

2017 Season Review...

FREMONT ROSS

Little Giants hope to close in from all sides

Defense's performance will be big key to success

Matthew Horn
Reporter

Fremont Ross coach Chad Long wants his offense to protect the ball and move the chains.

This shouldn't come as a surprise.

"We need the defense to keep up in games and the offense to win games," Long said.

The Little Giants forced 32 turnovers and scored five touchdowns on defense last season.

"We want more," Long said.

Key to those efforts will be defensive linemen Shawn Newsome and sophomore Dontrez Brown. Newsome was honorable mention all-Ohio last season and Brown weighs 240 pounds.

Fremont Ross 2017 schedule

8/25 H Springfield
9/1 A Sylvania
Southview
9/8 H Sandusky
9/15 A Findlay
9/22 A St John's
Jesuit
9/29 A Lima Senior
10/6 H Toledo
Central Catholic
10/13 A Whitmer
10/20 H Clay
10/27 H St Francis
de Sales

"After seeing (Newsome) cause havoc on the back side and Dontrez on the front ... both sides," Long said.

Roger Burling moves from safety to corner, where Ross has good size. Sophomore defensive tackle Mike Thomas and linebackers Garrett Schneider, Caleb Wood and Ben Rozzell also return.

Defensive back Jerardo Eckford and safeties Noah Hotz and Chrystjan Mancini are also back.

"That's what happens when you play young," Long said of the number of returning starters on defense. "It makes me feel good. We're ahead of the game. To win games you have to have a good defense."

"We're ahead of where we were with the experience under the lights. They know the positions."

Running back Remy Bulger, linemen Thomas, David Heidelberg and Tanner King and receivers Burling, Devyn Jagodzinski, Hotz and Newsome (tight end) return on offense. Heidelberg is 6-5, 300, Thomas is 6-1, 266, and Shawndrae Koch is 6-4, 315.

"We have some size," Long said. "We have to build depth to win in our conference with mental toughness. There are no newbies to Friday night. Unfortunately,



See ROSS, Page 55 Running back Remy Bulger returns for the Little Giants.

MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSANGER



MOLLY CORMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Safety Chrystian Mancini will be a key cog in the defense for Fremont Ross.

Ross

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ly, with injuries we had a ton of kids play.

"But it worked out good — these kids

are eager to compete in a tough conference. The experience is there, we have to execute."

Hotz was honorable mention all-Olio at punter and Long trusts Mikey Contreras from 45 yards.

Junior quarterback Hayden Lehmann earned the starting spot to open

last season but missed several games because of injury.

"His arm is so strong," Long said. "He can throw and run and do anything in our offense."

Eddie Baptista is the Little Giants' new offensive coordinator.

"We'll try to be 50/50 run/pass," Long

said. "Our play-action will set up the pass for big balls. We like what Hayden can do with his feet and his arm. He can do things outside the pocket. (Baptista) brings excitement to the offense."

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

SETTING HIGH TEAM GOALS



MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Remey Bulger of Fremont Ross is among area seniors entering their final campaign.

Seniors like Clyde's Long, Ross' Bulger enter final season with sense of urgency

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Fremont Ross, Port Clinton, Bellevue, St. Joseph Central Catholic, Genoa, Danbury and Woodmore open the season at home.

"I want us to play every game like it's a championship game, especially for us seniors," Little Giants running back Remey Bulger said. "This is our last ride together and there's nothing better than playing on Friday with your boys that you grew up with."

Junior Hayden Lehmann earned the starting nod at quarterback for the second straight season, although he played sparingly last year because of injury.

"Everything is finally coming together on offense and defense,"

"The biggest thing

I have learned is to keep fighting and never give up."

CONNER LONG
FLIERS SAFETY

Bulger said. "We are deep at running back, o-line and wideouts. We can have people coming out and going in without missing a beat."

Clyde, Oak Harbor, Gibsonburg, Lakota and Margaretta are on the road for Week 1. Lakota and Margaretta have new coaches in Mike Lento and Todd Polk, respectively.

"It's my last go-around and just the brotherhood in general makes me excited to kick off Friday," Flyers safety Conner Long said. "The team's goals are set very high. We want to get our third SBC title in a row and make a run in the playoffs."

"My personal goal for this season would be to just lay it all out on the field every single game. If I do that, I will be satisfied with the outcome."

Long also gets carries in the backfield, takes the snap at quarterback in some packages and plays on special teams.

"The biggest thing I have learned is to keep fighting and never give up," Long said. "There were countless games we came

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Football

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back from a big deficit when most people thought it was over.”

Kyle Fitzpatrick replaces graduate Joey Brenner at quarterback for Port Clinton. Fitzpatrick was a receiver last year.

“We have lots of kids stepping up into new roles and it’s going to be exciting to see it all play out,” Fitzpatrick said. “I’m excited to step in at quarterback. I’ve always wanted to try and now the coaches are giving me an opportunity to see what I can do.

“As a team, our goals are to get another SBC championship and take another trip to the playoffs.”

This week’s games:

Springfield at Fremont Ross

Ross alternates its first four games between road and home. The Little Giants fell 51-32 last season. Ross had three wins. Springfield (10-1) lost 48-41 to Westlake in overtime in Week 11.

Front 7 front and center for Fremont Ross

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Fremont Ross coach Chad Long is in love with his defensive linemen and linebackers.

"I will take my Front 4 and my three linebackers over anybody in the conference," Long said. "They're team players and they'll sacrifice."

Friday's victory over Holland Springfield wasn't a Three Rivers Athletic Conference matchup. Long, however, is even more encouraged about the group.

"We were able to get so much pressure on the quarterback the entire night," Long said. "Our safeties sat back and we had five interceptions. They were having issues

moving the ball."

Noah Hotz intercepted a pass in the end zone and Roger Burling returned another 20 yards for a touchdown as the Little Giants harassed the quarterback before the throw. Ross had five interceptions and recovered two fumbles.

"Roger made some big plays," Long said. "Things were trending in their favor before Hotz's interception." Ross followed a muffed punt recovered by Bryce McKinstry — courtesy of Cameron Jones — with a quick touchdown run from quarterback Hayden Lehmann to open the scoring. "The offense scored when given opportunities," Long said. "We stalled in the red zone so many times last year. Hayden did a good job throwing the ball."



MOLLY
CORFMAN/THE
NEWS-MESSENGER
Shawn
Newsome,
front, and
Garrett
Schneider of
Fremont Ross
chase
Springfield's
quarterback
Friday.



Caleb Wood of Fremont Ross chases Springfield's quarterback.

MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

WOOD ALL OVER ROSS DEFENSE

Fremont Ross linebacker Caleb Wood continues to impress

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Fremont Ross linebacker Caleb Wood wasn't sure how he tore his glove in the first half Friday.

But it's safe to say he had his hands all over the Little Giants' 28-18 victory over Holland Springfield.

"That kid's just a ballplayer," Ross coach Chad Long said. "He's hard-nosed. He can play Division I or Division II football. He's just a junior. He rocks kids sometimes. You can't teach that."

"You either have it, or you don't. He listens and he picks things up."

Wood injured his knee to derail a promising wrestling campaign as a sophomore, when Long was Ross' wrestling coach.

Shawndrae Koch had a tackle for a loss on first down and he and Wood combined for another on third down in the second quarter. Wood had a tackle for a loss on

first down and he and Shawn Newsome combined for another on third down before half-time.

"We started out in nickel and it worked well early," Wood said. "We went 4-3 and the defensive linemen were pushing with the linebackers filling gaps."

Cover linebacker Ben Rozzell and Wood, who is the team's best run-stopper, switched roles against Springfield.

"(Friday), he ran the defense," Long said of Wood. "Garrett Schneider plugged and caused havoc with blitzes."

Wood intercepted a pass late in the game wearing his backup gloves.

Wood obviously won't be needing new gloves. The old ones are now the only thing he's holding on to from the past.

"We knew we were underdogs," Wood said. "Nobody had faith in us. We work hard and we have something to prove."

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CHAD LONG
ROSS COACH



Ethan Chumley rushes for a touchdown Friday as Fremont Ross beat Sylvania Southview.

