

2000 SEASON REVIEW

Freshman setter helps Ross to victory

By **TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM**
Sports editor

CASTALIA — Fremont Ross junior Erin Barr knows what it's like to be an impressionable freshman on the varsity volleyball team.

That's why **Volleyball** she did her best to make little sister Ceara, a freshman setter, feel right at home early in the Little Giants' season opener Tuesday at Margaretta.

Erin Barr picked up three of her five kills in opening moments of the first game as Ross swept the Polar Bears 15-7, 15-9 in a stuffy Margaretta gymnasium. Meanwhile, Ceara, the team's on-

ly player younger than a junior, settled into a promising first start, recording 16 assists and eight service points.

"I thought she did pretty well for her first game," Erin Barr said of her sister. "I remember when I was a freshman; I was the same way, nervous. She did really well."

Ceara said having her sister on the court was a comfort. But Erin also can be her most vocal critic.

"Sometimes she tells me to get it close to the net if it's not perfect for her. But she gets it over," Ceara said.

Ceara Barr got a quick indoctrination Tuesday. She set junior Lindsay Cobb and senior Kira Wo-



C. BARR



E. BARR

jdyla for kills on the first two Ross serves. After the Polar Bears scored two points, Erin Barr started a run of three consecutive kills, the first two on assists from Ceara.

The Little Giants went on to build a 10-4 lead before Ceara served four consecutive points to clinch the first-game victory.

Inside: Clyde, Old Fort volleyball teams win. **Page B2**

Ross coach Karrie Gardner said her freshman setter showed poise.

"You always think it's going to be so tough for somebody going from eighth grade to varsity," Gardner said. "It's a whole different world. But she's got a lot of experience, and she's an excellent player. She's the kind of kid that doesn't get scared easily. That allows her to play with a lot of the older girls. It helps, I think, that her sister's on the team."

See ROSS, B2

Continued From B1

"It's hard to argue when she plays that well."

Cobb knocked down five kills, and junior Jessica Fick added three more for the Little Giants. Cobb had three aces, and senior Tiffany Garcia came up with two.

Katrina Day led the Polar Bears (1-1) with six kills. Laura Hawn contributed three. Setter Courtney Miller had seven assists.

The Polar Bears, who defeated St. Joe in three games Monday, led 8-6 in the second game before Garcia handed control back to the Giants with a six-point serving run. She had both aces in the streak, and Cobb came up with a kill and a block.

Cobb ended the match with two service points, the first on an ace the second on a dink by Ceara Barr.

Gardner was pleased with her team's start.

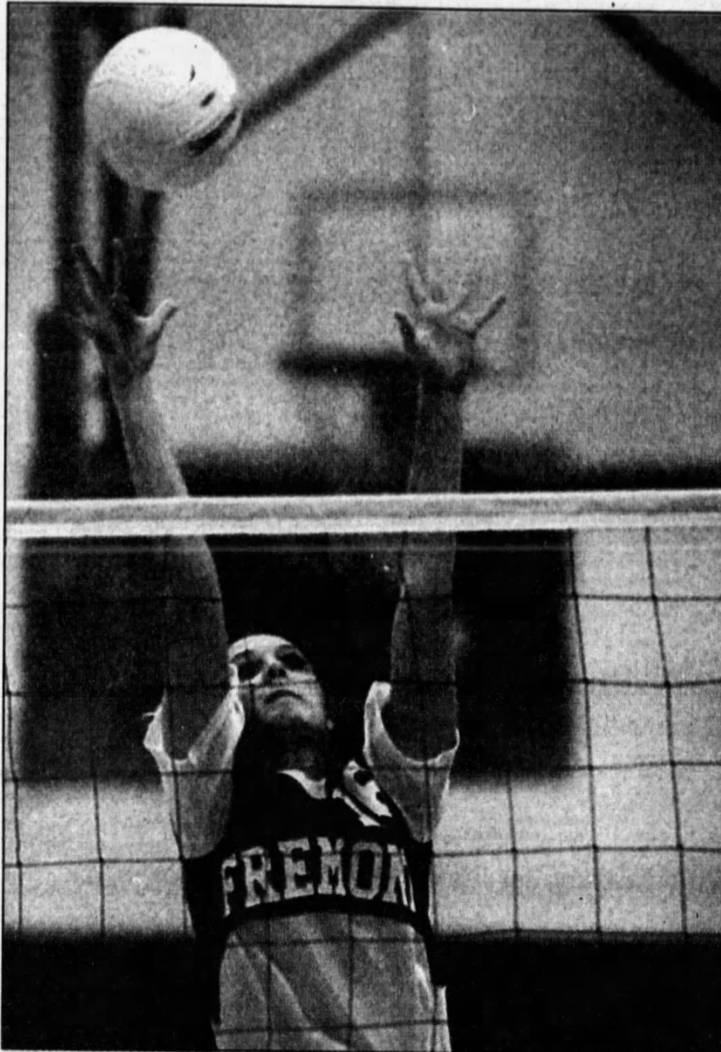
"You never know what to expect," she said. "There are nerves, and this was the first day of school. Their minds have been on a million things today. So I was happy they came out focused."

