts in a five-inning no-hitter Monday as the Little Giants routed the Redskins 11-0 in non-league action.

Ross (1-0) scored all 11 of its runs in the fourth inning. Lindsey Overmyer led the way at the plate going 2 for 3 with a double and three RBIs. Bailey Eishen doubled and drove in two more runs while Meghan Michael also had two RBIs.

Softball: Ross 5, Bowling Green 2

FREMONT — Ross senior Mckenzie Gallagher followed up her no-hitter from Monday by giving up just two hits Tuesday as she allowed a single earned run and tallied 11 strikeouts as the Little Giants topped the Bobcats in non-league play.

At the plate, Gallagher went 2 for 4 with a double and scored two runs. Ross (2-0) also got two hits each from Kiera Hall and Kelsey Ivy. Ivy's suicide squeeze in the first inning proved to be the game-winning hit as the Little Giants scored three runs in the inning.

Lindsay Overmyer added a double and an RBI.

Softball: Edison 4, Fremont Ross 3

MILAN — Errors did in the Little Giants' softball team in a one-run loss to the Chargers in Saturday's non-conference game.

Mckenzie Gallagher allowed just six hits in seven innings and struck out eight batters, but gave up four unearned runs off eight Ross errors.

Kelsey Ivy drove in a run and scored a run, going 2-for-4 for the Little Giants (2-1). Teammate Lindsay Overmyer tripled in a runner and Gallagher went 2-3 with a double, two runs and a stolen base.

ROUNDUP

Another no-hitter for Ross' Gallagher

TOLEDO — McKenzie Gallagher tossed her second no-hitter of the season Monday, striking out 14 total Waite batters as Ross routed the Indians 18-0 in non-league play.

Kiera Hall homered twice, drove home six runs and scored three to lead the Little Giants (3-1). Kelsey Ivy, Lindsay Overmyer, Mo Fox, Kortni Lagrou, Kalee Royster and McKenna Pettiford each drove home single runs.

SOFTBALL

Whitmer slugs its way past Fremont Ross

By Kevin Shields

Sports writer

FREMONT — McKenzie Gallagher showed her grit in the circle Wednesday for Ross by battling through painful swelling around her planter's knee, while at the same time, trying to shut down one of the Three Rivers Athletic Conference's best hitting teams.

But the Little Giants' senior hurler was far from her usual self, surrendering 17 runs (10

earned) on 20 hits as Whitmer rallied to score 13 runs in the fifth and sixth innings to win 19-9 in a game played at Alumni Fields.

Gallagher was struck by a sharply-hit ball during Monday's game at Toledo Central Catholic, a game Ross lost 5-0 where Gallagher allowed two earned runs on nine hits and struck out eight.

"She wanted to pitch and I wasn't going to say no," said Ross coach Mike Gilbert of his

ace. "She finished three innings up at Toledo Central Catholic and she pitched here tonight. She's a warrior."

"But even though I know (Gallagher) was in pain, we aren't going use that as an excuse. Whitmer hit the ball and they deserved to win."

Ross (4-4, 0-2) had rallied from a 6-0 deficit in the third inning to take a 9-6 lead after scoring three runs in the third inning and six in the fourth. Gallagher drew a walk to start the third

and scored on Meghan Michael's double to left field. A single by Kelsey Ivy was then followed by a two RBI triple from Lindsay Overmyer.

Whitmer replaced starting pitcher Kailyn Bates with Makayla Taylor in the fourth inning. Bates, much like Gallagher, took a hard hit ball by Mo Fox off her left knee in the second inning, which began to bruise and forced her to leave the circle.

Taylor, who had been playing

at third base, struggled to find the strike zone in the fourth inning. The Little Giants drew six walks, including three from Ivy, Overmyer and Brina Hrynciw that led to runs being scored. Michael's RBI single through the left side was the lone hit of the inning for Ross.

"Makayla took a lot of the responsibility on her shoulders for that inning when she didn't really need to because we're a team

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Whitmer

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that can take control and do good things when we put our minds to it," Panthers coach Mark Figliomeni said. "She pitched exceptionally well (Tuesday) and I had great confidence in her, but it's tough coming in like that. I think she was trying to overthrow."

Whitmer wasted little time getting back in the game. Three straight RBI hits from Tori Weidinger, Meghan Franz and Olivia Combs tied the game, before the Panthers went ahead for good on Kendra Pratt's two RBI single. Combs finished 3-for-3 with a two-run homer in third inning, a double and three RBIs. Franz was 3-for-4 and finished a homer shy of hitting for the cycle.