PHOTOS BY MOLLY CORMAN/THE NEWS-MSGENER

Sandusky next challenge for Ross

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Sylvania Southview scored its only touchdown Friday in the fourth quarter on a 54-yard touchdown pass in a 20-6 setback to Fremont Ross.

The unbeaten Little Giants allowed 51 yards of total offense for the game.

"The defense was extremely sound," Ross coach Chad Long said. "They played lights out. They kept field position the entire night. We had (two interceptions). We're starting to learn to play some defense right now."

"The linebackers and Front 7 will cause havoc with any team we play. They're gap-sound play-makers."

Caleb Wood had two tackles for a loss and a sack, Ben Rozzell had 2.5 tackles for a loss and one sack and Garrett Schneider added two tackles for a loss at linebacker as Ross made 10 plays behind the line of scrimmage.

Jason Burling had a sack and Chrystian Mancini added an interception. The Little Giants allowed 17 yards on 33 carries, 2 of 12 conversions on third down and held Southview to five first downs.

In Week 1 against Holland Springfield, Ross forced five turnovers and generated steady pressure on the quarterback in a 28-18 win.

Hayden Lehmann connected with Roger Burling for a 77-yard touchdown Friday and Ethan Chumley added a short scoring run in the second quarter for Ross.

Noah Hotz scored from 72 yards out



Chad Long's Little Giants are 2-0 as Sandusky visits Friday.

in the fourth quarter. A defensive back fell as Southview scored with about five minutes left.

"It was two good teams defensively," Long said. "They put six on the line and blitzed. It frustrated our run game without enough guys to block what they were bringing. They gave us fits. We went to the passing game."

"We have to get back to running the football. They made us one-dimensional."

Lehmann completed 11 of 24 passes for 142 yards but missed a few open receivers. Future opponents are likely to try to challenge Ross in a similar fashion.

"Hayden will have to step up," Long said. "Hayden hooked up with Roger on a bomb down the sideline. We ran a reverse to counter what they were doing. We can throw and run. It's, 'How are we going to do it.'"

Sandusky (2-0) visits Ross this week.

"It makes the game a little sweeter," Long said. "We're both 2-0. We're excited. Our kids believed we'd be 2-0 playing Sandusky."

Sandusky beat Port Clinton 41-7 in Week 1 and Huron 35-13 last week. Javon Alexander, a Michigan State commit, rushed for 97 yards and a touchdown and completed 11 of 22 passes for 122 yards against the Tigers.

Malachi Campbell caught a touchdown and Alexander intercepted a pass on defense. Terion Stewart rushed for 127 yards and three scores on 14 carries.

Alexander, who was second-team all-Ohio as a junior, rushed for two scores and tossed another to Campbell against the Redskins. He also returned an interception for a touchdown.

"They have a lot of speed on offense and defense," Long said. "They're not big, but they're fast. We're going to run the ball at them. Hopefully, we can wear them down. Even the quarterback plays on defense."

"We're preparing for their speed. We see this a lot like Springfield. We're prepared for any trickery. It's a rivalry game."

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



Noah Hotz plays in all three phases for Fremont Ross.

MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

ROSS HAS HOTZ FOR ALL PHASES

Little Giants junior has impressed
as safety, receiver and punter



MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER
Noah Hotz of Fremont Ross scored from 72 yards
on a reverse against Southview.

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Only one player on Fremont Ross' roster is listed playing three positions.

Through two games, junior Noah Hotz has earned the special distinction. After an interception in the end zone in a win over Holland Springfield, Hotz scored on a 72-yard run in a victory at Sylvania Southview.

"You know what you're going to get," Little Giants coach Chad Long said. "He may not be the fastest or the biggest, but he gets things done just as fast because he's so smart."

Hotz is 5-foot, 11-inches tall and weighs 160 pounds. He plays safety, receiver and punts.

"He runs precise routes and finds ways to get open. He has great hands and great knowledge. Those are kids we want," Long said.

Hotz also pinned two of seven punts inside the 3-yard line in Week 2.

"Noah is a gamer," Long said. "He always shows up on Friday. He's never flashy. He does everything we ask. He's quiet. Noah's reverse was the turning point (against Southview)."

"We ran the speed-option one way and Noah went the other. He made a linebacker miss. He's a weapon with field position. That's why he was honorable mention all-state as a punter."

The Little Giants defense has made it hard for opponents to sustain drives regardless of where they start. They forced seven turnovers against Springfield and allowed 51 yards of offense against Southview.

"We have a lot of great players on defense from the front line to the linebackers to the defensive

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Hotz

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backs,” Hotz said. “We’ve had a good staff through middle school. We’re executing what we’ve always been taught.

“Play hard and play tough and play Fremont Ross football.”

There was no room on the roster to include his responsibilities returning kicks.

“I just try to do whatever Coach Long asks me to do,” he said. “I try to perfect whatever position I’m at to the best of my ability to help my team. I like to play the sport I love with all those guys I call family.

“I try to do my best for my team and my city.”

This mentality doesn’t change for

Hotz. It might, however, intensify as Sandusky visits Friday.

“Growing up in Fremont, we’ve known about the rivalry since we were little,” Hotz said. “We know how big it is in Fremont. It hypes us up. The alumni come back and people determine how they feel about us from this game.

“We want to show them what we’re made of.”

Long feels Hotz deserves recognition for his contributions to the team.

“He gets overshadowed,” Long said. “It’s time for him to get some notoriety. He’s not a big muscle kid. He’s a three-sport athlete so he doesn’t focus on just football. What he’s doing is impressive.

“He’s playing very well. I’m in awe of his performance in all three phases.”

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BUILDING WINNERS



CRAIG SHOUP/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Fremont Ross football coach Chad Long, foreground, and St. Joseph Central Catholic football coach Brian Spicer talk to Kiwanis members about their goals for the 2017 season.

St. Joe's, Ross football coaches discuss their programs in talk to Kiwanis

CRAIG SHOUP
REPORTER

Two high school football coaches, both in their second year leading programs in Fremont, talked about family, service and teaching high school boys to become the city's next great generation.

Chad Long, Fremont Ross football coach, and Brian Spicer, coach of St. Joseph Central Catholic, preached similar messages in how they run their football programs to members of the Fremont Kiwanis Club Thursday at the Fremont Elks Lodge.

The coaches' annual meeting has been a Kiwanis tradition for nearly 50 years.

Spicer is leading the Crimson Streaks program into a new era, having broken a 13-game losing streak that led to a 4-6 record last year, and he is continuing to build this year with a group of 14 seniors and 34 players overall in the program.

“

All we do is tell our kids to give effort every four to six seconds. That is how long a play usually lasts and that is what we ask of them.”

CHAD LONG
FREMONT ROSS HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

“There have been bigger St. Joe teams in the past, but we have a great group,” Spicer said.

Spicer said his job is to teach and prepare the students for a successful life as adults, saying he uses the bibli-

cal passage from Matthew, Chapter 5, verses 12-16 to inspire his team.

In the verse, Spicer said, Jesus tells his followers to be the salt of the Earth and the light of the world.

“We have a one-word motto for this season,” Spicer said. “That is, ‘Become.’”

Spicer said he hopes his seniors and future SJCC graduates become the salt of the Earth, giving back to their community and living good lives.

Long, who is preparing to lead his 2-0 Little Giants into action at Don Paul Stadium Friday against rival Sandusky, said his goal is to meet higher expectations in his second season, and thanks to a team-first attitude, he believes a successful season is attainable.

“We’re a very close-knit team,” Long said to the room of Kiwanis members. “Last year we gave each player a bracelet that said four things: ‘family, love, respect and

See COACHES, Page 4A

Coaches

Continued from Page 1A

pride.' ”

Long said many of the players are thinking team first, and are excited about the future of the program, which boasts 84 players.

“All we do is tell our kids to give effort every four to six seconds,” Long said. “That is how long a play usually lasts and that is what we ask of them.”

Effort has been aplenty on the defensive side of the ball, Long said, as the Little Giants defense has forced 12 turnovers in its wins against Springfield Holland and Sylvania Southview.

