



Port Clinton's Simon Schulz and Ross' Steven Blodgett battle for the ball Monday. DOUG HISE/NEWS-MESSENGER PHOTOS

Fremont Ross boys fall to Port Clinton in season opener

By Matthew Horn
Sports writer

PORT CLINTON — Zach Zimmerman scored the only goal Monday for Fremont Ross in an 8-1 non-conference setback to Port Clinton to start the season.

“We played well to start,” Little Giants coach Tom Ackerman said. “The first 10 minutes we played well and had it in their end.

“We can’t hang our heads. They had some fast guys.”

Ackerman, who came over from Old Fort, was anxious to get the campaign under way.

“We were pretty much ready to go,” Ackerman said. “I’m learning as the new coach and getting a feel for where every-

body plays.”

Ross was missing a few players because of injuries Monday.

“We shuffled the lineup,” Ackerman said.

“It’s a fairly young team with six freshman and sophomore starters.”

Denmark exchange student Simon Shulz scored five goals for the Redskins.

“He adds to our attack,” Port Clinton coach Paco Romero said.

“He adds a different look. We have attackers who can beat you in many ways. We have speed and skill.”

The Ross girls also fell to the Redskins 6-1.

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Port Clinton's Shelby Gerwin shoots toward the goal Monday against Fremont Ross.

No time to waste

Eli quickly fitting in with Rockets

By Matthew Horn

Sports writer

OAK HARBOR — Connor Eli could not play sports last season as a transfer from Genoa.

Two games into his Rockets varsity soccer career, it looks as though he's been together with his teammates for 10 years.

Eli scored four goals for the second straight game, including three in rapid succession Wednesday as Oak Harbor (2-0) shut out Fremont Ross 9-0 in a non-conference matchup.

"All year I was thinking about it," Eli said. "I went to a few practices. We've been working hard. The hard work and patience are paying off even though it was hard not to play sports with the decision to come to Oak Harbor."

Eli and Tate Haar communicated without saying a word Wednesday. Eli nodded to Haar in the middle of the field from the left side an approximation of where his cross was about go, but Haar already knew.

"If I come down the left I'll



Fremont Ross' Steven Blodgett settles the ball during a soccer game against Oak Harbor on Wednesday.

put it near the 6 with my left foot," said Eli, who also had three assists Wednesday. "It's nothing planned, but he was there to put a head on it."

Haar and Andy Burnette each added two goals against the Little Giants (0-2). One of Burnett's goals had a bit of a screen and was in the net far

post before anybody had time to be wiser.

"It's not just team chemistry," Haar said, "it's a family. I wouldn't ask for more. I love each one of them. We battle in practice and we want to be the best."

"The past couple years communication was not great. We know each other and are starting to understand how we play, but it's the communication."

"We have captains and other guys who could be captains, including Connor."

Trevor Hanely scored one goal Wednesday while Burnette and David Birchall each added an assist.

"Right now, it looks great," Eli said of the group's cooperation and teamwork. Oak Harbor won its first game 9-2. "Tate, Tim (Poiry), Tyler (Sievert) ... I got to know the guys in school. We talked — not really about soccer — but we hung out in the summer and the chemistry is good."

"We're not worried about who scores but about giving everybody chances."

Haar had an idea what to ex-

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pect from Eli, but eight goals in two games is even more than Haar had in mind.

"I played against him with Genoa," Haar said. "I didn't like him. He's fast, he knows how to play soccer and I knew what we were adding. He's one to watch out for. I'm glad we have him and Genoa doesn't."

Eli would certainly say the same of Haar, who has four assists in each of the first two games.

"If Tate feeds it to the corner, I can look once and I know guys will be there for a play or guys will be on the backside," Eli said. "It's getting to know each other and being able to look at each other and know where it will be without saying much. That helps."

"With non-verbal communication, we know each other as a team. It's all over the field."

Oak Harbor's defense also has obviously been strong in the first two games. When one Rocket makes a run to a corner, another steps in to fill the vacated space as the team tries to consider spacing and play-making on the attack.

Ross had only about two shots on goal in the second half and very limited pressure throughout. Oak Harbor's attackers trust the defenders and vice versa.

"Our defense is smarter and quick and transitions to take away opportunities

teams will need against us," Haar said.

Rockets coach Ken Filar wants his boys to avoid being their own worst enemy.

"Everybody played in both games," Filar said. "We did a good job getting fit. Tate led the group and everybody went hard. We had competition for spots and had to make cuts. We're in good shape for the next several years. We've been working for two years to get where we are. We won't take anybody lightly."

