

2000 District...

# Ross descends on BGSU

## Giants only team to take all 7 players

By MICHAEL PIDANICK  
Staff writer

Fremont Ross senior Pete Scranton is glad his teammates will be rooting him in Bowling Green this weekend, as he tries to reach the state tournament for the first time.

He's even happier they'll all be there legally.

The Little Giants sent all seven players — three singles

players and two doubles teams — to the Division I district tournament Friday and Saturday at BGSU. The top three placers in the district earn a trip to the state meet next weekend in Columbus.

"It'll be nice to have them there, and having them there and not truant from school is even better," Scranton said.

"It gives me someone to talk to, other players to watch that I can cheer for. A lot of the tennis players don't get along, so it's nice to have at least six players that you want to win and that want you to win. My first two matches will be crucial, and it's nice that I will have some-

**Friday:** Scranton favored to advance to state.

one there to help me along."

Scranton was expected to roll through the Sandusky sectional Friday and Saturday, and he did, losing only two games all weekend. And while it is not a surprise that any of the Little Giants advanced to the district round, it is rather amazing that all seven Ross players made it. It is believed to be the first time in Ross history that has been accomplished.

"That was great," said singles player Mike Zimmer. "I

don't think we've done that in the history of Ross before. It's really something to send everybody. We really cleaned it up.

"Even if we lose, it's not a loss. We all got to district and that's a great accomplishment. All of us being there as a team is going to be fun. I don't think any of the other teams are all going to be there."

Ross is the only school in Northwest Ohio to pull off such a feat.

"It's amazing," said doubles player Mike Moxley.

See ROSS, B3

### Ross tennis players and their records

Singles Singles Singles



SCRANTON

26-4

ZIMMER

21-10

YOUNG

25-7

Doubles Doubles Doubles Doubles



MILLER

25-5

ECKERT

26-4

BROUGH

26-3

MOXLEY

27-3

# Ross sends seven to district meet

Continued from B1

"I've never heard of any team from anywhere, even St. John's or St. Francis, making it to districts as a team."

Scranton finished first at the sectional, as expected. Buck Young was third and Mike Zimmer was fourth. The first singles team of Marc Brough and Moxley took second and the first doubles team of Paul Eckert and Austin Miller claimed third.

"It's been a nice capper to their four years of tennis," said Ross coach Rick LaFountain. "To see all of them make districts, it's a nice reward for all the hard work they put in for four years."

It was sweet redemption for the Little Giants, who lost the Great Lakes League tournament on a tiebreaker to rival Findlay. The Trojans beat the Little Giants 3-2 during regular-season action, marking the first loss for the five Ross seniors.

"Sending our whole team to districts is the contrast to losing GLL," said Eckert. "We did tie, but that's not as good as winning. If we do what we expect we can do, we'll be all right."

The Little Giants won all 14 matches they played in Friday's sectional action, which guaranteed them a spot in the semifinal and an automatic bid in the district tournament.

Young was the only one of the seven to need a third set. After a fairly easy 6-3 first-set win in his match against Mansfield Senior's Eric Peffley, he let the second one slip away and lost 7-5, forcing a third and deciding set.

"It was a tight match," said Young. "I remember going into that third set thinking what it would be like to be the only one that didn't make it. So it kind of drove me to win."

Young cruised in the third set, winning 6-0.

He will have a tough test in his first match, taking on foreign exchange student Cisco Villar, who beat Scranton earlier this season.

"I'm in a pretty tough bracket," said Young, who has also participated on Ross's state-qualifying 200 medley relay swimming team. "So I don't know how it's going to go. I'm just going in to play my hardest. I'm just happy I made it."

Like Young, Zimmer has a tough opener, facing Brian Donaldson of Toledo St. John's. And like Zimmer, he's entering with a nothing-to-lose attitude.

"I'm going to have to play at the top of my game," said Zimmer. "If I can play my toughest I know I can do well."

The biggest surprises were pulled off by Moxley and Brough, who knocked off the No. 2 and No. 3 seeds at the sectional.

"We were focused going in against the two-seed," Brough said. "Against the three-seed, we were a little more relaxed because we knew he had the district already. It was a great match; both teams played tough,

but we came out with the win."

The tandem has been red-hot recently, earning first team All-Great Lakes League honors two weekends ago, and has won 25 of the 28 matches they've played together this season.

"We've been pulling surprises off the whole season, especially at sectional," Moxley said. "That was just exciting. Like our assistant (athletic) director, Mr. (Bob) Knapp, put it, we've taken our game to a whole new level."