Lyndi Winzler led all Whitmer hitters going 4-for-4

with three doubles and two RBIs.

"The girls believe they can score runs and that never out of games," Figliomeni said. "We've scored a lot of runs to start the season and their confidence is strong right now."

Added Gilbert: "They're always one of the best hitting clubs we play."

Ross stranded two runners in the fifth and had runners at the corners in the sixth. Michael paced the lineup at the plate, going 3-for-4 with two RBIs and two runs scored. Overmyer had a team-high three RBIs.

"I told the kids I hope this a journey onto improvement," Gilbert said. "It's not important where you are. It's important where you end up. So hopefully at the end of the year, I'll be saying that we've improved quite a bit."

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Softball: Ross 10, Findlay 0

FINDLAY — Mckenzie Gallagher allowed just two hits and struck out eleven batters in a complete game shutout to lead the Little Giants to Three Rivers Athletic Conference win against the Trojans Friday.

Gallagher also drove in three runs and stole a pair of bases. Teammate Kiera Hall was 2-for-3 with a double and two stolen bases for Ross (5-4, 1-2).

**FREMONT ROSS 9,
FOSTORIA 0 (GM 1)**

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» **Winner:** Mckenzie Gallagher (6-4) (CG, 0ER, 2H, 2BB, 8K)

» **Hitting:** ROSS— Gallagher 2-4, R, 2RBI, SB; Kiera Hall 2-4, 2R, RBI; Meghan Michael 2-3, 2B(2), 2R, RBI; Kortni Lagrou 1-3, 2B, R; Mo Fox 1-4, 2RBI.

**FREMONT ROSS 6,
CAREY 2**

(GM 2) (8 innings)

R H E

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Carey	000 110 00	2	4	1

» **Winner:** Mckenzie Gallagher (7-4) (CG, 0ER, 4H, BB, 6K)

» **Hitting:** ROSS – Kiera Hall 2-4, R, RBI; Meghan Michael 2-3, R; Kelsey Ivy 1-2, 2R, SB; Lindsay Overmyer 1-3, R, 3RBI; Brina Hrynciw 2-3, HR, R, 3RBI.

» **Records:** Ross 7-4 (1-2 TRAC)

» **Next:** Ross vs. Clyde, Tuesday.

Oregon Clay 11, Fremont Ross 1 (5 innings)

Mo Fox walked to drive in Meghan Michael with Ross's only run in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference softball setback.

Mckenzie Gallagher (7-5) allowed only one earned run. She and Kiera Hall each had a double for the Little Giants (7-5, 1-3).

SOFTBALL

Gallagher dominant in Little Giants victory

Ross beats St. Ursula Academy 2-1

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — When she's hitting her spots and has her rise ball working, Mckenzie Gallagher can be as dominant as any pitcher in Northwest Ohio.

Nine days after a gritty performance where she labored through painful swelling around her planter's knee and surrendered 17 runs on 20 hits in a six-inning loss to Whitmer, Gallagher was back to her old form Friday. The Little Giants

senior hurler allowed a single unearned run on three hits and struck out seven as Ross topped St. Ursula Academy 2-1 in a Three Rivers Athletic Conference game at Alumni Fields.

"I was locating and hitting my spots," said Gallagher, whose team committed five errors in the field behind her. "It was easy to place the ball, but when their (the Arrows) good hitters did come up my rise ball was working really good."

The Arrows (2-7, 1-3) scored their lone run in the first inning. Kirstin Webb lead off with a bunt single, stole second, then went home on a throwing error that allowed Emily Uhlman to

reach first base safely. Mary Richberg added a bunt single in the inning for St. Ursula. It was the last hit for the Arrows in 24 plate appearances.

"Mckenzie pitched a great game and even though we made several mistakes, we hung in there," Ross coach Mike Gilbert said. "A win is a win. I'll take an ugly win over a pretty lose any day."

Gallagher helped herself with the bat, going 2-for-3 and stealing two bags. Her leadoff double in the home half of the first inning and subsequent steal of third base put her in scoring position for Kiera Hall, who brought Gallagher in with a

groundout to second base.

Like her counterpart, Uhlman kept the Little Giants (8-6, 2-3) in check. Ross tallied five total hits. Two of those came in the fourth inning, where the Little Giants scored the go-ahead run.

