



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

TIPPEN — 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 1 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 6-6-6 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 right-hander 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

See GIANTS, Page 7A

Giants

Continued from Page 6A

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. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

would've ended the inning.

Morman tripled to right to lead off the sixth inning. Hoffsis bunted for a single and Williford hit a two-run double off the fence in left field for a 6-1 lead. Parker singled in the Bobcats' final run three hits 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."

KShields@gannett.com
419-334-1043
Twitter: @KShieldsNM