

Area tennis programs begin warming up

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT ROSS

Coach: Lisa Wolfe, eighth year.

Last year: 6-11 (2-5 TRAC/6th).

Returnees: Seniors Jonathan Alexander, Dylan Henry and Carl Spears; juniors Robert Joerg Nate Rellinger, Connor Martin, Joe Meyer and Dylan Willey; sophomores Marshall Kuieck, Henry Nguyen and Hunter Smith.

Newcomers: Senior Andrea Lee; junior Rayjean Viruet and freshmen Brianna Goodwin, Kaitlyn McGilton, Brandon Richter and Joell Starks Fant.

Graduates: Gaetan Brugger, Domenic Meints and Taran Rodriguez.

Outlook: Former Oak Harbor tennis coach Rick LaFountain, a teacher at Ross, has joined Wolfe's program as an assistant coach this spring. Rodriguez and Joerg were honorable mention all-Three Rivers Athletic Conference players for the Little Giants a year ago. Brugger placed fourth in the TRAC at No. 3 singles, Rodriguez was fifth at second singles and Joerg was sixth at No. 1 singles. Alexander and Meins took fifth at first doubles, while Rellinger and Martin battled to a fifth-place finish at second doubles. Alexander finished 9-14 a year ago, and will be in the mix this spring for a top singles spot, or top doubles spot. Joerg went 11-18 and is going to start the year as Ross' No. 1 singles player. Rellinger returns after going 21-9 as a sophomore, while Martin was 18-9. Six other non-lettermen return to Wolfe's roster, which will feature six newcomers.

"I probably have the greatest group of tennis players, attitude-wise, than anyone else around," Wolfe said. "Those attitudes make practices very productive and they have been working very hard. We lost Taran, which is a huge loss, but we will have a lot of depth to fill the void. They have shoveled the tennis courts as a part of conditioning many times and we've been able to play outside several times so far and at the YMCA for a couple of weeks. They are not afraid to work. I have a team of 17 and at any given time, I would be comfortable with 10 being on a varsity court at some level."

SJCC

Coach: Joe Luthman, first year.

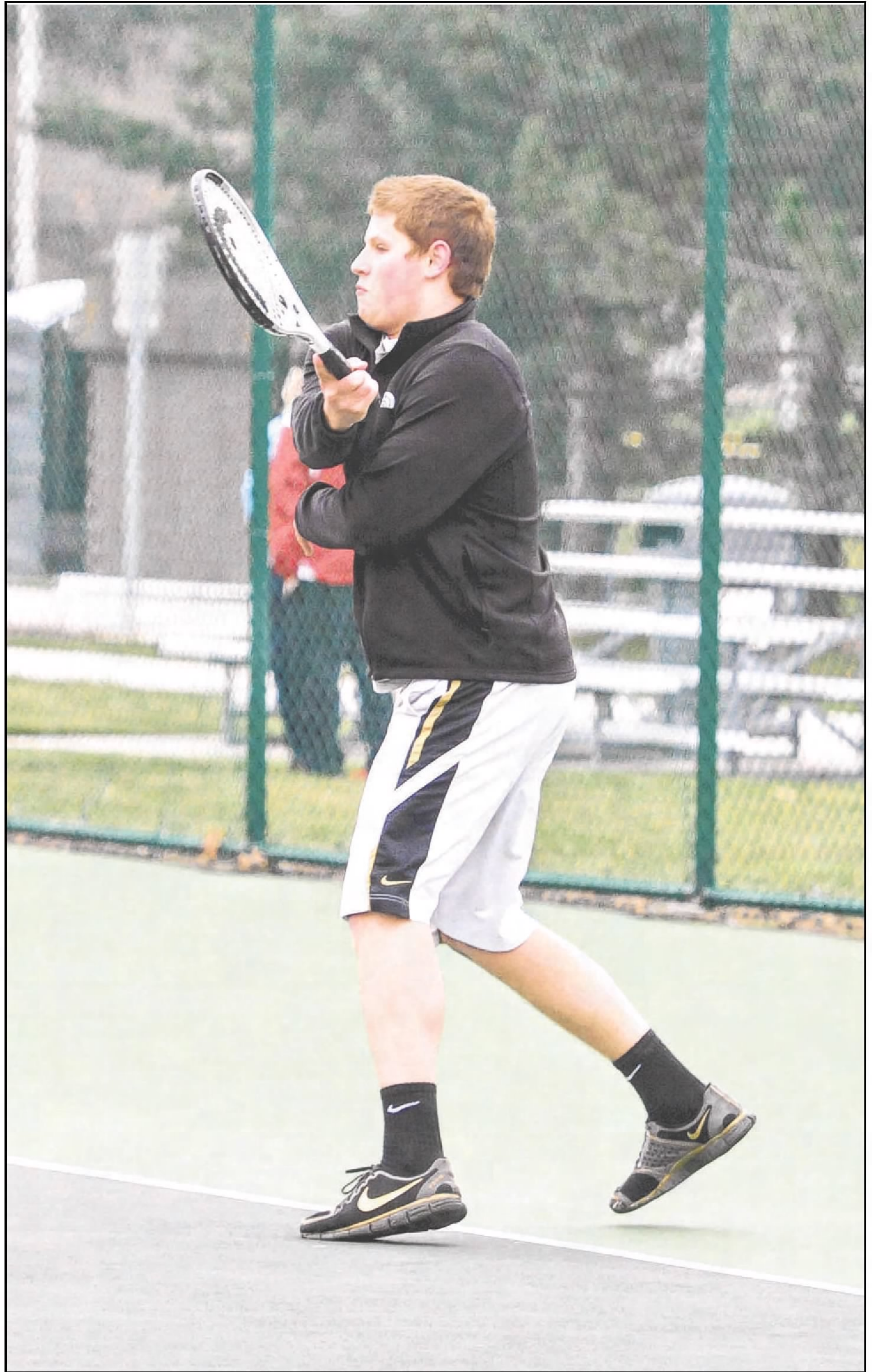
Last year: No victories, all matches required at least 3rd singles to be forfeited.