With one out in the fourth inning, Kelsey Ivy ripped a 2-1 pitch for a single to left field. She moved to second base on a passed ball, before Lindsay Overmyer drove a single to center field to bring her in and give the Little Giants a 2-1 advantage.

St. Ursula put runners at second and third base with two outs on Maddie Krell's sacrifice bunt

in the sixth inning. But Gallagher got out of the inning with no damage when she induced a ground ball, which she herself handled and threw over to Meghan Michael at first base for the out.

The Arrows threatened again in the seventh inning, putting runners at first and second. Uhlman struck out swinging for the final out.

Coming into Friday, Gallagher had allowed a single earned run in her last three games. She threw two-hit shutouts both against Findlay and Fostoria.

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Ross

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"The knee is a lot better," Gallagher said. "I just iced it good and it healed up."

New found sunshine didn't hurt either.

"(Gallagher) has better control of her pitches when it's

warmer out like this," Gilbert said. "For the most part she kept ahead in the count and it made job calling the game that much easier."

Gallagher was the lone Ross batter with multiple hits. Webb had two of the Arrows' three hits.

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Softball: Notre Dame Academy 2, Ross 0

TOLEDO — Mckenzie Gallagher went the distance, allowing two unearned runs on six hits, but the Little Giants could only muster three hits on offense in a Three Rivers Athletic Conference setback to the Eagles.

Gallagher struck out three and walked three for Ross (8-7, 2-4). She, Kiera Hall and Lindsay Overmyer accounted for the Little Giants' hits.

The Eagles scored both their runs in the bottom of the sixth inning.

Softball: Ross 8, St. Ursula Academy 3

TOLEDO — Kiera Hall hit two home runs and drove in five runs for the Little Giants as they downed the Arrows in Tuesday's Three Rivers Athletic Conference tilt.^N

Meghan Michael had two hits, including a homer and drove in two runs for Ross (9-7, 3-4).

Mckenzie Gallagher earned the win in the circle tossing a complete game, allowing a run on four hits. She struck out five and walked one.

At the plate, Gallagher doubled twice and scored two runs. Mo Fox added three hits and Lindsay Overmyer had two.

Michael keeps hot bat in Fremont Ross win

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Production wasn't just a hope coming into the spring, it was expectation for Ross senior Meghan Michael.

But after hitting .495 as a junior, Michael struggled at the start of the spring.

"I wasn't keeping my head down," said Michael, of the lack of production. "But I'm working on it a lot now."

Michael was 2-for-3 with a homer and two RBIs Tuesday in

a win over St. Ursula Academy. On Wednesday, she continued to swing a hot bat, going 3-for-4 with a double. Michael scored on high fly ball hit to shallow left field by Lindsay Overmyer in the home half of the eighth inning that was dropped by the shortstop for the winning run in a 4-3 Three Rivers Athletic Conference victory over Toledo Central Catholic in a game played at Alumni Fields.

"That was kind of a scary moment for me," Michael said. "My heart just stopped for a moment. But she dropped it and we

ended up getting the run in. A win is a win. That's all that really matters right now."

The Little Giants (10-7, 4-4) scored twice in the first inning. After McKenzie Gallagher reached first base on an error, she was brought home on a single to left field by Kiera Hall for an early 1-0 lead. Michael advanced Hall to third on a hard single to right center, before Kelsey Ivy got her home with an RBI bunt single. Ivy was the lone other Ross player with multiple hits as she finished 2-for-4.

Offense was hard to come by in the early going for the Fighting Irish (7-9, 5-2). Gallagher had five strikeouts thru four innings as Central Catholic managed only three hits.

Alexa Galernik's one-out double in the fifth inning started the Irish rally. That was followed by the first of three errors for Ross in the game which put runners at the corners. After Angelica Martinez stole second base, she and Galernik scored on a two-RBI single up the middle by Kaitlin Bronikowski, tying the game at 2-2.

Back-to-back two-out errors by the Little Giants in the top half of the sixth inning put the Irish on top 3-2. But with two on and one out in the home half of the inning, Ross caught a break of its own as Ivy scored the tying run on a throwing error by the first baseman, trying to get Ivy out on the third base line.

Both squads went quietly in the seventh inning. Central Catholic threatened in the eighth inning putting runners on the corners.

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Softball

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However, the threat ended when Kortni Lagrou made a nice running catch in left field for the out.

"I was nervous there," Michael said. "But I had faith in Kortni. She never really plays outfield, but she came through tonight."

Gallagher allowed three unearned runs on six hits and finished with eight strikeouts and a single walk.