The Little Giants welcome the Sandusky Blue Streaks to Fremont Friday night in a rivalry game that dates back to 1895.

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CRAIG SHOUP/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

St. Joseph Central Catholic football coach Brian Spicer said he teaches his players to follow a biblical message and become the salt of the Earth in a talk to the Fremont Kiwanis Club on Thursday.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Ross hopes to bounce back from setback

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Fremont Ross had its chances to hold off Sandusky in a setback Saturday.

It hopes to have similar opportunities to capitalize on as it visits Findlay for Week 4.

“We have to win the day,” Little Giants coach Chad Long said, adding that Findlay is another big rival.

“We need to refocus and move on and get back to our winning ways,” he said.

Ross forced nine turnovers as it won its first two games. Noah Hotz intercepted a pass in the fourth quarter against the Blue Streaks, but the Little Giants punted after three plays without a first

down.

Ross pinned Hotz's punt at the 1-yard line as Ross led 15-10. Hotz busted through to make a tackle three plays later to force a punt from Sandusky's end zone.

The Little Giants, however, roughed the punter to give Sandusky life at their own 22. Keith Williams capped the ensuing drive with a 19-yard touchdown catch from Ja'Vez Alexander with 39 seconds left.

Ross had a safety in the second quarter before Hotz returned the ensuing kick to the Blue Streaks' 7. Sandusky intercepted a pass three plays later, after a penalty nullified a touchdown run for Ross.

After Sandusky scored first with a field goal, the Little Giants' defense forced three straight punts before the safety.

The Blue Streaks sandwiched two punts around a touchdown pass to start the second half.

Mikey Contreras kicked a field goal for Ross for a 15-3 lead with 9:04 left in the third quarter. The Little Giants punted and threw an interception on their next two possessions.

Ross went three-and-out twice in the fourth quarter.

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MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Noah Hotz of Fremont Ross had three of his punts pinned inside the 3-yard line the last two weeks, including one in the fourth quarter Friday against Sandusky.



Chrystian Mancini of Fremont Ross runs with the football against Sylvania Southview.

PHOTOS BY MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

HIT AFTER HIT

Ross's Mancini
embraces the
physical aspects
of the game



Mancini loves contact on both sides of the ball.

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Senior Chrystian Mancini is learning not to focus his attention on the backfield when he's in coverage as a safety for Fremont Ross.

That doesn't mean he's not making plays near the line of scrimmage. Mancini had a stop for no gain on first down one play before Noah Hotz intercepted a pass in the fourth quarter Friday as the Little Giants led by five in a 16-15 setback to Sandusky.

"Instead of watching the quarterback it's reading the receivers," Mancini said. "If I can go make plays, I'm going to make them. I want to help the team. If I'm there, I want to make the play."

Mancini had another stop for no gain on first down three plays before a punt in the second quarter and added a tackle for a loss in the first quarter.

"He understands our defense," Ross coach Chad Long said. "He knows where to fill on a run play. Our defense knows where they're supposed to be. He's football savvy and smart."

"He understands the entire secondary."

The Little Giants (2-1) have generated consistent pressure on opposing quarterbacks and forced turnovers.

"Swarming to the ball," Mancini said. "The effort. We do that in practice. Once you do it in practice, you do it in games."

Mancini didn't play on the offensive side last season, but a player who loves the physical elements also fits in well at running back.

"He's not afraid of contact and actually loves it," Long said. "He never complains about being hurt. He's undersized sometimes and he's not afraid to stick his nose in there. He's not afraid to tackle. He brings the wood when he wants to come up and hit."

Mancini will take the hits as well, but he's more likely to outrun pursuit than his teammates. He had eight and 14 yards on his first two carries in the third quarter Friday.

"He's a game-breaker," Long said. "He has speed to find the hole, hit it and get outside to run. We have two thumpers and he's our slasher. He can definitely catch

"Mancini is an
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player who puts
everything on
the line —
offense or
defense."

CHAD LONG
FREMONT ROSS COACH

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Mancini

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the ball as well.

“Mancini is an old-school player who puts everything on the line — offense or defense.”

Or special teams. Not surprisingly, Mancini is gunner on punts.

“He’s a competitor,” Long said with respect. “He’s a teamer. He’ll do whatever you ask for the better of the team. If we need offense, he’ll play on offense. Special teams. It doesn’t matter.

“He’ll sacrifice to get us a win.”

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FINDLAY 55.
FREMONT ROSS 49 (30T)



MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER
Fremont Ross coach Chad Long says lessons can be learned from narrow setbacks.

Lessons in tough losses for Giants

JOSH MORGRET
NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

Fremont Ross and Findlay battled like two heavyweights in boxing in the first half Friday.

The Trojans twice landed what appeared to be a game-ending blow, but Ross never stayed down in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference matchup.

With opportunity to end the game on two occasions, the Little Giants couldn't in a 55-49 setback in triple overtime.

"It was a slugfest," Ross coach Chad Long said. "Our message to the kids is at some point, we are going to overcome adversity and we are going to win some of these games that are close."

Little Giants' quarterback Hayden Lehmann, a junior, and Findlay quarterback Tanner Rickle, went toe-to-toe for most of the night. Each threw a touchdown pass in the first quarter. Rickle ran in for a second in the second quarter and Lehmann threw his second of six touchdowns to respond.

Rickle added another passing score as Findlay (2-2, 1-0) took a 21-14 lead into halftime. In the third quarter, Lehmann's second touchdown throw to Roger Burling cut Findlay's lead to 28-21.

Rickle added his second score on the ground as Findlay led 35-21 after three quarters. The lead blossomed to three scores as Lehmann blinked first, throwing an interception to Findlay's Parker Fetterman, who returned it 66 yards for a touchdown.

The Little Giants (2-2, 0-1) clawed back and forced overtime. They took the lead on a 19-yard touchdown from Lehmann to Noah Hotz.

Ross had a chance to end the game if they stopped the Trojans. After a first down, Findlay got redemption when Rickle threw a 1-yard touchdown on 4th-and-goal.

"It was just back-and-forth," Long said.

After Burling intercepted Rickle in the second overtime, any score for the Little Giants would have won the game. After a sack, they were forced to try a 50-yard field goal.

After another missed field goal in the third overtime, Findlay scored on its second play, ending the game.

"Defense did not play good at all, all night long," Long said. "Offensively, we played outstanding. We put up enough points. No way in my mind would I ever think we would give up that many points on the defensive side."

Now, after two losses by a combined seven points, Ross gets into the thick of its conference schedule, starting with a trip to Toledo St. John's (2-2, 0-1). Toledo Whitmer shut out St. John's 31-0 last week.

Ross then travels to Lima Senior before playing host to Toledo Central Catholic.

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MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Hayden Lehmann tossed six touchdown passes in Fremont Ross' setback to Findlay.

Ross

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Despite losses to Sandusky (16-15) and Findlay, the Little Giants are a couple plays from being unbeaten.

"Sometimes we make a couple bone-head mistakes or something happens and it gets teams back into it," Long said. "We battled back, being 21 points down. Many kids would fold up."

"Our kids are fighters. That is the Fremont football mentality now. We are going to fight until the end. One of these games, we are going to come away with a close game and a close win."

ROSS HOPING TO REMAIN EXPLOSIVE



Hayden Lehmann of Fremont Ross established school records with 428 passing yards and six touchdowns in Friday's loss at Findlay. PHOTOS BY MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Little Giants' offense came to life in last week's loss

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Fremont Ross hopes the 49 points it scored as quarterback Hayden Lehmann established two school records Friday in a setback to Findlay are a sign of things to come for the offense.

It hopes the 55 points it allowed the Trojans are an anomaly. The Little Giants' allowed 24 combined points in wins over Holland Springfield and Sylvania Southview to start the season.

"We can be in any game against any team," Little Giants coach Chad Long said. "It was a good setback for the defense to burst their bubble and humble them."

They largely held quarterback Javon Alexander in check, but Sandusky drove 99 yards for the go-ahead score with less than a minute left in a 16-15 setback in Week 3. The drive was aided by a roughing the punter penalty.