The team has a shot at doing some damage at state. LaFountain said Moxley and Brough have a realistic shot at reaching the semifinals, meaning one win in their final two matches would result in a state berth.

Moxley said the team is entering with a "serious but fun" attitude.

"We're just going to play our best and see what happens," he said. "I'm not saying we're making it to state or anything. But we've got one of best draws possible. We could make it to the second day (semifinals). That would be quite an honor."

Miller and Eckert, who have only lost twice as a team this season, open against Blake Filion and Chris Weiss of Southview. Miller said he hopes they can continue the winning ways.

"We're excited to get there," Miller said. "I hope Paul and I can play well, we've been play-

ing well throughout the year. I think we can get pretty far. It depends on how many mistakes we make and how much we want it more than the other players."

Scranton has the best chance to reach state as he prepares for his fourth district tournament. He is widely considered the second best player in the district, behind Ross Wilson of St. Francis, and he wouldn't meet Wilson until the district final after a state berth had been clinched.

Young will take the court at 9:30 a.m., and Scranton and Zimmer will play one hour later. Doubles action starts at 11:45 a.m.

The semifinals are at 9:50 a.m. and the finals at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday.



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## Scranton confident he'll make it to state

By MICHAEL PIDANICK  
Staff writer

Many of the tennis players participating in today's Division I district tournament will be so nervous they'll barely be able to think, breathe or play decent tennis.

Don't count Pete Scranton among them.

Confidence will not be lacking for Scranton this season as he participates in his fourth district tournament in search of his first state berth.

"I have to be confident," he said. "If I'm not confident this year, there's something wrong because there's no reason not to be. I can tell everyone there I'm going to be them 0 and 0, and if I lose, I go to college and I'll never see them again."

"Hopefully, I can intimidate players so they feel the nerves. At districts, you have to play your best tennis from the beginning, and if you start beating players badly, it's always in the back of their mind, 'I've lost to him before and he's playing well. What do I have to do?'"

The top three placers in each district advance to the state tournament next weekend at Ohio State University. Scranton is considered by many to be the second-best Division I player at the district behind Ross Wilson of Toledo St. Francis.

"Pete has as good a shot as ever," said Ross coach Rick LaFountain. "He's probably the second- or third-best player, whether or not he plays that way remains to be seen. If you don't play well at districts, you can get beat by anybody. You've got 16 real good players. If you don't play your best tennis, you're going to go home. You have to play fantastic."

Scranton enters the tournament with a 26-4 record, and has beaten everyone on his side of the bracket at least once before. But after three near-misses, Scranton said he isn't taking anything for granted.

"I'm not going into it expecting to win, because I don't want to be disappointed," Scranton said. "But if I don't make it this year, I have no one to blame but myself. This year, I am best player in my draw, so I will go to state."

"It's nice to see I've beaten everyone on my side of the draw at least once before. That doesn't mean they can't come out and beat me. They've beaten four players, so that means they can win matches. But they're not going to win one on Friday or Saturday. The big thing to remember is that I'm better, and I have to come out and play my best game. Hopefully my best game will be there when I need it to be, and if it is I won't have any problems."

### Tennis



SCRANTON

## Scranton reaches first state tourney

News-Messenger reports

Fremont Ross senior Pete Scranton will end his career at the ultimate showcase for high school tennis.

Scranton took second Saturday at the Division I district tournament at Bowling Green State University and earned his first career trip to the state tournament.

He will face Billy Pfaffinger, a junior at Dublin Coffman, Friday at Ohio State University.

"We're very proud of him," said Ross coach Rick LaFountain.

"It's a great way to end his career."

According to LaFountain, Scranton is the first Little Giant in nearly 30 years to reach the boys state tennis tourney. Ross senior Ainsley Watkins reached the girls state meet last fall.

The top three players at each district qualify for state, so when Scranton beat Brian Donaldson of Toledo St. John's in his first match Saturday, he earned his bid. He was beaten 6-0, 7-5 in the finals by St. Francis sophomore Ross Wilson.

"Pete had nothing to lose in that match," LaFountain said. "Wilson came out playing unbelievable tennis. He was hitting winners all over the place, right down the lines, he was hitting first serves. Pete hung in there, and after the first nine games, it was pretty even."

Scranton failed to reach state in his first three district tournament appearances.

Donaldson was beaten by Lima Senior's T.J. Williams in the third-place match 6-4, 7-5.

The Little Giants will host a tough St. John's team today in the Ohio Tennis Coaches Association tournament.

"St. John's is real good," said LaFountain. "They can one up you at every spot, except maybe Pete."



SCRANTON