Michael's one-out double set the tone in the bottom of the eighth inning. She moved to third base on a groundout to second by Ivy.

"I'm so happy that my bat is finally back," Michael said. "I

took break from softball over the winter because I didn't play travel ball."

Michael's grandfather was recently diagnosed with a brain tumor. Fighting through bouts with cancer over the years, the news was another big setback to her and her family.

"Before the pitcher threw me my home run ball on Tuesday, I said I was going to hit one for my grandpa and I hit one for him," Michael said. "It was a really proud moment for me."

Michael will look to stay hot when Ross travels to Lima Senior for a TRAC battle today at 5 p.m.

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Triples wild in Little Giants TRAC win

News Journal staff report

Mckenzie Gallagher and Lindsay Overmyer each tripled twice and drove in four runs Thursday as Fremont Ross's softball team shut out Lima Senior 18-0 in five innings in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

Gallagher tripled twice in one inning, singled, scored three runs and stole a base while Overmyer added a run for the Little Giants (11-7, 5-4).

Megan Michael (1-0) allowed one hit while striking out one and walking none in five innings for the win in the circle.

Kiera Hall and Michael each had three hits as Ross had 16 as a team. Hall scored twice and drove in two, Michael scored three times and Kelsey Ivy scored three runs.

Mo Fox added three RBIs while Kortni Lagrou scored twice.

Dewitt each drove in a run for the Redmen (14-4, 5-3).

Norwalk (20-2, 8-0) scored one run in each of the first two innings to top Bellevue for the second time this season.

Tennis: Port Clinton 4, Oak Harbor 1

Eli Boldt defeated Mat Rodrigues in three sets and won 1 singles but Oak Harbor's tennis team fell in the Sandusky Bay Conference.

"Matheus returned to action in a tough rematch with Eli that Eli gritted out in the end," Port Clinton coach John Taylor said. "Both played well and we can look forward to more in the SBC tournament/sectionals."

Ian Rhoads (No. 2 singles) and Bryce Rubie and Ian Puckett (No. 2 doubles) all lost in three sets for the Redmen. Rhoads lost a third-set breaker while Rubie and Puckett made things difficult for Max Mercurio and Ian

Softball: Whitmer 17, Ross 7

TOLEDO — Kelsey Ivy homered, doubled and drove in four runs, but the Little Giants were run-ruled 17-7 by the Panthers in Friday's TRAC match-up.

Megan Michael, Kiera Hall and Mo Fox each doubled for Ross (11-8, 5-5).

Mckenzie Gallaher suffered the loss allowing seven earned runs.

**Sandusky 7, Fremont
Ross 2 ; Ross 17,
Sandusky 7 (6 innings)**

Meghan Michael and Kelsey Ivy each scored four runs as Ross's softball team won the second non-conference matchup.

Michael hit a home run and added an RBI, Kiera Hall scored twice, drove in two and added a homer, and Lindsay Overmyer scored three times and drove in two for the Little Giants (12-9). Brina Hrynciw scored twice, Kalee Royster drove in two, and Mo Fox had an RBI and scored.

Michael (2-0) walked one in seven six innings to notch her second victory of the week. She scored once and drove in a run in the first game.

Softball: Ross 5, Findlay 2

FINDLAY—Mckenzie Gallagher struck out 12 Trojan hitters and drove home three runs at the plate as the Little Giants picked up a Three Rivers Athletic Conference win on Monday.

Gallagher allowed two unearned runs on hits and walked a single hitter in a complete game effort. She was 3-for-5 for Ross (13-9, 6-5), which also got four hits, including two doubles and an RBI from catcher Kiera Hall. Meghan Michael had two hits and an RBI.

Softball: Notre Dame 12, Ross 2

FREMONT — Kiera Hall was 3-for-3 and scored two runs but the Little Giants fell to the Eagles 12-2 Tuesday in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

Ross' Mckenzie Gallagher lost in the circle going just four innings allowing six earned runs on ten hits.

Kelsey Ivy was 2-for-4 and drove in both of the runs for Ross (13-10, 6-6).

Softball: Clay 7, Ross 1

FREMONT — The eighth-ranked Eagles held the Little Giants to two hits in Wednesday's Three Rivers Athletic Conference tilt.

Lindsay Overmyer got Ross (13-11, 6-7) within 4-1 in the fifth inning with a solo home run. McKenzie Gallagher recorded the Little Giants other hit.

Gallagher gave up six runs (four earned) on eight hits in five innings of work where she struck out two and walked two. Meghan Michael gave up a run on two hits in two innings.