Ross (2-2, 0-1) scored 63 points in its first three games before the offense erupted. Lehmann completed 25 of 43 passes for school marks of 427 yards and six touchdowns with two interceptions.

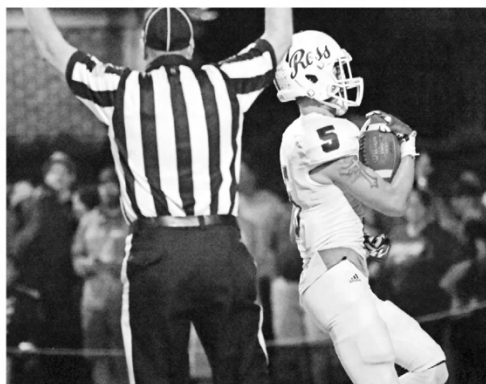
"Hopefully, this was a breakout game," Long said. "We had different formations and good protection. He sat back comfortable, set his feet and threw the ball. We put up a lot of points."

"We know we can do it. They have to trust the staff that they're in good positions. We can be dangerous going forward."

Roger Burling tied a school record with 11 receptions for 190 yards. He caught two touchdowns and Dylan Jagodzinski, Shawn Newsome, Noah Hotz and Andrew Edmonds added one apiece.

"That's who Hayden looks for," Long said of Burling. "That's Hayden's main target. Roger gets open and runs good routes. Noah is a hidden secret. He just makes plays every Friday with a clutch reverse or big reception."

"(Hayden's) getting more comfortable finding somebody else with the



Roger Burling of Fremont Ross tied a school record with 11 receptions, including two touchdowns Friday at Findlay.

double teams."

The offense is gaining comfort and familiarity with first-year coordinator Eddie Baptista. Lehmann, who is nearing 1,000 yards passing for the season, knocked some cobwebs off after missing the lion's share of his sophomore campaign with injuries.

"He can see what Eddie's made of and his system," Long said. "They got a glimpse that if they listen and do what they're supposed to, (Friday) can happen. (Baptista's) a great offensive mind."

"Sometimes it takes a while to process a new offense and see the evolution. He's starting to understand the offense and make some plays. A light bulb came on and it's clicking."

Ross started the season running in an effort to set up the pass.

"We flipped that," Long said. "We understand our personnel. Hayden still missed a couple (Friday). There's room for improvement. He can always get better, but teams are concerned about the pass now to open the run

game."

Ross's defense is anxious to demonstrate Week 4 was a fluke. Lehmann wants to do the opposite.

"He leads by example," Long said. "He's a good student-athlete. He studies and loves the game and plays it with all his heart. Leadership-wise, he's gaining respect in the huddle."

"Before you do that, you need to have success. He feels like he has a lot to prove. He plays with a chip on his shoulder to prove himself from last year when he tried coming back. He gets better each week."

Lehmann intends to keep accelerating.

"When we were 2-0 we took our feet off the pedal," he said. "We thought we were better than we were. We all know we should be 4-0. Even though we're 2-2, we're a better team."

"We made a couple dumb plays. We can beat anybody."

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Contreras makes most of opportunity

Kicker bounces back with go-ahead field goal

JOSH MORGRET
NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

TOLEDO - Fremont Ross kicker Michael Contreras had a rough game last week in a 55-49 triple overtime loss to Findlay on the road.

Contreras had a chance to win the

game for the Little Giants in the second overtime, but missed a long field goal from 50 yards.

In the third overtime, his 37-yard attempt was just short, and Findlay won two plays later.

On Friday, Contreras missed his first extra point attempt. It was not a sign of things to come as his 24-yard field goal with 7 minutes, 29 seconds left in the fourth quarter was the difference in a 23-20 win at Toledo St. John's.

"I have all the faith in Mikey and what



Mikey Contreras

he does," Ross coach Chad Long said. "It does not matter about last week. We call Mikey, 'The Clutch.' We knew we had to put it on the left hash and let Mikey go to work. That is where he is at his best. We kept it over there knowing we were going to kick a field goal if we could not get a first down. I trust the kid. He has been in the program."

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That is where he is at his best. We kept it over there knowing we were going to kick a field goal if we could not get a first down. I trust the kid. He has been in the program."

Contreras made field goals from 28 and 21 yards in a 16-15 setback to Sandusky in Week 3.

Contreras plays multiple sports in the fall. He also plays soccer for Little Giants coach Alex Coressel.

"I trust Coach Coressel," Long said. "I have the utmost faith in that guy, as well as Mikey. He plays soccer and then he plays football. He gives up his time away from his main sport to come and kick."

"He has been clutch for the last few years."

REDEMPTION

ST. JOHN'S TO LOOK TO REDEEM BIG LOSS AGAINST FREMONT ROSS

AND REVENGE



Jerardo Eckford carries the football for Fremont Ross. MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Redemption and revenge are the words of the week.

Fremont Ross visits Toledo St. John's. The Little Giants earned their biggest win of the season 38-29 over the Titans last season.

Port Clinton visits Clyde. The Redskins topped the Fliers 27-21 last year.

Oak Harbor plays host to Perkins this week. The Rockets beat the Pirates 14-6 last season.

Gibsonburg hosts Tiffin Calvert. The Golden Bears fell 38-6 to Calvert last year.

Genoa visits Otsego this week. The Comets fell 45-21 last season.

Danbury visits Cardinal Stritch. The Lakers fell 50-30 for Stritch's only win last season.

Ross knows St. John's will be an angry group.

"St. John's is not going to forget last year," Little Giants coach Chad Long said. "This has probably been circled on their calendar for some redemption."

St. John's linemen Austin Beier (Minnesota) and Brian Dooley (Eastern Michigan) are verbal commits.

"They'll run the ball down your throat if you're not ready up front," Long said.

Ohio State commit Dallas Gant is a senior linebacker for the Titans.

"Hayden will need time against St. John's," Long said. "Gant will blitz."

Fremont Ross (2-2, 0-1) at St. John's (2-2, 0-1), 7 p.m.

Ross fell 55-49 to Findlay in triple overtime last week. Hayden Lehmann threw for a program-record 427 yards and six touchdowns. Roger Burling caught two touchdowns and Dylan Jagodzinski, Shawn Newsome, Noah Hotz and Andrew Edmonds added one apiece. Newsome also scored once on the ground. St. John's was shut out 31-0 by Toledo Whitmer. St. John's allowed 232 yards of offense, but 24 points in the

"St. John's is not going to forget last year. This has probably been circled on their calendar for some redemption."

CHAD LONG
LITTLE GIANTS
COACH

third quarter.

Port Clinton (3-1) at Clyde (4-0), 7 p.m.

This is a crossover game in the Sandusky Bay Conference. Clyde beat Toledo Bowsher 48-8 last week. The Fliers allowed one yard of total offense and intercepted four passes. Braydi Clark rushed for two touchdowns and Conner Long one. Trevor Burtch threw touchdown passes to Logan Riehl and Josh Jenne. Burtch has 771 yards passing and Clark has 440 on the ground. Riehl has 18 catches. Jenne has 40 tackles. Port Clinton topped St. Joseph Central Catholic 42-7. Kyle Fitzpatrick rushed for two scores, including one covering 74 yards and tossed touchdown passes to Cooper Stine and Nikolas Skoufos. Tony Nesbitt rushed for two scores. Fitzpatrick has 447 yards passing and Stine has 532 on the ground.

Toledo Start (2-2) at Bellevue (2-2), 7 p.m.

Bellevue fell 46-0 to Shelby last week. Riley Renwand has 578 passing yards and Bryce Ray has 559 on the ground. Dakota McPeak has 25 catches. Jack Howey has 51 tackles. Start beat Columbian 21-15 last week. The teams didn't play last season.