Returnees: Seniors Hunter Harrison, first singles; Aaron Burns, second singles; Jacob Hahn, first doubles; Nick McNair, first doubles; Ben Selvey, second doubles; and Jacob McQuiston, second doubles.

Newcomers: Seniors Mathias Michelsen and Sean Vasquez; junior Kyle Snodgrass; and freshman Patrick Cool.

Graduates: None.

Outlook: Numbers have been the biggest issue for the Crimson Streaks to overcome in recent years. No one would question the competitiveness shown by



Fremont SJCC's Hunter Harrison follows through on his swing during a tennis match against Port Clinton on April 12. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

the players themselves. Both Harrison and Burns carried .500 records during last season, despite the team setbacks. McQuiston earned a match win at sectionals. All six players from last season were juniors.

"All of our players have continued playing despite fielding a team one short of a full squad of seven players," Luthman said. "Our team is senior dominated. The program is in need of building, both in numbers of players and in skills acquisition. This year we intend to concentrate on better serving and doubles movement."

BELLEVUE

Coach: Jim Picciuto, fifth year.

Last year: 15-3 (7-3 NOL).

Returnees: Seniors Drew Ring and Matt Pooch.

Newcomers: Juniors Josh Becks, Nick Bock and Jake Chagolla; and sophomores Aaron Price and Tate Schoen.

Graduates: Collin Covella, Brent Runion, Blake Kryling, Tony Harper and Cody Henderson.

Outlook: Seniors dominated the Redmen lineup last year. That experience showed in the results. Blake Kryling and Drew Ring finished their season 15-3 in doubles play, while Harper was 15-2, Runion was 13-5 and Henderson finished 14-4.

Fremont Ross tops Bowling Green on courts

Nate Rellinger (No. 2 singles), Jonathan Alexander (No. 3 singles), and Marshall Kuieck and Dylan Henry (No. 2 doubles) each won in straight sets as Ross won the non-conference matchup.

“This was a great season opener because it was a very tight match and made my team really compete and play hard for each court win,” Little Giants coach Lisa Wolfe said. “Nate did a really nice job. He really showed his mental game by adjusting the second set by sitting back on the baseline until the right time to approach instead of rushing the net and getting passed ... smart player.”

Connor Martin and Dylan Willey (No. 1 doubles) also won in consecutive sets by taking two tiebreakers for Ross (1-0).

“Connor and Dylan had a very even match,” Wolfe said. “They kept their focus on each point and that's what you have to do when you play so equally with an opponent and end up in a tiebreaker ... or two.

“Jonathan, and Marshall and Dylan also did a great job. It was a perfect way to start the season and finally nice weather.”

Rellinger was primarily at No. 1 doubles last season.

Little Giants best SJCC in windy affair

Despite weather, Ross' Joerg beats SJCC in singles

By Kevin Shields

Sports writer

FREMONT — Fremont Ross' Robert Joerg, like many other athletes Tuesday, was at the mercy of the ferocious winds that made way through Sandusky County.