Margaretta coach Bill Cramer was unavailable after the game.

Ross won the junior varsity match 15-12, 11-15, 15-12. Margaretta took the freshman match 15-9, 15-2.

The Little Giants are at Lorain Southview on Tuesday in their Great Lakes League opener. The first home match is Sept. 7 against Findlay.

Coming from all angles



LINDSAY COBB is one of three experienced hitters on the Fremont Ross volleyball team this season. The Little Giants hope their balanced attack can lead them to a Great Lakes League championship.

News-Messenger file photo

Ross juniors form triple hitting threat

By **TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM**
Sports editor

The Fremont Ross volleyball team may have the element of surprise on its side in 2000.

The opposition can never be sure which of three talented junior hitters will be raining spikes and from where.

Inside: Prep volleyball capsules. **Page B2**

Outside hitters Erin Barr and Jessica Fick are entering their third seasons on the varsity. Middle hitter Lindsay Cobb is starting for the second consecutive year.

All three are experienced at getting the ball to the floor.

"That's going to be one of our biggest strengths," third-year coach Karrie Gardner said. "At any given time, we've got at least two, sometimes three, hitters up in the front row that are all threats. And we've got a setter that can get everybody the ball. That should work to our advantage.

"We've got nice hitters. We've got dependable hitters in every spot. They don't just get up and swing hard. They play smart. They know what to do in each situation. They're good tippers; they're good at placing the ball."

The Little Giants are shooting to improve on last year's 11-12 record and third-place finish in the Great Lakes League. They'll do it without middle hitter Rebecca Brown, who graduated, and setter Krissy Lotycz, who transferred to Gibsonburg after being named the team's most valuable player last season.

The team's goals are to win the GLL, get out of sectional — they've lost the tournament opener in each of past two seasons — and play as a team.

The well-rounded hitting attack — it also includes junior middle hitter Sara Steinle and seniors Kira Woldyla and Jenna Mackey — should help freshman setter Ceara Barr, Erin Barr's little sister, settle into her role. She dished out 16 assists in the Ross opener Tuesday.

"We do have a lot of good hitters," Erin Barr said. "They all know their position and they get the job done when they need to get it done."

But the success of Ross's season may depend on the defense and passing. Seniors Tiffany Garcia and Janell Kingsborough and junior Katrina Strayer will man the back row.

"The offense doesn't ever

See GIANTS, B2

Giants ready for GLL season

Continued From B1

get going unless the defense is there," Gardner said. "We have good defensive players, and we're getting scrappier all the time. But that has to be something that constantly improves if we're going to come through as a whole."

St. Joseph Central Catholic must deal with the loss of All-Ohio hitter Annette Kupka, who is now playing at Tennessee Tech. Hitters Brea Busold and Sarah Pollick have also graduated.

The Crimson Streaks were 17-7 last year, and nearly upset Hopewell-Loudon in a sectional final. The Chieftains beat SJCC 15-7, 9-15, 15-12 at Old Fort en route to their third straight state championship.

This year's Crimson Streaks will rely on senior setter Jessica Ash, who is in her fourth year on the team. Senior Rachel Babione will play middle hitter; juniors Marianne Fox and Rachel Fisher will play outside hitter.

This year's edition of the Clyde Fliers will reach a milestone 500th victory for head coach Nancy Hanger. Hanger, who is in her 28th season, owns 497 career wins with Thursday's victory over Margaretta.

Clyde comes off a 16-8 season, a second-place finish in the Sandusky Bay Conference and a sectional championship. Three-year letterwinner Rachel Crooks, a middle hitter, is the top returnee. Crooks was second-team All-Ohio last season.