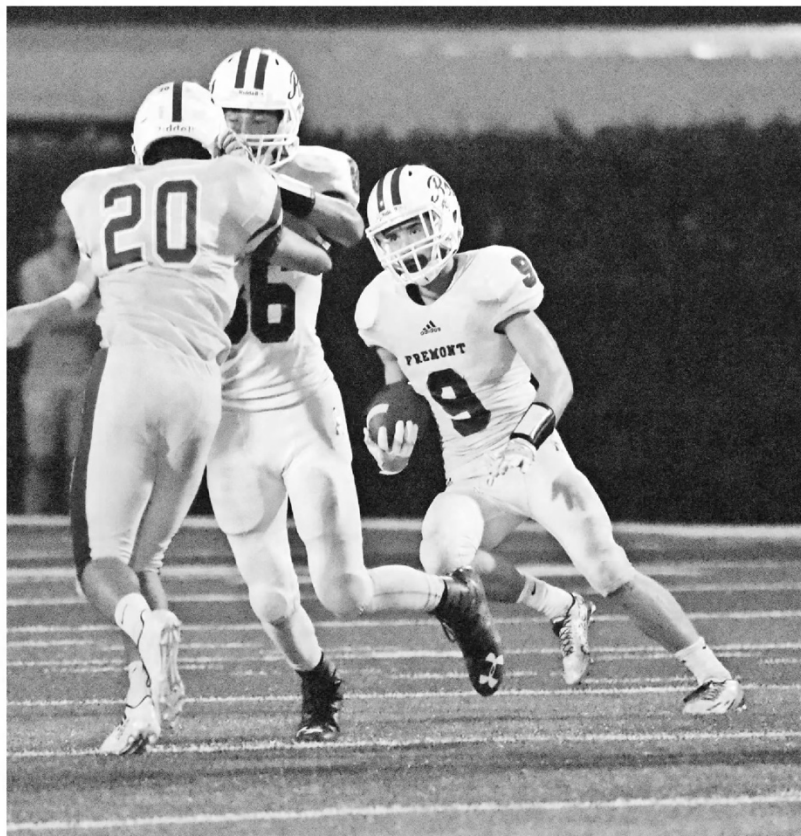
Perkins (0-4) at Oak Harbor (2-2), 7 p.m.

This is a crossover game in the SBC. Oak Harbor shut out Tiffin Calvert 10-0 last week. Clay Schulte caught a touchdown pass from Jac Alexander. Alexander has 418 rushing yards and 379 passing. Schulte has 36 tackles. Perkins lost 35-12 to Vermilion. Noah Henry rushed for a score. Isaac Grude had 304 yards on the ground.

Woodward (1-3) at St. Joseph Central Catholic (1-3), 7 p.m.

SJCC lost to Port Clinton 42-7 last week. Tad Foster caught a touchdown pass from Spencer Harrison. Harrison has 597 passing yards. Chris Morrisette has 21 catches. Woodward beat Montpelier 64-7. James Jones had three touchdowns on the ground. Domo McClain rushed for 120 yards and two scores and Burrow Alexander had 107

See FOOTBALL, Page 2B



Bryce McKinstry, blocking as Noah Hotz carries the football against Findlay, caught two touchdown passes against Lima Senior. MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

MCKINSTRY DEVELOPS INTO ADDED THREAT

The Little Giants' junior is practicing harder, building confidence and making big plays

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

With the exception of two rushing touchdowns from Chrystjan Mancini, Lima Senior stifled Fremont Ross' ground game last week.

You knew the Little Giants were going to throw the ball when they were down by four points in the fourth quarter. Quarterback Hayden Lehmann even knew exactly where he was going with the pass that resulted in the go-ahead touchdown with 21 seconds left in a 28-24 victory.

"We've had chemistry since freshman year," Lehmann said of junior classmate Bryce McKinstry. "When I broke my ankle last year we lost that. We've regained it. He's a mismatch for me."

"I can trust him. I knew (Lima Senior) would play man. Usually the corner bites down on zero. It's a touchdown or incompleteness."

McKinstry's clutch touchdown covered 23 yards and he added a 14-yard scoring reception. He caught three passes for 66 yards as Lehmann passed for

323.

"All our receivers are making plays because of the confidence in what we're doing throwing the ball," Ross coach Chad Long said. "We have Roger (Burling), (Dylan) Jags (Jagodzinski) and Noah (Hotz)."

"If we can have four ... (McKinstry) is a 6-4 mismatch. He'll go up and get it, like Lima Senior."

Burling continued to shine with six catches for 165 yards and two interceptions last week.

"He basically single-handedly locked down (Keaton) Upshaw," Long said of the all-conference pass catcher. "They tried throwing into single-coverage twice and he picked it off. No mas."

After two narrow setbacks, Ross is learning how to win close games with consecutive wins.

"The statement was closing out St. John's when they were driving and it carried over to Lima," Long said. "I'm getting gray hairs with the learning curve, but the team is learning. We got the stop against St."

See MCKINSTRY, Page 6A

McKinstry

Continued from Page 5A

John's.

"Heads didn't drop at Lima. We knew we had the ball and could score."

In Long's mind, McKinstry made himself known even before the touchdowns with two catches for 72 yards in the win over St. John's.

"Two weeks ago was his boost," Long said. "Last week he practiced to the potential we always thought he could be at. He

knew he had the potential but he had to figure out the way you practice is the way you play."

"He's practicing harder and making plays in games. Lima Senior was a continuation with his confidence."

Long's also been impressed with his resolve.

"He started way low on the depth chart and slowly worked his way up," he said. "His work ethic is better. A year of maturity and development. He doesn't seem fast. He's one of our faster guys."

"His long strides are deceiving. He was better about getting in the weight room. He put on

some muscle. I still call him string-bean, but he's developing and colleges will fall in love."

Lehmann has long been enamored.

"He's my best friend," McKinstry said. "It's good to be out here building the chemistry back up. These last two weeks it's built. We want to keep building."

McKinstry was a backup receiver last season.

"It was a wake-up call," he said of his production. "I've matured. I'm more focused on football. I'm trying to be a better leader stepping up."

Toledo Central Catholic (5-1,

2-1) visits Ross (4-2, 2-1) this week. The Little Giants are quite likely a roughing the punter penalty and missed field goal away from being unbeaten.

"When we started 2-0, we got laid back," Lehmann said. "After Sandusky, everybody was mad and we came back to play. We got down at Findlay and had to figure out how to get back on track."

"We were down 21-0. We have to fight and not give up. We didn't win, but we showed what kind of team we are and we started to win again."

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

PUTTING IN WORK



Garrett Schneider, back, anchors the middle of Fremont Ross' defense, but he still makes plays behind the line of scrimmage. PHOTOS BY MOLLY CORMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Ross LB Schneider brings old-school approach to game

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

It seems not many people like hard work these days.

Fremont Ross linebacker Garrett Schneider prefers nothing but hard work all day most every day.

That's what he's always known. Schneider goes from caring for cattle and pigs and farming corn, beans and wheat, to football practice.

The only break is often the time it takes to travel from one to the other.

"I'll work seven or eight hours before practice," he said. "The work ethic ... you're not done until the job is done. You work all morning and then come do another job. I wouldn't change it. I enjoy the lifestyle I've got going."

Little Giants coach Chad Long, who played safety at Bowling Green, respects Schneider as old-school.

"You don't get those very often around here," Long said. "He wants to tackle. He's nasty. He loves contact and he wants to go full-go every day. You don't find kids like that. He and Caleb (Wood) are like that."

"They hustle and make plays when others say, 'I'll let this one go.' He wants to go full-go all the time and it becomes contagious."

The juniors are best friends.

"Everyone says we're like brothers," Schneider said. "We're together



Garrett Schneider also plays fullback for Fremont Ross.

all the time. There's trust in the guys behind me. A team player trusts the guys with them."

Schneider and Wood are the linebackers in Ross' 4-2 formation.

"We can put the third guy in coverage to help the secondary," Long said.

The pair are also throwbacks when it comes to mentality.

"That's the fun part of the game — going out and laying a lick, helping

them up and laying another lick," Schneider said. "That's the fun. There ain't no fun in being soft. You can't throw a big hit without a flag in the high leagues."

Long trusts Schneider when he recognizes a roadblock or opening.

"He's smart," Long said. "He's a studier. Knowing which way the linemen are pulling and blocking and where to fit in the defense with a hard-core nasty attitude. He's so mature for his age. He's like a coach."