Instead of playing the typical forehand, backhand or drop shot, some of the best shots for Joerg and the Little Giants, Tuesday's non-league home match against St. Joseph Cen-

tral Catholic resembled those more along the likes of the ones you'd see in golf. The fade (a left to right shot), in particular, proved highly effective in the easterly winds.

Joerg bested SJCC's Hunter Harrison 6-0, 6-0 at No. 1 singles as Ross swept the Crimson Streaks 5-0.

"There's not much you can go for in these conditions, except try to force your opponent into making an error," Joerg said. "Shots that normally

kissed the line were going five feet out."

Joerg was an honorable mention all-Three Rivers Athletic Conference selection for the Little Giants in 2013. He's part of a trio of juniors that return after filling significant roles in the lineup as sophomores.

Another of those is Nate Rellinger, who played doubles a year ago and will switch

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St. Joe's Hunter Harrison returns a shot in a match with Ross' Robert Joerg. DOUG HISE/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

Ross

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between No. 1 doubles and No. 2 singles throughout the spring. Rellinger and Marshall Kuieck were 6-1, 6-1 winners at No. 1 doubles Tuesday, topping the SJCC duo of Nick McNair and Jacob Hahn.

Ross' Dylan Henry and Carl Spears bested the Streaks' Ben Selvey and Matthias Michelsen 6-4, 6-2 at second doubles.

"We took some lumps last year, but we're real strong and probably a little deeper than last year's group," said Rellinger, who went 21-9 at second doubles in 2013. "We're hoping to take a lot of those losses in 3-2 matches last spring and flip those around this time around."

Perfect attendance at practices determined the Little Giant's lineup against SJCC.

Sophomore Henry Nguyen competed in his first varsity match for Ross where he bested Patrick Coul 6-0, 6-1 at

third singles.

"It felt great," Nguyen said. "I was really excited to get the chance to play."

The most competitive match of took place at second singles where Ross' Connor Martin beat SJCC's Aaron Burns 2-6, 6-1, 7-5. Martin is the other junior back after playing with Rellinger at No. 2 doubles.

"We're building and building right now," Joerg said.

"We're trying to develop the younger guys and get them ready for these varsity matches."

New to coach Lisa Wolfe's staff this year is former Oak Harbor and Ross tennis coach Rick LaFountain.

"He's a bit more laid back, which helps cool the tensions sometimes," Joerg said.

Ross will host Clyde today at 4:30 p.m. The Crimson Streaks will next play Thursday at Oak Harbor (4:30 p.m. start).

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Tennis: Clyde 3, Fremont Ross 2

FREMONT — Alex Medley won at first singles (6-3, 6-0) and the Fliers doubles teams swept both duos for the Little Giants in earning the victory in Wednesday's match.

Clyde's Caleb Prunty and David Murphy won 6-0, 6-1 at No. 1 doubles, while Jacob Roach and Thomas Ariaans were 6-3, 7-6 (0) winners at second doubles.

Ross' lone wins came from Nate Relling at second singles (6-2, 6-1) and Jonathan Alexander at third singles (7-5, 7-5).

“It was a close match, as always with Clyde,” Little Giants coach Lisa Wolfe said. “Coach Brian Miller (Clyde's coach) has done a nice job with his tennis athletes. Jonathan (Alexander) played a very steady match at No. 3 singles for us, staying focused and consistent in a close match.”

Tennis: Fremont Ross 5, Lima Sr. 0

LIMA — The Little Giants swept the Spartans in Tuesday's Three Rivers Athletic Conference varsity boys tennis match.

Robert Joerg (No. 1 singles) and Nate Rellinger (No. 2 singles) both recorded two-set sweeps of their opponents and Henry Nguyen (No. 3 singles) beat Donovan Levan 6-4, 6-0.

In doubles action, the Ross duo of Connor Martin and Marshall Kuieck (No. 1 doubles) defeated Travis Tuttle and Brian Fruch, 6-1, 6-1, while teammates Jonathan Alexander and Dylan Henry (No. 2 doubles) also won 6-1, 6-0.

Fremont improves to 3-2 overall and 1-0 in the TRAC.



Fremont Ross' Robert Joerg returns the ball during a tennis match against Port Clinton on Wednesday, April 9, 2014. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Joerg's sideline shots help Ross

Little Giants get road sweep of Port Clinton

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

PORT CLINTON — The sidelines at Port Clinton's tennis courts were very friendly to Fremont Ross' Robert Joerg on Wednesday.

But not too friendly.

"I had a lot of my shots down the line just miss by a hair," Joerg said. "But sometimes you just need that little extra luck. Those were good shots for me today."