"In any sport, the top teams get upset because they start reading the clippings. If we play smart and hungry and protect the ball, we'll be fine. Connor didn't do anything by himself. They're working together. They're very unselfish. Connor's been the one on the finishing end and next game it will be somebody else."

The Little Giants' goalkeeper made a few plays in the first half to try to keep his team in the game. A Ross defender also prevented a goal.

"We're still trying to figure out what we're going to do with formations," Little Giants coach Ron Ackerman said. "We had a few good balls through, but we didn't play to space."

The best scoring chance for Ross came as Armando Gonzalez tried to loft a shot over Kyle Draper, but Draper reached high to make the save.

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BOYS SOCCER PREVIEWS

FREMONT ROSS

Coach: Tom Ackerman, first year.

Last year: Eighth in the TRAC.

Roster: Ben Morroney, Taylor Biehler, Daniel Jacobo, Trent Bishop, Jared Fox, Alex Terraza-Cobo, Diego Jacobo, Alfonso Morales, Zach Zimmerman, Nate Domiray, Trent Damschroeder, Sergio Garcia, Caleb Jackson, Carter Aldrich, Ivan Jacobo, Steven Blodgett, Jacob Weinheimer, Eigil Voelund and James Gibson.

Outlook: Ackerman comes to Ross after having success down Ohio 53 at Old Fort.

Ross soccer breaks through for first win

Little Giants finally get rewarded for hard work, efforts

By Kevin Shields

Sports writer

FREMONT — Good effort and scoring chances haven't been the problem for the Ross soccer team this fall.

Finding the net has.

"This team has to find a way to learn how to score," Little Giants first-year coach Tom Ackerman said. "I think once a player does it, it becomes more and

more frequent. Right now, we're just missing shots or we're one pass too short, or one too many at times.

"But I think once this team learns to score and scores a lot, we'll really get this thing rolling."

Ross tallied its first victory of the season Thursday, topping arch rival Sandusky 3-1 in a non-league contest.

Armando Gonzalez and Alfonso Morales each scored first half goals for the Little Giants (1-5-2, 0-2-1) who also got an insurance goal from Nate Domiray on a second half penalty kick.

Ross controlled the game's tempo and play throughout the match, hustling to each ball and making smart decisions with it.

Domiray always seemed to be at the center of attention.

"That's by far Nate's best game," Ackerman said. "We call him a defensive midfielder, and tonight, he controlled everything for us. It was nice to see him move the ball out there and make the plays I want to see him make."

Goalkeeper Ben Morroney has been the anchor of the Little Giant's defense for a couple seasons now. Sandusky got its lone goal against him on a penalty

kick with 21:51 remaining in the game.

In front of Morroney, Ackerman has had as many as five or six freshmen and sophomores getting a majority of the playing time.

"I think Ben got a little frustrated with some of these guys at times towards the start of the year, but I think he's learned that these guys are learning, so he's getting a little more comfortable with them in front of him."

Ross finished in a 2-2 tie with Oregon Clay on Tuesday in a Three Rivers Athletic Conference match. It's about a close as

the Little Giants have gotten to a win in the TRAC after going win-less in the league in years one and two.

"We had opportunity after opportunity to win that game," Ackerman said. "Good shots. They just weren't going in."

"But the TRAC is brutal. It's been nice having these non-league games yet to play teams more to our level, but it's also nice because the TRAC shows us where we need to go in the future. Hopefully, we'll be competing with St. John's (Jesuit), St. Francis (de Sales) and

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Findlay in the not too distant future.”

“There’s a lot of young talent out there on the field for us right now, especially on the back end of the field on the defensive end,” Ackerman continued. “Normally, there’s two freshmen and a sophomore back there, and if it’s the backup defender, it’s another sophomore.”

James Gibson, one of those young defenders, is a player Ackerman has seen a lot of development in.

“At the beginning of the year, he looked slow, now he’s right at competition level,” said Ackerman of Gibson. “I think he’s figured out where to go and what spacing he needs.”

Steven Blodgett, alongside Gibson in the rear, has been using his height to his advantage.

“He’s done such a better job in the air,” Ackerman said. “He knows all the stuff in front of the net is his and he’s pressuring guys and taking balls away from guys, where before he was just using his strength out there.”

Speed kills. Ross has plenty of it.

“We’re looking more up the

field offensively, which is something we’ve stressed,” Ackerman said. “At the beginning of the year, the kids would play the ball back a lot where maybe they didn’t need to. So, we’re not making as many drop passes as we were at the start of the season.