"He knows what's happening and where to line up. He's a good resource for coaches."

As his own worst critic, Schneider is honest with himself and coaches. It helps with adjustments and avoiding mistakes twice.

"A spade is a spade," Long said.

Schneider had 7.5 tackles, four tackles for a loss and one sack in a win over Toledo St. John's and six tackles, 1.5 tackles for a loss and a sack in a win over Lima Senior last week.

"He's totally consistent and reliable," Long said. "The kid doesn't miss many tackles and he wants to rip your head off. He's Steady Eddie. He does everything we ask. He's a positive player. There's no negatives from that kid."

"He refuses to come off on defense. He takes huge pride in what we

See SCHNEIDER, Page 2B

Schneider

Continued from Page 1B

do on defense.”

Schneider, who also plays full-back, had to play along the offensive line late last season.

“He shrunk in a good way by committing in the weight room,” Long said of Schneider losing 30 pounds but gaining muscle. “His dedication has paid off. He start-

ed last year, but this is a breakout. He takes pressure off Caleb.”

He also tries to inspire teammates with Little Giants passion.

“Where is that Little Giants pride,” he’ll ask the defense when it needs a stop in a key situation. “This is what it’s all about. Leave it out there and get a stop and let’s leave with a win.”

No matter how long it takes.

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Fremont Ross coaches trust Garrett Schneider to make plays or recognize play calls that leave the Little Giants vulnerable. MOLLY CORFMAN/THE

NEWS-MESSENGER



Devyn Jagodzinski can run after the catch for Ross. MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Jagodzinski makes the most of his opportunities

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

With Roger Burling and Noah Hotz at receiver, Devyn Jagodzinski is rarely the first option Fremont Ross quarterback Hayden Lehmann looks to pass to.

All Jagodzinski does is make the most of his opportunities. He has strong hands and can run after the catch, third-option or not.

"I like giving him the ball," Lehmann said. "We've always had a connection. It's just him getting open. He beat the corner off the line right off the snap and he made a big play."

Jagodzinski caught a 34-yard touch-

down pass for a tie in a 27-7 setback Friday to visiting Toledo Central Catholic.

"I knew I could beat the corner," he said. "I'd been running them off all game. 'If he's even, he's leavin'.' I got even and then went up and used my size."

Jagodzinski had few opportunities as a junior. He missed the first seven games following shoulder surgery and didn't have the impact he wanted the final three games.

"Those three games helped with my confidence in the offseason," he said. "I've gotten faster. I ran track. I wanted to get faster, not being able to play last season."

"(Coach) Mike Rankin pushed me on the track and got me in the weight room."

Jagodzinski weighs 180 pounds, up from 155. He's 6-foot, 2-inches tall.

"Jags was open on the backside quite a bit," Little Giants coach Chad Long said Friday. "They played over the top of Roger. He made a play and caught a touchdown."

As much as Burling commanding extra attention can lead to catches for others, Jagodzinski wants to be a threat that stretches secondaries thin for all Ross receivers.

See JAGODZINSKI, Page 6A

Jagodzinski

Continued from Page 5A

“Roger is a big-play guy,” Jagodzinski said. “They’ll come after him and cover him. Somebody is going to have to step up. All the receivers have a good relationship with Hayden.

“We all stayed after practice to work on timing. We both missed a lot of time. Getting back in the pace is a big key, especially in our league.”

Jagodzinski is a captain. His teammates respect him for his consistency more than his flash.

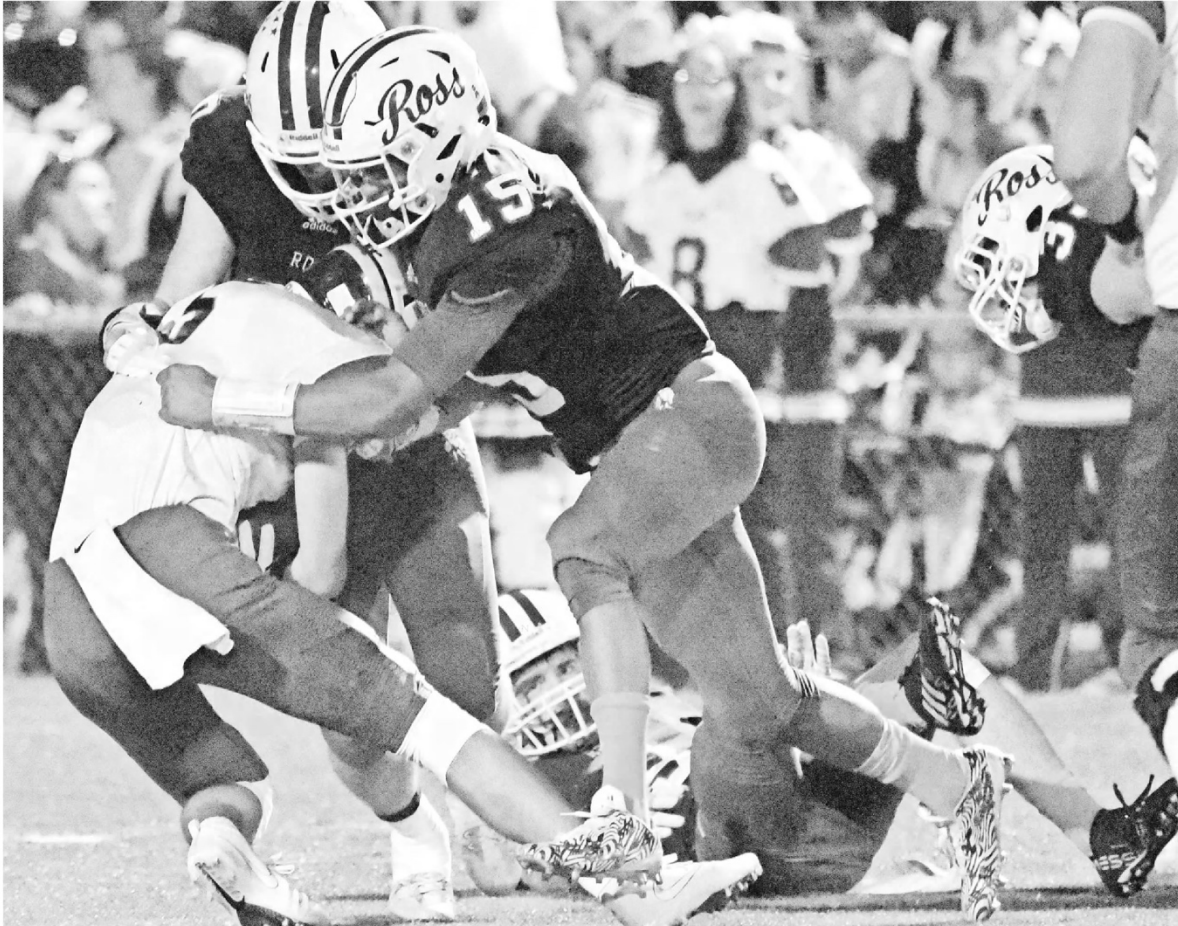
“He’s a quiet kid,” Long said. “He’s one of those student-athletes you love. Those kids sacrifice and do what’s needed for the team. He leads by example.”

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ROSS SAFETY ROZZELL THINKS TEAM FIRST



Fremont Ross senior Ben Rozzell is a team leader at safety. MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Fremont Ross senior Ben Rozzell is a linebacker who can play in the secondary.

That's exactly what Rozzell is doing at strong safety.

"He understands the defense, not just the Front 7, but the back," Little Giants coach Chad Long said. "He knows what we want to accomplish. He can see things develop and come down and make a tackle."

Rozzell, who started the season at linebacker, intercepted a pass in a loss to Whitmer in his first game at safety in Week 8. He added four tackles and is having fun with the shift as Remey Bulger slides to Sam.

"I'm comfortable," he said. "Sam linebacker

is a hybrid position. It's an easy transition between the two. It's whatever the team needs. I really enjoy it. I can watch and I have a split-second to adjust.