Joerg earned a hard-fought three-set 6-1, 6-7 (3), 7-6 (7) win over the Redskins' Noah Cross in the match of the night at first singles as the Little Giants earned a 5-0 sweep in the non-league match.

"We'd never played each other before," said Joerg, now 3-3 on the year. "The first set, I played clean and he made a lot of errors. Second set (Cross) played a whole lot better. He capitalized when I got tight and

he held his nerve, especially in the tiebreaker. And the third set was the same as the second, just one or two points that separated us."

Cross clipped the net on his match point in the tiebreaker allowing Joerg another chance. Cross failed to make a play at the net two points later on Joerg's winner.

The two played a slower, more deliberate pace in the final set.

"I think both of us were trying to calm our nerves and trying to hold serve, which wasn't very easy to do," Joerg said. "Then once one of us got up 30-Love, we just tried to sprint away with that particular game. I was just glad to squeeze it out in the end."

Ross (4-2) got another three-set singles win from Nate Rellinger at second singles. He topped Jeff Griffin 6-4, 2-6, 6-3.

"I played a lot towards (Griffin's) backhand," said Rellinger, now 5-1. "I was told he some issues with his backhand, so I tried to get him moving around and hoped the rest would take care of itself."

Jonathan Alexander earned a 7-5, 6-1



Fremont Ross' Dylan Willey looks to serve during a tennis match against Port Clinton on Wednesday, April 9, 2014. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Sweep

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victory over Cameron King of the Redskins (0-2).

In doubles play, the first doubles combo of Connor Martin and Dylan Willey earned a 7-5, 6-4 win over the Port Clinton tandem of Ellis Adolph and Tristan Auxter.

"I think with each match we're getting more experience as partner," Martin said. "This is the first year we've played together and we're starting to learn what each others strengths and weaknesses, and we're able to play to those.

"But it also helps that we're friends off the court."

Martin, a junior, was 18-9 as a sophomore playing varsity at second doubles, mostly with Rellinger. Willey, another junior, was 11-8 as a JV player.

^N "I think both our service games are doing a lot better," Willey said. "Our serves at the beginning of the year weren't great but now we're getting

"For us to beat these guys says a lot about our team."

LISA WOLFE

Fremont Ross coach

them down and we're making our first serves and not double faulting a lot."

Added Martin: "We had a lot of quick reactions at the net today, which really helped. Those reaction shots were falling in and that's always good when those more athletic reaction kind of shots go in."

Marshall Kuieck and Dylan Henry completed the sweep with a 6-2, 6-0 win at second doubles.

"For us to beat these guys says a lot about our team," Ross coach Lisa Wolfe said. "Port Clinton is very talented and deep. I'm proud of my guys tonight."

Ross will host Toledo St. John's Jesuit in Three Rivers Athletic Conference today at 4:30 p.m.

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Tennis: St. John's Jesuit 5, Fremont Ross 0

FREMONT — The Little Giants boys tennis team was swept by the Titans Thursday in a Three Rivers Athletic Conference matchup.

Ross coach Lisa Wolfe shuffled her starting lineup and St. John's took advantage, winning all matches in straight sets.

"This lineup would give my No. 1 (Robert Joerg) and No.2 (Nate Rellinger) singles an opportunity to play some doubles," Wolfe said. "We have two doubles tournaments in the next two weeks, and depending on how they decide to play at sectionals, St. John's is in our sectionals also. So it was a great time to try something different."

Jonathan Alexander, the regular No. 3 player, was also moved to doubles action where he fell with teammate Connor Martin in two sets.

Tennis: Fremont Ross 3, Tiffin Columbian 2

FREMONT — With the score knotted up at 2-2 at the start of his third set, the Little Giants' Nate Rellinger stepped up and delivered the match-clinching point in Wednesday's non-league victory over the Tornados.

Rellinger won 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 at second singles for Ross (5-3).

"Nate did a fabulous job of changing up his second set after the first set," Little Giants coach Lisa Wolfe said. "Nate is very coachable and is a smart tennis player realizing what is working and what isn't. He never gives up and constantly chips away at his opponents' weaknesses."

Robert Joerg won in straight sets at first singles (6-1, 6-1). The first doubles team of Jonathan Alexander and Connor Martin also came away with a win (6-2, 7-6).

Tennis: St. Francis de Sales 5, Fremont Ross 0

TOLEDO — The Little Giants lost all their matches in straight sets and were swept by the Knights on Thursday in a Three Rivers Athletic Conference matchup.

Ross falls to 5-4 overall and 1-2 in the conference.