Softball: Ross 14, Lima Senior 0

FREMONT — Mckenzie Gallagher tossed her third no-hitter of the season as the Little Giants earned coach Mike Gilbert a win in his final regular season home game as Ross' coach by routing the Spartans in five innings in a Friday Three Rivers Athletic Conference tilt at Alumni Fields.

Gallagher, who threw her first two no-hitters in the first two weeks of April, struck out 10 and walked one. On offense, she scored three runs, drove in another and stole two bases for the Little Giants (14-11, 7-7). Kiera Hall homered and drove in four runs while Kelsey Ivy was 2-for-2 with a dou-

SOFTBALL

Ross outfield makes play when it counts

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Fly balls have been an adventure at times for Ross' new outfield this spring.

But even through all the trials and tribulations, each outfielder has found ways to make big plays. And McKenna Pettiford's catch in left field was a key play for the Little Giants on Tuesday.

With two outs and Marion Harding threatening with run-

ners at third and second base, Pettiford ran down a ball off the bat of Presidents' hitter Paige Kightlinger that looked to be a sure gap shot that would've tied the game. Instead, Pettiford squeezed it and Ross had a 5-3 victory and a sectional crown in a Division I contest played at Alumni Fields.

The Little Giants will play the winner of Thursday's game between Bowling Green and Perrysburg next Tuesday at 5 p.m. at Tiffin University.

"They made a big play," said Ross coach Mike Gilbert, of his outfield. "Just like the play before that when Brina (Hrynciw) made an effort at a ball in center field and dropped it, McKenna was there to back the play up and keep (the Presidents) to one base. That's something we haven't been doing. I saw improvement."

Harding (11-16) scored three runs in the top half of the fifth inning to cut into what had been a 5-0 advantage for the Little Gi-

ants (15-11), aided by scoring four unearned runs in the second inning.

"After we got our runs we started relaxing and that's where coach (Gilbert) said, 'we're not done yet. It's not time to relax yet, it's time to push harder,'" Ross catcher Kiera Hall said. "Feels good to win. This was probably one of the better games we played together as a team. Everyone showed up to play and we reduced our errors a lot, even though we had

a few pop up again."

Five to be exact. Two occurred in the fifth inning where the Presidents runs went unearned. After Hailey Crochet led off with a double to right field, Kaitlynn Evans reached on an error that allowed Crochet to come home. Harding added two more runs when Kightlinger hit a two RBI single through the left side. But Ross pitcher McKenzie Gallagher

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Ross

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recovered to strike out the final hitter before any more damage could be done.

Gallagher finished with 10 strikeouts as she held the Presidents to three hits. She had one walk and hit another batter.

"I thought McKenzie pitched a really good game and we played good enough defense to win," Gilbert said. "When you get to this point of the year anything can happen."

Gallagher didn't surrender a hit until a bunt single in the fourth inning. She stranded three runners in that inning, getting out a one out bases loaded jam.

"She can get rattled, but she calms me down and I calm her down when things aren't going our way," said Hall, of her bat-

tery mate.

Ross grabbed the lead in the home half of the first inning when Meghan Michael's sacrifice fly in four territory on the first base line scored Gallagher, who tagged up and caught the Presidents out of position.

Lindsay Overmyer and Hrynciw tallied back to back singles to start the second inning for the Little Giants. Overmyer scored on a throwing error by Harding pitcher Taylor Hancock.

Hrynciw scored on another error at third base on a fielder's choice by Gallagher, before Hall singled in Gallagher and Bailey Eishen with a single to right.

Hall and Overmyer were the lone Ross hitters with multiple hits, each finishing 2-for-3.

"I'm seeing the ball better and I'm way more disciplined at the play than I was last year," Hall said. "I've been practicing

on my swing a lot and it's been paying off lately."

Tuesday's game marked the final home game for Gilbert, who will retire from coaching after having coached the Ross softball program the last 15 years. The West Carrollton native has taught in Fremont City Schools the past 38 years and has also helped coach varsity football and basketball.

"He's such a good person," said Hall, of her coach. "I want to make this season go far from him."

Said Gilbert, "It's been a lot of fun. I've had a great career with great kids. What more can you ask for? Whether or not they play the best ball sometimes, these girls come out and practice hard and they try to do what you tell them. In this day and age, that's pretty special."

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DISTRICT SOFTBALL



Ross' Kiera Hall bunts against Bowling Green on Tuesday. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Bobcats beat out Little Giants 7-1 in semifinal

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

TIFFIN — Ross' softball team ran into a hot team at the wrong time.