"It's more natural. I'm at the secondary level, so when the ball's in the air I can make a play. I'm in the best position. I have no problem anywhere on the field to help the team."

Rozzell has 25 tackles, six tackles for a loss, three sacks and two interceptions. He couldn't hold on to a third last week in a win over Clay.

"He's the heart and soul of the team," Long said. "He's a vocal captain. He's a leader. He has a high-motor. He's always running around giving 100 percent effort flying to the ball. He's our Energizer bunny."

"He gets them hyped up and motivated. He leads Giant Jacks. He carries himself well as a

student-athlete. He's vital to the team in general, let alone the defense."

Coaches Long, Mark King, Craig Yeast and Rozelle's parents helped instill a team-first mentality.

"I've been put on the right path," Rozelle said. "The biggest lesson I've learned is how to deal with adversity. Things won't always go your way. You have to have a positive attitude and try to find a solution."

"Through the years I've had to step up as a leader. I watched the previous classes and tried to take positives from them. In life, in order to be successful, it's a team effort. I like to work together."

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4 LONGS FIRST-TEAM ALL-OHIO AT CLYDE



Clockwise from top left: Clyde defensive coordinator Ray Long and Lakota assistant coach Kade Long were both first-team all-Ohio at linebacker for the Fliers. Fremont Ross coach Chad Long was first-team all-Ohio three times. Conner Long was first-team all-Ohio at safety as a junior last season. PHOTOS BY MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

MATTHEW HORN
REPORTER

Chad Long had 13 interceptions as a sophomore and helped Clyde earn its only state championship as a junior.

The first thing Chad asks his brother when he checks in — and the only thing he absolutely must know — is how many interceptions nephew Conner Long had playing for Ray Long's defense at Clyde each Friday.

Even with Chad at Fremont Ross as head coach and Ray at Clyde as defensive coordinator, the Longs will always remain competitive among one another. They want the next Long to be the best Long, because football is also family and should be nurtured.

And thus far, if you play like a Long, people will know it.

Chad, who graduated in 1997, used to play with Ray, who graduated in 1992, and his friends when he could. He sometimes took a beating, but he enjoyed it.

"He's the baby," Ray said. "He's always been a spoiled brat. He's a mamma's boy. He was on the opposite end of some highlight hits. Never the biggest or fastest, but always the least scared."

"He's always been hard-nosed. He's really firm — this is what I think and this is how we'll do it. He's outgoing, but he has vision and won't waver on values. It's his way, but everybody is involved."

Don't let the glasses fool you; Ray looks and sounds like there are consequences for straying from his plan as well. He has a beard, shaved head and cuts an imposing figure in stature and intensity.

If there is a teddy bear underneath the gruff exterior, it can't be found on Friday nights. Ray is loud and honest and treats mistakes like the culprit offended the entire program and must atone.

"I coach angry," Ray said. "I played angry. Do more. You won't get it if you don't ask for it. I'm very demanding. I demand a lot of myself and of my coaches. I'll ask why I'm not getting it."

That's exactly why players love him.

"We know our players' abilities and what we can and can't do with them," Chad said. "We have great player/coach relationships. Kids want to play hard for coaches they respect."

Conner knows a lack of sympathy will endear him to other Longs.

"My uncle and dad played with an aggressive mindset to hit as hard as they could," he said. "We tried to take that from them and carry it on. Work

hard and be mean. We like to be mean on the field. "Hit hard and don't make too many friends."

Chad has own Urban legend

Chad was a safety at Bowling Green State University from 1997-2002. He was a medical redshirt as a freshman after breaking his thumb against Ohio State.

He finished his career as a senior for Urban Meyer. Chad loved his new coach immediately.

"The first time I met him, it was 5 a.m. at the field house and there were trash cans everywhere and the doors were locked," he said. "I'm going to run some of you off today and you will puke." I told him I wouldn't puke.

"He ran off like 15 scholarship kids. Either you love the game and play it for the right reasons or you don't belong here."

Chad didn't puke. Meyer holds Long's class in high esteem as his first group of seniors and one that engineered the biggest turnaround in the nation, going from 2-9 to 8-3.

"He'll say this, that was his most special class ever," Chad said. "He says he wouldn't be where he is without us as seniors. He was 36 years old. That's younger than me."

Meyer keeps in touch and the Falcons occasionally gather. One story always comes up.

BGSU and Northwestern were tied when the Falcons turned the ball over. Chad had just collected a cup of water and was standing next to Meyer as he began to flip out about the interception.

"Hold this, I'm going in," Chad said before entering the game and promptly plucking an interception of his own in a game the Falcons won 43-42. "Where did I get that arrogance as a player? From Urban."

"He has a swagger. There's a mutual love, hate and respect between us. He loved what I did, but he also hated me. I pushed buttons, pissing him off a lot. He knew it was for the right reasons."

Long would obliterate a teammate at practice. He did so because Meyer couldn't.

"I'd blow a kid up and get kicked out of practice to change the tempo," he said.

Chad was first-team all-Ohio at linebacker three times and defensive player of the year in Division III once for Clyde. He holds the Fliers' career record with 20 interceptions.

Chad was defensive coordinator at Lakota for two years out of college. He held the same position at Tif-

See CLYDE, Page 2B

Clyde

Continued from Page 1B

fin Columbian for six years under mentor Steve Gilbert before a stint at Clyde when nephew Kade Long was there.

"He's a players' coach," Ray said. "He cares what they think. He wants their input. He's trying to build a tight group like we have here. The steps he's made from last year to this year are huge.

"It's working. He has young coaches. He's teaching coaches to coach and building."

Clyde was fourth in its region and Ross eighth entering games Week 10. With Conner graduating, it wouldn't be a surprise to see Ray join Chad's staff.

"He's great with the Front 7 and I'm good with the Back 7," Chad said. "It made things so much easier not worrying about the front."

Conner wants to be like Chad

Ray was first-team all-Ohio at linebacker once for Clyde. He played on two national championship teams at Findlay and twice earned first-team All-America status.

He was national defensive player of the year and is a member of Findlay's hall of fame.

He started coaching at Clyde in 1997. He's led the defense under Bob Bishop, Mike Martin, Marc Gibson and Ryan Carter.

Nothing better encapsulates the mentality of the Fliers' program than Ray Long.

"There hasn't been a losing season since 2003," Ray said. "We've done great things here. It's still the same program. It shows what tradition can build."

Ray lives vicariously through his defense and everybody is accountable, for every snap.

"The defense reflects me," he said. "Do it the right way every time. If you do it wrong, you're gone and you earn your job back. They know. You have to have personal accountability and do what I want.

"Here at Clyde, we expect to win. If I get effort, I can get a win. I guarantee it. If he gives me everything, I'll put him in position to win. That's my job. His job is effort."

Kade was first-team all-Ohio at linebacker as a senior in 2015 and second-team as a junior. Clyde topped DeShone Kizer and Central Catholic in the post-season his junior year.

"We were all willing to attack anything in front of us," Kade said of his family, "no matter what it was."

Kade coaches the defensive line at Lakota, which has six wins and only one loss in conference play.

"I always find myself using things my dad and uncle do when I'm coaching," he said. "I run a defensive front much like my dad has used in his schemes. I also find myself using coverages (they) use."

"It's been a great help having those two great coaching minds by my side. I've learned so much from both."

Conner has the same attitude, mannerisms and position (sort of) as his uncle, not his father. He even wears No. 1.

"He emulates me as a player," Chad said. "Everyone in the family says he's mini-me. The way he thinks. The way he talks. The way he acts. My wife says it. His parents say it. I'm proud. It makes me feel good to know I was never forgotten."

Ray isn't jealous.

"They both lack common sense," he said.

Conner continued the first-team all-Ohio lineage with a spot at safety last season.

"I had to be like them to build up that legacy," Conner said. "I put a lot of pressure on myself to follow my dad and my uncle and my brother. They were great players. I have to do my part to fit into the family."

Conner can be forgiven for not being a linebacker.

"There's a great bloodline of success with the family tree," Chad said. "I didn't want (Conner) to be the only Long who didn't get first-team all-Ohio."