The Fliers are hoping to get outside hitter Rachel Dick, a first team All-SBC selection last year, back in a couple weeks from an illness. That should inject even more experience into a talented group.

"We're hopeful of having a successful season. There's a lot of determination on this year's team," Hanger said.

Gibsonburg has state on its mind after coming up a step short in 1999. Led by star setter Heather Hill, the Golden Bears look to tackle a tough schedule which includes Eastwood (twice), Old Fort and Toledo Central Catholic.

Gibsonburg must replace four all-league players lost to graduation, most notably league MVP Wendy Mathia.

Woodmore couldn't wait for the season to begin so the Wildcats could erase the bad taste of last year's 4-14 record. Senior co-captains Cori Moenter and Abby Richard should provide fifth-year coach

Kristina Blanco with plenty of leadership. Newcomer Rorey Giesler, a 6-foot-1 junior, should help with size in the middle.

New coach Mindy Myers inherits an experienced Lakota squad that returns most of the talent that went 9-11 last season. Senior hitters Renee Chaney, Maria Lowery, Megan Nonnemaker and Jamie Ray all won letters last year.

"I'm hoping to have at least a .500 season, and I think we can do more than that," Myers said.

At Oak Harbor, senior Sarah Schimmoeiler leads the way as the Rockets try to improve on a 5-15 season. Tracy Vargo is in her first season as head coach after piloting the junior varsity team last year.

"We're taking little steps at a time," said Vargo, who replaces Melanie Thorbahn. "I plan to have a better record than last year. The team definitely is talented, as long as we can keep our attitudes together and play as a team."

Old Fort coach Nancy Hoover has a talented squad for her 19th season. The Stockaders went 20-6 last season and advanced to the district final, where they fell to eventual state champion Hopewell-Loudon. Back are senior setter Carly Dunlap and senior hitter Erin Rau.

"Once the younger players get some experience, we should have a really good team," Hoover said.

Margaretta lost two talented players in Kristin Orwig and Jessica Van Ness from last year's 15-9 team. They'll try to compensate by relying on seven returning defensive players, led by junior Tracy Kingsborough. Junior Katrina Day is the top returning hitter.

"We will be relying on defense early on," third-year Polar Bears coach Bill Cramer said. "We look forward to building on the offense for success."

Second-year Bettsville coach Michelle Dantuono hopes to lead the Bobcats into respectability after a tough debut season.

Talented senior Char Soto is an all-purpose star for Bettsville.

Karen Irons, a 1985 Bellevue graduate, takes over the coaching reins of the Red. She will get help from Ann Ringholz, a senior setter who will run the offense, but Bellevue may struggle after losing four seniors from last year's 10-14 squad.

"Even though it will be a rebuilding year, we hope to be able to compete," Irons said.

**Fremont Ross 15-15,
Southview 2-10**

LORAIN — Fremont Ross rolled through its Great Lakes League opener, beating Lorain Southview easily.

For the Little Giants (2-0), Lindsay Cobb had seven kills, Janelle Kingsborough had nine service points, including three aces, and Tiffany Garcia had six digs.

Giants hit the bricks

Ross outlasts Findlay, starts down yellow road to GLL title

By TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM
Sports editor

In the Fremont Ross girls locker room, volleyball coach Karrie Gardner has hung a banner on which the Little Giants can chart their progress toward a Great Lakes League title.

For every GLL victory, the girls add a yellow brick on the road to the Emerald City.

That's right, it's a Wizard of Oz thing.

For Thursday's three-game victory over Findlay, Ross ought to get two yellow bricks for the heart, brains and courage it used to get by its chief league nemesis.

The Little Giants, led by junior middle hitter Lindsay Cobb, overcame a tough first-game loss to post a 14-16, 15-12, 15-13 victory in an intense, two-hour match before a boisterous crowd in the home opener.

Ross is 3-0, 2-0 in the GLL.

"Obviously we play to win, but when they play like that I'm happy whatever happens," Gardner said, her eyes rimmed red from the emotion of the victory.



COBB

"This was huge. Every game in the GLL is going to be like this. We can't afford to trip up. It was extremely important we get out of this with a win. For whatever reason, Findlay has always seemed to be a team that gives us trouble."