“We’re fast up top. We have to use that to our advantage and try get one-on-one match-ups with a defender.”

The Little Giants travel to Clyde for a 2:30 p.m. game Saturday.

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Ross soccer falls 2-1 to Central Catholic

By Kevin Shields

Sports writer

FREMONT—Coaching isn't an exact science.

But like many coaches new to a team, Ross boys soccer coach Tom Ackerman has been doing his fair share of experimentation this fall.

Mostly of the trail and error variety.

Tuesday's experiment during the Little Giant's Three Rivers Athletic Conference game with Toledo Central Catholic, featured a tactical change Ackerman made with defender Trent Damschroder. Instead of playing back by his own net, Damschroder was free to go wherever he was needed.

Ross lost to the Fighting Irish

2-1, but Ackerman liked the results of his test.

"It seemed to really pay off, although we're risking things a bit with only three defenders back" he said. "Trent touched a lot of balls that could have gotten back in play. The move is a little more aggressive than what we've been playing, which I like and it helped the midfield out tremendously."

The Little Giants (4-9-2, 0-6-1) spent a lot of time in the Central Catholic (2-12-2) zone.

However, as has been the case many times this season, a majority of the team's scoring chances were shot over the net and never given a chance to beat Irish goalkeeper Curt Newell.

"Same thing, again, we're struggling with our finishing,"

Ackerman said. "We finally took advantage of a throw-in. Trent Bishop does our throw-ins and he can throw it all the way to the goal and his ability to do so finally paid off in the second half."

Ross' Nate Domiray took advantage of Newell being out of the goal box and bounced in a high kick off his foot after the Irish goalie failed to clear the ball from his net area.

Domiray's goal answered a goal by Central Catholic's Conor Maloney at the 30:08 mark that gave the Irish a 2-0 lead, moments after the Little Giants squandered a prime scoring opportunity. Bishop's throw-in from the left side found the foot of Irish player Anthony Lockett on the right side of Newell, who was battling with Ross' Jared

Fox for the ball. Lockett failed to clear it as his clearing attempt hit off Zach Zimmerman's head back to Fox who tried to setup Zimmerman with a return kick, but Zimmerman couldn't quite get his shot on net as it sailed wide and into Newell's grasp.

A minute or so later, the Little Giants lost containment on Maloney, who slipped in and beat Ross goalkeeper Ben Morroney.

"That was a killer because that's a chance we should finish down there and it was right there to have at," said Ackerman of the stretch. "We had everybody up and we were attacking.

"But then (Central Catholic) got that second goal and that was tough. At least we responded."

Morroney recorded five saves for the Little Giants.

Ethan Collins scored the other Irish goal at the 31:54 mark of the first half on a crossing pass.

"Everything that I expect him to save, he did," said Ackerman of Morroney.

Newell made three saves for Central Catholic.

"I liked the hustle today," Ackerman said. "They never gave up. We were winning a lot of balls in the midfield."

Ross will close its regular season by hosting Marion Harding on Thursday at 5 p.m. The Little Giants play Ashland next Tuesday in sectional play at Lexington.

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A GOAL FOR BOYS SOCCER

Tyler Campton
Staff Reporter



Goal!! Fremont Ross Boys' soccer season is nearing the end. The current record of the boys' team is 2-5-2 (0-2-1 in TRAC) but still play with high

hope and energy. The team has 22 players with Ben Morroney and Nate Domiray named as captains.

"The team is really focused on respect for our opponents, our team, referees, parents and anyone involved with the program," Coach Ackerman said. "The expectation for the team is to rebuild the program into a competitive team game in and game out," said Coach

Ackerman.

And speaking of respect for the game, the Fremont Ross Boys' soccer team is now feeding the other team, win or lose, at the end of every game. "We respect the other team no matter what. The game is over and there is no need to fight," comments Mr. Burndt, the athletic director.

"The team is really better than last year, it really is a big improvement but there is always room to develop," said senior Ben Morroney.

"My goal for the team is to go for every ball and play until the last whistle," said junior Nate Domiray. "We've made a huge jump and the team has really improved." Nate is also hoping for a place as captain next year.

With true leadership and teamwork, this team is one that can really thrive.

Boys soccer

Ross junior Nate Domiray earned first-team all-TRAC honors for the Little Giants in boys soccer.

Senior goalkeeper Ben Morroney was second team. Steven Blodgett, Trent Damschroeder and Trent Bishop were honorable mention.