Chad's son, Gunnar, is next Long up. He's 2.

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Dontrez Brown is among four sophomore defensive linemen who earned significant playing time.

Long's Little Giants improve in 2nd year

Matthew Horn
Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

In Chad Long's second year as head coach, Fremont Ross improved by two wins — from three to five.

He is aiming for the team's record to continue to improve.

"If we're not 7-3 next year, we're not doing our jobs as coaches," Long said. "We have talent back. Good sophomores and juniors who played."

The Little Giants (5-5, 3-4) lost to Sandusky 16-15 and Findlay 55-49 in triple-overtime. They fell 21-7 to Toledo St. Francis in Week 10, and only dropped one spot in their region to ninth, narrowly missing the postseason as Toledo St. John's beat Toledo Central Catholic.

"If St. John's doesn't win, we're in at 5-5," Long said. "Two games linger in my mind. Sandusky and Findlay. We were the better team. We allowed teams to stay in. That's the hump and the mental edge we need."

"It's a process. We're there, we saw it. We made huge strides from my first year. We need to close out games and not let teams back in."

Ross topped St. John's 23-20 and Lima Senior 28-24 the two weeks following Findlay. It beat Clay 28-23 in Week 9.

"We played four quarters," Long said. "Now, it's four quarters finishing playing



Fremont Ross improved by two wins from Chad Long's first year to his second as head coach. PHOTOS BY MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Fremont Ross football. They got a taste of winning. Now, let's win all the time and refuse to lose. Great teams find ways to finish.

"Do your job and do it correctly. Give effort and we'll give you results. We're in the process of being great as a program."

Ross advanced inside the 30-yard line of St. Francis (2-8) seven times but generated only one touchdown. Roger Burling missed the game with a broken collarbone.

"Our offense gradually got better as the year went on," Long said. "We moved the ball, but we have to concentrate on scoring points. The mentality

got better. We lost two games and learned to win two close games.

"We have to refuse to lose, finish teams off and beat the teams we're supposed to beat. You can't build a castle in two years necessarily. It depends on how big you want it. I want it huge. We want to be the empire of northwest Ohio."

The Little Giants played four sophomore building blocks in defensive linemen Dontrez Brown, Carson Brandon, Nick Mayle and Jason Burling. Junior linebackers Caleb Wood and

See ROSS, Page 6A

Ross

Continued from Page 5A

Garrett Schneider help quarterback the defense.

"We'll miss the maximum effort from Shawn Newsome up front," Long said. "He flew around the field like no other. Ben Rozzell. Roger Burling."

Ross played seven kids along the offensive line who will be back, along with juniors Hayden Lehmann, Noah Hotz and Bryce McKinstry. It would like to find a workhorse running back.

"They need to piggyback off the seniors' foundation," Long said. "They can't be content at 5-5. They're not. They got a taste being close to the play-offs, but we want to take steps beyond that."

"Conditioning and the offseason are important to get over the next hump. They know that."

Lehmann had 2,170 yards passing in Ed Baptista's first year as offensive coordinator this season. He struggled to stay healthy after earning the starting job as a sophomore.

"He made plays for highlights and then there were plays he just missed," Long said. "He can learn and get better. I believe he'll be a 3,000-yard passer



Hayden Lehmann passed for 2,170 yards as a junior. MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

next season trusting the system. He can get the big play from a short reception.

"He studies and listens. He just needs to continue to build. We'll be good next year with him at quarterback."

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Fremont Ross senior Roger Burling was first-team all-TRAC on both sides of the ball at receiver and cornerback. He had 38 receptions and five TDs at receiver, and had five interceptions at cornerback. MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Burling leads 4 Ross players on first team

Lehmann, Newsome, Hotz also earn top honors

Matthew Horn
Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Fremont Ross senior Roger Burling was first-team all-Three Rivers Athletic Conference on both sides of the ball at receiver and cornerback.

Burling caught 38 passes for 745 yards and five touchdowns before breaking his collarbone in Week 9. He had 29 solo tackles, eight pass break-ups and five interceptions, including one he returned for a touchdown.

"Burling is a coach's dream because he has a huge football IQ and athletic ability to go with it," Little Giants coach Chad Long said.

Junior quarterback Hayden Lehmann, senior defensive lineman Shawn Newsome and junior punter Noah Hotz also were first-team selections for the Little Giants (5-5, 3-4). Hotz and Newsome were first-team last season as well.

"Newsome plays with effort and attitude and that's why he makes so many plays," Long said.

Lehmann completed 140 of 285



Ross senior Shawn Newsome was first-team all-TRAC on the defensive line for the second straight year.

passes for 2,170 yards and 16 touchdowns. He added two scores on the ground.

"Hayden has all the potential in the world with a very strong arm and mobility to run at any time," Long said.

Newsome had 38 solo tackles, 27 assists, 14 tackles for a loss and 6.5 sacks. Hotz averaged 37.7 yards on 57 punts and 15 were downed inside the 20-yard line.

Ross junior linebacker Caleb Wood, junior defensive back Hotz and sophomore defensive lineman Dontrez Brown were second-team. Wood had

"Burling is a coach's dream because he has a huge football IQ and athletic ability to go with it."

Chad Long
Fremont Ross football coach

63 tackles, 42 assists, 18 tackles for a loss, nine sacks and one interception and Brown had 40 tackles, 25 assists, eight tackles for a loss, six sacks and two interceptions.

Junior lineman Mike Thomas was second-team on offense.

Seniors Michael Contreras, Devyn Jagodzinski, Tanner King, Chrystian Mancini and Benny Rozzell and juniors Garrett Schneider and Seth Harder were honorable mention for the Little Giants.

Whitmer sophomore quarterback Riley Kelley is player of the year.

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DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR



Defensive end Shawn Newsome of Fremont Ross started a few games at running back. MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Ross' Newsome earns reputation for pursuit of ball

Matthew Horn
Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Some linebackers stand out because of their ability to make plays from sideline to sideline.

Fremont Ross senior Shawn Newsome makes plays all over the field because he doesn't seem to think there's a play he can't make. Newsome is a defensive end.

He is also The News-Messenger's Defensive Player of the Year.

"He's 6-2, 200-plus," Little Giants coach Chad Long said. "You don't find kids that big running around that fast. He'll sacrifice his body. You don't find kids that do that, like that."

"He's around the ball. He's a nasty football player and he's resilient finding a way to be around the football."

Newsome had 65 tackles, 14 tackles for a loss and 6.5 sacks. He also started at running back late in the season.

"You'd watch film and he'd stand out," Long said, "always running around. His hustle. His determination and willingness to do whatever for the team. We were looking for a run game."

"We needed to find ways to get him the ball. He brought energy to the offensive side. To play a skill position and then go to defensive end and not take any plays off was exceptional."

Newsome is relentless. He has the speed and agility to beat linemen into the backfield or chase the ball 30 yards in the opposite direction — on the same play.

"Coach Long always told me pursuit helps the defense impact a game," he said. "As long as I pursue, they won't get first downs and they won't score. Pursuit is a key for the defense."

"Get to the ball and make a play. Wherever the ball goes, I should be there to stop it."

Newsome appreciates the role Long's played in his development. He also takes pride in the team's improvement in Long's first two years as head coach.

"A lot of my accomplishments are because of Coach Long and the staff and my uncle with their motivation," he said.

Ross had three wins Newsome's ju-

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Newsome

Continued from Page 1B

nior year and five this year, including three in league play.

Newsome was first-team all-Northwest District and Three Rivers Athletic Conference the last two years.

"He's in a small class," Long said of a conference with plenty of talent every year. "It's a great indication of what he's put into it to be rewarded first-team two times.

"He's always had to work hard for what he's got. Nothing's ever been given. He's worked to show people."

Newsome, who was special mention all-Ohio as a junior, was bigger and faster as a senior.

"Technique, pursuit on the ball," he said. "Everything in general. The coaches helped me work on my weak spots."

He earned a reputation, particularly with four defensive touchdowns as a junior.

"All we ask for as coaches is effort every play," Long said. "He did that. You knew where he was and if you run away from him, he'll find a way to track you down."

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