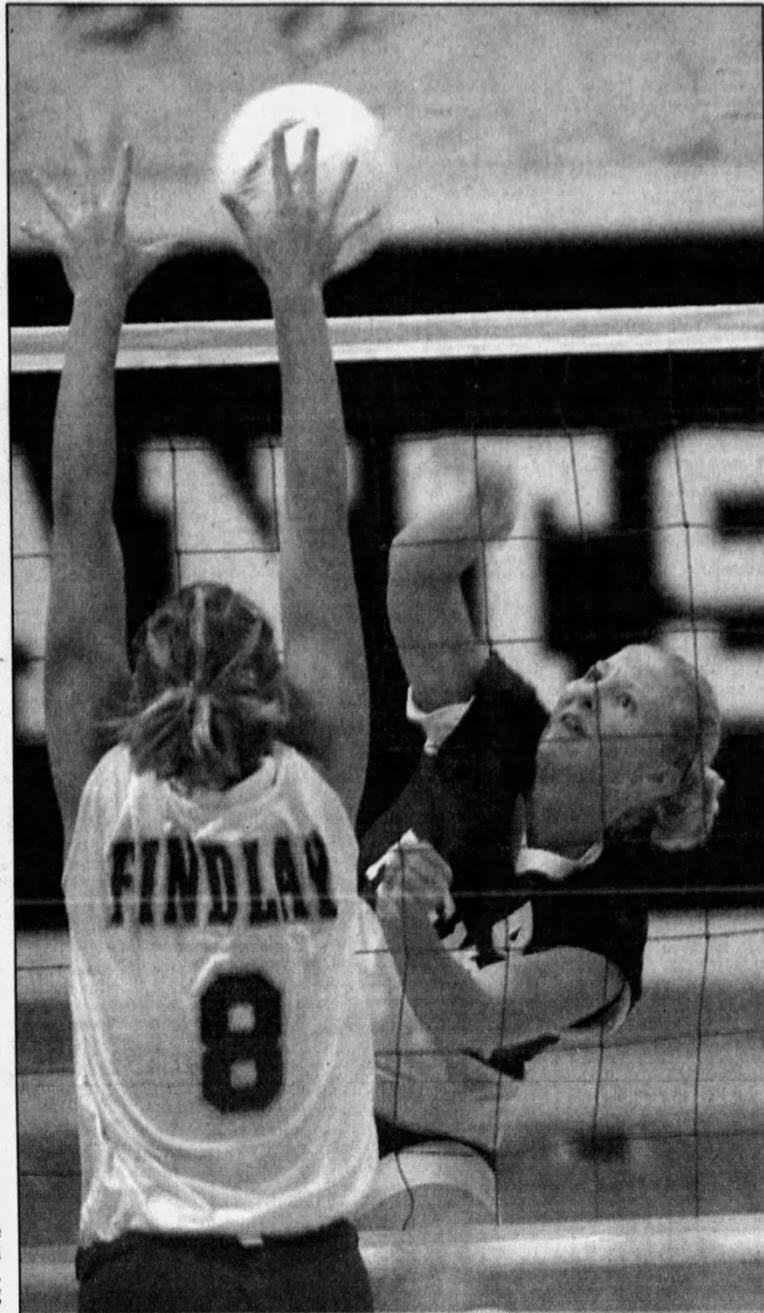
The Trojans led 10-7 and 13-11 in the final game but couldn't put Ross away. Each of Ross's talented junior hitters — Cobb, Jessica Fick and Erin Barr — ripped kills to keep Findlay from scoring the match-deciding points.

Then freshman setter Ceara Barr served up the tying points, both on Findlay miscues. After a Fick kill got the ball back for Ross, Tiffany Garcia ended the match by serving two more points. Fittingly, the final point came when Cobb slammed the ball off the net and off the arm of Findlay's Kandice Crum for a kill.

Cobb ripped 14 kills and had five stuff blocks for the match.

"It meant a lot to win because we've been talking this game up forever," Cobb said. "We told all our friends to come, and everybody came and supported us."

"I never thought we were going to lose. We've been losing worse than that before and come back to win. We're a good team; we have a lot of talent. Sometimes, it's bringing it all together and playing as a team. I think we did that in the second game and the third game."



News-Messenger photos/Ben French

ERIN BARR of Fremont Ross reaches for a spike against Findlay blocker Kandice Crum (8) during Thursday's Great Lakes League match at Ross High School.

