

Clay clips Little Giants

Ross drops third game to rival Eagles

By ALEXIUS TOMASZEWSKI
Staff writer

No coach wants to see errors in the final game of the season.

But it was those same early-season blunders that cost the Little Giants softball team its late-season tournament run in a 4-1 loss to fourth-ranked Oregon Clay in a Division I district semifinal Tuesday at Alumni Field.

Ross ends the season 18-10. The Eagles advance to play Anthony Wayne — 3-0 winners over Bowling Green — on Thursday at Tiffin University.

"They pitched a good game and we didn't hit the ball. They deserved to win," Ross head coach Mike Gilbert said. "There's not much you can say. We didn't field the ball when we needed to field it and to get to this point, you have to play error-free ball. And we didn't do that."

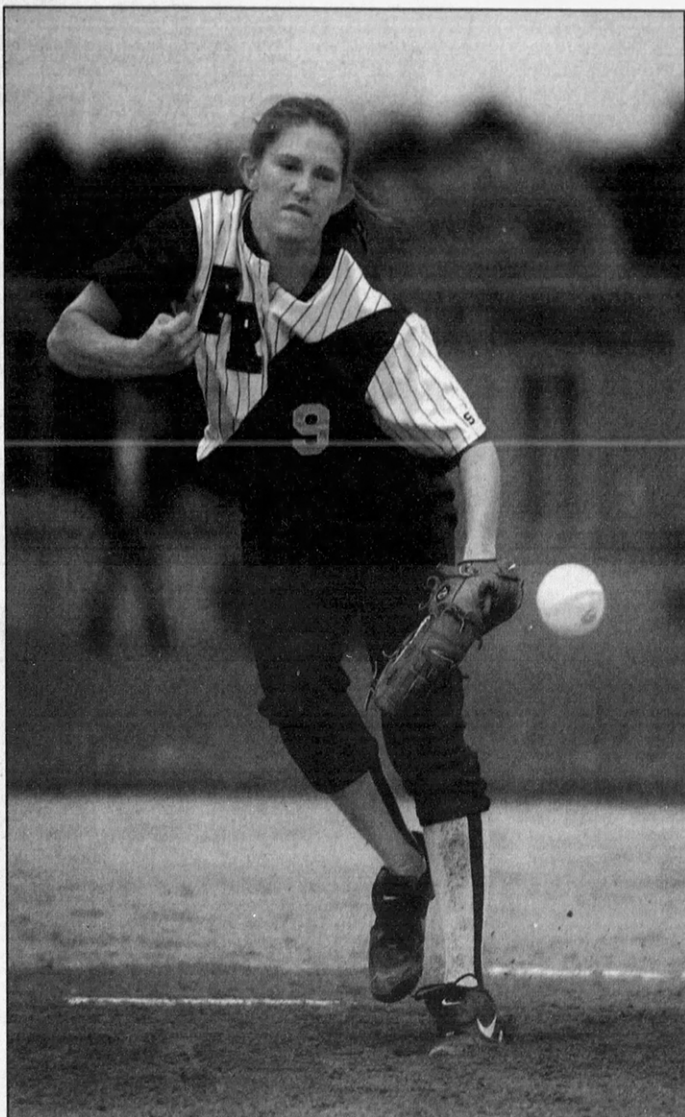
Ross, which had four errors to the Eagles' zero, was 0-for-3 against Clay this season, dropping a pair of games in Great Lakes League play.

The Eagles (21-6) broke open a scoreless game with a run in the top of the sixth and closed the door on Ross by scoring three insurance runs with two outs in the seventh.

Lindsay Miller took first on a fielder's choice, and Brooke Shimmman followed with another single. Ross pitcher Miranda Steinberger fielded the grounder and threw an off-balance pitch to second hoping to start a double play, but the runners were safe. Miller and Shimmman moved on a Melissa Bowie groundout. Whitney Ondrus came up and delivered a double to score Miller and Shimmman.

Eagles pitcher Kristin Crawford singled and Monica Sigurdson ripped a single to score Ondrus for the final score. Clay had four of its seven hits in the inning.

"We were making pretty good contact and we hit a couple of ground balls right to them. I kept telling them in the huddle it was going to go," Radabaugh said. "Fremont made a few



ROSS HURLER Miranda Steinberger delivers a pitch against Oregon Clay Tuesday at Alumni Field during Division I district semifinal action. She carried a shutout into the sixth inning, but the Little Giants lost 4-1.

News-Messenger/Ben French

See GIANTS, B3

Giants bow out of postseason with 4-1 loss

Continued From B1

errors that we were able to capitalize on for the insurance runs in the seventh and that helped out."

Sigurdson was 2-for-4 to lead the Eagles, while Ondrus, Crawford, Yendrick, Schumaker and Shimmman added a hit apiece.

Down 4-0, Ross didn't fold. "I was a little nervous when the tying run was at the plate, Eagles coach Brenda Radabaugh said. "Every time we've played them, they hit both our pitchers. We've been playing good defense lately, so I was hoping that would hold true today."

Shannon Hickey led off the bottom of the seventh frame with a walk and was replaced with pinch-runner Lydia Sandoval. She moved to second on a passed ball, and Paige Kingsborough singled. Tara McFee was then walked to load the bases with two outs. Sandoval crossed home for Ross's only run on a wild pitch. Amy Reiter struck out to end the game.

The Little Giants stranded five baserunners and had runners in scoring position several times during the first five scoreless innings. Said Gilbert, "We've done that all year. We seem to relax once we get behind. They never quit. We could've just laid down and died, but we didn't."



ROSS'S NICOLE MARROQUIN rounds third during the fifth inning of Tuesday's Division I district semifinal against Clay at Alumni Field.

News-Messenger/Ben French

Crawford earned the win, walking two with 10 strikeouts. Steinberger ends the year 13-7, giving up four runs on seven hits with five strikeouts and no walks in the complete game. At the plate for Ross, Kingsborough went 2-for-3. Jaymelee Glaspy added a hit.

Despite a 500 GLL record, Gilbert said the season was a success. "I would've liked to have done better in the league, but I'm happy. We have a great bunch of kids that played hard every game. They never quit and that's one thing you've got to like about them."