Bowling Green's Hanna Williford held the Little Giants to six hits and struck out nine in leading the Bobcats — winners of four regular season contests — to a 7-1 victory in Tuesday's Division I district semifinal game played at Tiffin University. They'll face the winner of Wednesday's game between Anthony Wayne and Ashland in the district championship game at noon Saturday.

Williford kept Ross (15-12) hitless until the fourth inning as the Bobcats (6-18) built a 2-0 lead and never trailed. The Little Giants scored their lone run in the home half of the fourth inning when Kiera Hall singled to right, scoring

"We got beat by a better team. They've caught fire at the right time and we wish them well. We felt incredibly fortunate to get this far."

MIKE GILBERT Little Giants coach

Mckenzie Gallagher from third base. Gallagher had led the inning off with a triple.

Ross had two hits in both the bottom of the fifth and seventh innings, but failed to score.

"We got beat by a better team," said Little Giants coach Mike Gilbert, who coached the final game of his 15-year career in the loss.

"They've caught fire at the right time and we wish them well. We felt incredibly fortunate to get this far."

Mckenzie Gallagher, pitching her final game in a Ross uniform, was saddled with the

loss. She was a victim of three errors in the field that allowed Bowling Green to score five unearned runs on 10 hits.

"We've averaged three errors a game all year," Gilbert said. "Mckenzie pitched a great game. But (Bowling Green) hit the ball tonight, which was something we couldn't do. Our three and four-hole hitters didn't come through for us like they're capable of."

Meghan Michael and Kelsey Ivy went a combined 0-for-6 with four strikeouts in the three and four spots. Mo

Fox was the lone Ross hitter with multiple hits going 2-for-3. McKenna Pettiford and Brina Hrynciw were the others with hits for the Little Giants who were kept off-balance all night by Williford. The junior righthander threw over 75 percent of her pitches (69 of 90) for strikes.

"Confidence is No. 1, obviously," said Cress, asked of what the difference in his team has been the last few games. "Hanna Williford has also come along. She's doing a phenomenal job pitching. She's gotten a lot stronger, she's been very good at placing the ball and mixing up her pitches and locations, which is throwing batters off."

"Offensively, we're putting the ball in play and getting some good solid hits. And our

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Giants

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defense has gotten a lot better over the last couple weeks.”

Ross topped the Bobcats 5-2 on April 2 at Alumni Fields. Gallagher followed up a no-hitter in the Little Giants’ first game by throwing a two-hitter against Bowling Green, giving up a single earned run and striking out 11.

“She’s a tough pitcher,” said Cress of Gallagher, who had seven strikeouts, a walk and one hit by pitch Tuesday. “She throws hard, she’s got good location and she did a nice job again tonight. We did learn from our first game with them, though, and knew to watch for a variety of pitches. We also knew she likes to throw up, so we worked on staying off of that and being a little more selective with our pitches.”

The Bobcats took a 1-0 lead in the second inning when Emily Sidle reached on an error to leadoff. Lily Murnen’s sacrifice bunt moved Sidle to third before Angie Hoffsis’ single through the right side scored her.

Bowling Green increased its lead in the fourth inning on Reagan Morman’s infield grounder to short.

With her team up one in the fifth inning, Sidle hit a two-out, two-run double to center scoring Hanna Addy and Kelsey Parker.

Addy had reached on a walk while Parker was hit by a pitch. Both runs were unearned after a dropped ball on a caught stealing play at third base and a strikeout, which



Ross’ Brina Hrynciw makes a catch for an out against Bowling Green on Tuesday. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

would’ve ended the inning.

Morman tripled to right to lead off the sixth inning, Hoffsis bunted for a single and Wiliford hit a two-run double off the fence in left field for a 6-1 lead. Parker singled in the Bobcats’ final run three hitters later.

Ross had runners at the corners in the fifth inning and runners at first and second in the seventh inning.

“It’s been a lot of fun,” said Gilbert of his career with the Little Giants. “I’ve had a great career with great kids. What more can you ask for? Whether or not they play the best ball sometimes, these girls come out and practice hard and they try to do what you tell them. In this day and age, that’s pretty special.”

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Ross softball was also well represented as Kelsey Ivy and Mckenzie Gallagher were each named to the first-team with Kiera Hall and Meghan Michael earning second-team recognition. Lindsay Overmyer and Brina Hrynciw were each honorable mention.