See ROSS, B2

Ross stays perfect in GLL by beating Findlay

Continued From B1

Gardner said she instructed Ceara Barr to get the ball to Cobb at every opportunity Thursday. Cobb used her volleyball savvy to beat the Findlay blockers, Gardner said.

"Lindsay was spectacular tonight," she said. "She did everything — she served for us, she hit, she came up with the plays whenever we needed them. ... They were double- and triple-blocking her, and she was frustrating the heck out of them."

Fick added eight kills and 14

service points, and Erin Barr had six kills for Ross. Ceara Barr dished out 26 assists and served up nine points.

Findlay senior Audra Ritchie had 14 kills and two stuff blocks.

Findlay jumped out to an 11-4 lead in the first game. But the Little Giants used big plays and took advantage of Trojan mis-

takes to get back into the game.

The Little Giants responded by grabbing an 8-1 lead in the second game. They got help from Findlay, which was called for three lifts during the early part of the game.

The Trojan bench argued the calls but continued playing the same way.

Findlay narrowed the gap to 8-

5 before Ross leapt back ahead 14-8. The Trojans made one more run to get it to 14-12, but Garcia ended the game with an ace.

In the third game, a five-point run by Erin Barr gave Ross a 7-6 lead, the last advantage it would enjoy until 14-13.

The Little Giants are at the Willard Quad on Saturday.

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Whitmer takes out Ross in 3

News-messenger reports

The Fremont Ross volleyball team took a big step toward the Great Lakes League crown by beating Findlay last Thursday.

On Tuesday, the Little Giants gave up the ground they had gained, dropping a 15-9, 9-15, 15-9 decision to Whitmer at the Purple Pit.

"All the way it was passing," Ross coach Karrie Gardner said. "We didn't pass on the serves; we didn't pass on the freeballs. You can't get an offense going when you don't pass.

"Whitmer was a nice team, I don't want to take anything away from them. But we didn't do our jobs on the court."

Ross is 4-2, 2-1 in the GLL. Clay is the only remaining unbeaten team in the GLL, Gardner said.

Junior Erin Barr led the Little Giants with 10 kills. Senior Tiffany Garcia served up nine points, and senior Kira Wojdila had 10 digs.

Whitmer jumped out to an insurmountable 11-4 lead in the third game. The Giants closed it to 12-8 but could get no closer.

Ross is back into GLL action Thursday at home against Lorain Admiral King.

Volleyball Roundup

Ross stays atop GLL

Clyde ready for showdown

News-Messenger reports

FOSTORIA — Ross stayed tied atop the Great Lakes League with an easy 15-5, 15-4 victory over Fostoria on Tuesday.

Lindsay Cobb and Jessica Fick led the way with eight and five kills, respectively. Erin Barr added seven points and two aces.

Ross is 7-2, 6-1 in the GLL.

The Little Giants

won the junior varsity match 16-14, 17-15 and the freshman match 15-4, 6-15, 16-14.

Ross hosts Sandusky on Thursday.



FICK

Rival rips Ross

Evans leads Sandusky

By TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM
Sports editor

Sandusky volleyball star Meghan Evans is learning she doesn't have to do it all for her team to win.

But when the Blue Streaks needed her most Thursday against Fremont Ross, Evans played like the Ms. Everything she is.

The 6-foot-2 Evans, a senior middle hitter, stopped an

early Little Giant run with a momentum-altering block then thwarted a Ross comeback attempt with her serving to lead Sandusky to a 15-9, 15-12 Great Lakes League victory at the Purple Pit.

"She just dominated," Ross coach Karrie Gardner said of Evans. "When you see a player like her, you're relieved when she goes to the back row. But with her serve, you're almost better off with her in the front row."

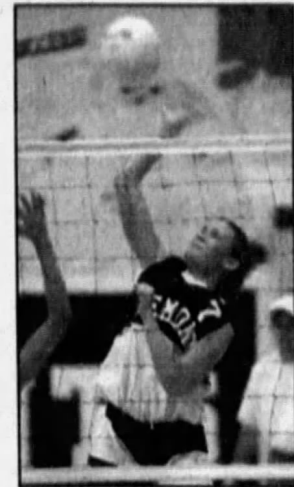
The victory keeps Sandusky (8-3, 6-1 GLL) in a first-place tie with Oregon

Clay after the first half of the league season. Ross (7-3, 5-2 GLL) falls one game off the pace.