Tennis: Little Giants Doubles Tournament

Robert Joerg and Nate Rellinger finished first at No. 1 as host Fremont Ross finished in fourth place.

Tennis: Fremont Ross 5, St. Joseph CC 0

FREMONT — Nate Rellinger won 12 straight games en route to a 6-0, 6-0 at second singles as the Little Giants shutout the Crimson Streaks in their Monday non-league match.

Robert Joerg won at first singles (6-1, 6-1) for Ross (6-4), while Jonathan Alexander won in straight sets at third singles (6-1, 6-2).

Connor Martin and Marshall Kuieck paired up for a 6-0, 6-2 first doubles victory. Carl Spears and Joe Meyer won 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 at second doubles.

Ross will host Toledo Central Catholic at 4 p.m. today.

Boys Tennis: Fremont Ross 4, Toledo Central Catholic 1

FREMONT — Nate Rellinger earned his 11th victory of the season in a three-set come from behind win at second singles (5-7, 6-2, 6-0) as the Little Giants (7-4, 2-2) topped the Fighting Irish in Tuesday's Three Rivers Athletic Conference match.

Jonathan Alexander won at third singles (6-2, 6-4).

Connor Martin and Dylan Willey won 6-1, 6-1 at first doubles, while Dylan Henry and Marshall Kuieck were 6-0, 6-2 winners at second doubles.

ROUNDUP

Fremont Ross tennis shuts out Toledo Whitmer

Connor Martin and Dylan Willey didn't drop a game at No. 1 doubles as Fremont Ross topped Toledo Whitmer 5-0 in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference on Thursday.

Nate Rellinger lost only one game at No. 2 singles while Robert Joerg dropped two at No. 1 for the Little Giants (8-4, 3-2).

Jonathan Alexander (No. 3 singles), and Dylan Henry and Marshall Kuieck (No. 2 doubles) won by forfeit.

LOCAL SPORTS ROUNDUP

Tennis: Ross wins Port Clinton doubles tournament

PORT CLINTON — Fremont Ross had two doubles pairs earn first place in their respective brackets as the Little Giants were crowned team champions of the eight-team Port Clinton Doubles Tournament on Saturday night.

Dylan Henry and Marshall Kuieck won the No. 3 doubles title, while Carl Spears and Dylan Willey won the No. 4 doubles championship, which included winning a tiebreaker (7-2) in the title match.

Robert Joerg and Nate Rellinger were runner-ups in the No. 1 doubles bracket. Jonathan Alexander and Connor Martin placed third at second doubles.

Tennis: Fremont Ross 3, Oregon Clay 2

OREGON — Robert Joerg (No. 1 singles) and Nate Rellinger (No. 2 singles) won in straight sets 6-1, 6-1 and 6-3, 6-3 respectively for the Little Giants who topped the Eagles Wednesday in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

Dylan Henry and Marshall Kuieck won 6-4, 6-2 at second doubles for Ross (9-5, 4-3).

It was the final league match for the Little Giants who will play in the TRAC championship tournament Saturday at Jermain/Ottawa Park (9 a.m.).

“The team has done very well so far this season,” Ross coach Lisa Wolfe said. “We’ve had some great wins against Central Catholic and Clay. We’re hoping for some good match wins Saturday.”

FREMONT ROSS 3, BELLEVUE 2

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Site: BHS, Bellevue

» **No. 1 singles:** Robert Joerg (FR) def. Aaron Price (B), 6-0, 6-1.

» **No. 2 singles:** Nate Rellinger (FR) def. Nick Bock (B), 6-0, 6-0.

» **No. 3 singles:** Jonathan Alexander (FR) def. Tate Schoen (B), 6-2, 7-5.

» **No. 1 doubles:** Drew Ring/Josh Becks (B) def. Connor Martin/Dylan Willey (FR), 6-2, 6-3.

» **No. 2 doubles:** Matt Pooch/Jake Chagolla (B) def. Dylan Henry/Marshall Kuieck (FR), 6-2, 6-4.

» **Records:** Ross 10-5; Bellevue 6-8 (5-5 NOL).

Tennis: Fremont Ross 4, Sandusky 1

FREMONT — The Little Giants disposed of their arch rivals with ease, winning four of the five courts in straight sets.

Robert Joerg was a 6-3, 6-3 winner at first singles for Ross (11-5), which also got a win at second singles from Nate Rellinger (6-0, 6-3).

Connor Martin and Dylan Willey didn't drop a game in a sweep at first doubles, while Dylan Henry and Carl Spear only dropped one (6-0, 6-1).