"Everybody's got a loss," Gardner said. "The GLL's still a possibility. We just made it a harder road for ourselves."

Evans led all players with 11 kills and 11 service points Thursday. She got help from middle partner Sheena Devese, a 6-1 senior who contributed six kills and three solo blocks.

See STREAKS, B4



Ben French/News-Messenger

JESSICA FICK of Fremont Ross spikes against Sandusky on Thursday at the Purple Pit. The Blue Streaks claimed a 15-9, 15-12 victory.

Streaks stay tied for GLL lead

Continued From B1

But it was Evans who supplied the Streaks with their first big play.

Ross's Lindsay Cobb got three consecutive kills and blocked an Evans spike to hand the Little Giants an early 4-1 lead in the first game.

But after the Streaks got the serve back, Evans stuffed a spike from Erin Barr straight down to the court. The block led to a three-point rally and got Sandusky right back into the match.

"Volleyball is such a momentum game anyway," Streaks coach Diane Majoy said. "One play is going to turn it around.

That's what we needed. We got big plays tonight."

The first game was tied at 7 when Sandusky's Megan Miller served four straight points, aided by three Ross hitting errors. The Giants got as close as 12-9 before the Blue Streaks put it away with three points from Julie Shaw. Evans ended it with an emphatic spike from the back row.

In the second game, Sandusky bolted out to a 12-6 lead before Ross came roaring back to tie the score. A five-point run served by Tiffany Garcia led the way. Jenna Mackey, Cobb and Jodi Fick had kills in the streak.

But with the score tied at 12, Evans spanked a kill to earn her team a side-out, turned and

sprinted to the back line. She immediately served the final three points, including an ace, to finish the Giants.

"This is a big one," Majoy said. "It's hard to play at Fremont. We came down last year and didn't do well. I told the kids 'We just want to compete, whether we win or lose.' They did. They came in aggressive."

Cobb led Ross with seven kills and two solo blocks. Fick had three kills and four points, while Garcia had seven points. Erin Barr added three kills, and Ceara Barr had 10 assists.

Ross is at Stow on Saturday for a tri-match with Stow and Mansfield Madison.

Volleyball

High School

Ross 15-15, Lorain S'view 4-5

Leaders — Cera Barr 13 pts; Lindsey Cobb 7 kills, Sara Steinle 3 blocks.

Record: Ross 9-5 (6-2 GLL).

Clay turns tables on Ross, nears title

Giants drop out of GLL contention

By **TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM**
Sports editor

The Oregon Clay volleyball team knows it still has two Great Lakes League matches left to play.

But the Eagles, who own a one-match advantage over Sandusky in the league race, permitted themselves a championship-style celebration after sweeping Fremont Ross on Thursday.



GARDNER

The Clay girls posed for posterity — and their snappy parents — behind the back line at the Purple Pit after taking a 15-9, 15-10 decision over the Little Giants, officially eliminating Ross from GLL title contention.

“This was the championship match, that’s what I told the girls,” Clay coach Dave Habegger said. “This is such a hard place to win at.”

The Eagles (15-2, 11-1 GLL), who suffered their only league loss to Ross, finish the season at home against Findlay and at Fostoria. Victories in those two matches would clinch Clay’s second consecutive league crown.

Ross (11-7, 8-4 GLL) suffered its second league loss in three outings. The Little Giants dropped a 15-8, 15-13 decision to Toledo Whitmer on Saturday.

But Clay’s victory was not as simple as the score might indicate. Thursday’s match took more than an hour and featured 69 side-outs.

Inside: Michele Smith pays Ross a visit. **Page B4**

“We knew it was a championship game for Clay,” Ross coach Karrie Gardner said. “We weren’t going to lay down and give it up to them. It was a hard-fought match.”

Asked the difference between Thursday’s match and the Sept. 17 meeting between the two schools — which Ross won 15-11, 15-7 — Gardner said simply, “No. 1.”

See ROSS, B5

Ross falls to Clay in 2 games

Continued From B1

That's the uniform number of senior Shelley Andrzejewski, who recorded a match high with 14 kills, 13 service points and three stuff blocks. Cleveland State University volleyball coach Chuck Voss was in attendance to scout Andrzejewski.

"I wouldn't say she was silent in the last match," Gardner said, "but she was nothing like she was today."

The Eagles also got a boost from Jenai Slaughter, a junior outside hitter who didn't even crack the lineup when Clay last met Ross. Slaughter, a left-handed hitter, recorded six kills, all in the first game.

"They were big," Habegger said of Slaughter's kills. "I don't think they expected that. Jenai came up big for us."

Clay bounced out to leads of 4-1 and 8-3 in the first game. The Little Giants, boosted by a pair of kills from junior Lindsay Cobb, closed to 8-7 before Andrzejewski served up five consecutive points to close the door.

Ross's best shot to get back in the match came midway through the second game, when Clay made several unforced errors in succession. After taking a 6-3 lead, the Eagles missed on eight consecutive serving chances, twice with bad serves and three times on hitting or passing miscues.

"We were in command early, and we had a chance to bury them," Habegger said. "But Ross plays such good defense."

Said Gardner, "I thought our defense kept us in the game. They were all over the court tonight. I thought (defenders) Kira (Wojdyła) and Tiffany (Garcia) did a nice job."

The Little Giants came back to grab a 9-6 lead. But Ross would score just one more

Smith setting CSU on fire

Former Fremont Ross volleyball star Michele Smith says it's no big secret how she's setting records for hitting percentage as a middle hitter at Cleveland State University.

"I'm not making errors," Smith said. "I see a hole, I hit it. I don't hit into blocks."

Of course, Smith makes it sound a lot easier than it is.

She's making it look easy, too.

After setting a preseason goal to hit .300, Smith was cruising along at .453 through the first 16 matches. She ranks third in the nation among Division I hitters and currently holds the Midwestern Collegiate Conference career record for hitting percentage.

Smith, a senior, and a pair of her teammates attended Fremont Ross's volleyball match against Oregon Clay on Thursday.

The Vikings are 9-8 after Wednesday's 15-2, 15-8, 15-11 victory at Canisius. Smith said Chuck Voss, a first-year coach, has brought stability to the program and given the players hope of topping the .500 mark for the first time since 1983.

"I couldn't ask for a better season," Smith said. "I'm just playing. I just want to win and have no regrets in my senior season."

Smith, an elementary education major, is on track to graduate in the spring.

— *News-Messenger reports*

point, while Clay got itself together and ended the match behind Andrzejewski.

The Little Giants got 10 kills apiece from Cobb and Erin Barr. Sara Steinle added five kills, and freshman setter Ceara Barr dished out 24 assists. Cobb led the way with eight service points, and Wojdyła pitched in with five.

Ross is at Bowling Green on Saturday.

Ross rocks Fostoria in 2

News-Messenger reports

Erin Barr and Jessica Fick collected seven kills apiece as the Fremont Ross volleyball team earned a 15-9, 15-7 Great Lakes League victory over Fostoria on Tuesday at the Purple Pit.

Kira Wojdyla led the Little Giants' defense with six digs. Freshman setter Ceara Barr added seven service points and 18 assists.

The junior varsity Little Giants improved to 16-3 with a victory over Fostoria.

Ross (12-9, 9-4 GLL) is at Sandusky on Thursday to wrap up the GLL season.

Inside: Area volleyball statistics. **Page B3**

so got 10 kills and 12 points from Rachel Babione and 21 assists from Tiffany Binsack.

The Streaks host Mohawk on Thursday.

Clyde 15-15, Edison 6-5

MILAN — The Fliers inched closer to a Sandusky Bay Conference crown by pounding Edison.

Clyde is 17-3, 12-0 in the conference.

“Our serve-receive game improved. We struggled

^N **Roundup**

eight points, while Heather Kwiatkowski had 20 points and seven points. Lauren Crooks served up six points.

The Fliers can own coach Nancy Hanger's 16th SBC title alone by beating fifth-ranked Huron on Tuesday at Huron. Clyde defeated the Tigers in two games on Sept. 21.

Sandusky 15-15, Ross 7-4
SANDUSKY — Jessica

Fick had eight kills, Lindsay Cobb seven for Fremont Ross, but the Little Giants dropped their second match of the season to the rival Blue Streaks.

The defeat marked the end of the regular season for the Little Giants (12-10, 9-5 GLL).

St. Joe 15-12-15,
Mohawk 10-15-9

The Crimson Streaks even their record in the Mid-