
Softball

Continued from Page 6A

"They get along well and they're doing everything I expected of them," Gilbert said. "I know I've got a good group of leaders with them and I'm thinking because of that, we can have a very successful season."

Hotz, an honorable mention GBC selection a year ago, will be at third base for Ross. Reidmaier is slated for to play second base in place of Christy Meggitt — a first-team all-league player — who graduated and had filled the spot for many years.

Swaigood will continue to fill the left field spot, with Schneider earning the start for the fourth straight year in center and Gowitzka again playing in right.

"They cover a lot of ground for us," Gilbert said. "With most of them playing three years out there and with McKenzie now playing four, that's a comforting feeling."

Amor, an honorable mention GBC player as a junior, is expected to contribute with her bat. She will be in the mix for the designated hitter spot, along with sophomore Whitney Overmyer.

Last year marked the only year in Gilbert's tenure he had team captains when he named Meggitt and graduated catcher Casey Clark as the team leaders, a duo that doesn't come around often.

"Christy had an amazing year last year hitting, and she always had great defense," Gilbert said. "And then Casey was a solid .400 hitter for four years."

Junior Kiera Hall steps into the void behind the dish. Hall played junior varsity a year ago.

"She's improved quite a bit," Gilbert said.

Freshman Brina Hrynciw, another newcomer, will battle for time at second base.

Unseasonably warm weather has allowed Ross a lot of time outside in the preseason.

"I think it's the furthest along we've ever been at this point in the season because we've been outside," Gilbert said. "The girls are pretty focused and excited to be out there. So far, I'm very pleased."

Ross was picked fourth in the coaches' poll for the new Three Rivers Athletic Conference. Clay was voted first, with Notre Dame Academy and Central Catholic tied for second.

"It's an extremely tough league that we're in. We'll have to perform well in each game," Gilbert said. "Hopefully we can continue to get better."

Solid group returns for Ross



Fremont Ross' Ally Hotz (9) looks to throw to second base after fielding the ball as McKenzie Gallagher (1) looks on during a softball game against Port Clinton last season. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Kelsey Ivy was a difference-maker for the Ross softball team as a freshman.

She had a knack for coming up with big plays on offense but, more importantly, she was a rock in the middle of the Ross defense at shortstop.

Mike Gilbert, now in his 14th season as coach, is hoping for much the same this year. Ivy is one of three full-time softball players the Little Giants have back on a team that was 11-8 and finished second in the Greater Buckeye Conference with a 7-3 league record.

"Kelsey is a really good shortstop. I'd say we probably won three or four games last year just because of her defense," Gilbert said. "And she hit really

well for a freshman."

Ivy, a second team all-GBC honoree, won't be the only horse in the stable. Also back are junior GBC pitcher of the year McKenzie Gallagher and junior first baseman Meghan Michael — a .300-plus hitter as a sophomore — who, like Ivy, play in leagues throughout the year.

"They play all year round and play winter ball," Gilbert said. "You can see a lot of improvement out of each of those girls."

What sticks out the most to the veteran coach so far, though, is the leadership. Six seniors return to the Ross lineup in Ally Hotz, Kylie Reidmaier, Sidney Swaisgood, McKenzie Schneider, Sara Gowitzka and Kaylee Amor — all of whom have seen significant playing time and have filled big roles.

See **SOFTBALL**, page 7A



McKenzie Gallagher pitches against Marion Harding last season. JAMES MILLER/CENTRALOHIO.COM

HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL: FREMONT ROSS 7, PORT CLINTON 6

Little Giants win ugly

By Kevin Shields

Sports writer

FREMONT — Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

And although Ross' box score looked anything but pretty after Tuesday's season opener with Port Clinton, the result was all that mattered.

With the game tied in the bottom of the seventh, with two outs and two runners in scoring position, Sara Gowitzka drilled a 1-1 pitch into left field to score McKenzie Gallagher from third, giving the Little Giants a 7-6 vic-

ROUNDUP, PAGE 7A

tory in the non-league contest.

The win came despite Ross committing four fielding errors, but no base-running miscues and no other fundamental mistakes.

"It's a good first win, and it was an ugly win," Little Giants coach Mike Gilbert said. "But I'll take an ugly win over a good-looking loss."

There was nothing good looking about either team's execution. For as

much as the Little Giants (1-0) were giving away favors and extra outs, the Redskins (1-1) gave them right back.

"It was really sloppy out there at times," Gilbert said. "I think we were playing really tight. And Port Clinton played really well."

The Redskins took a 1-0 lead in the first inning when Chelsea Skinner capitalized on the first Little Giants error. Skinner led off with a base hit off the bag at second and was advanced on a sacrifice bunt by Paige

See UGLY, page 7A

Ugly

Continued from Page 6A

Culver. However, Skinner stayed aggressive and tried to take third, forcing an over throw by the Ross first baseman that allowed her to score instead.

Culver, the starting pitcher for Port Clinton, escaped jams in the first and second innings when Ross threatened with runners at second and third, but couldn't get anyone across.

Culver allowed four earned runs on 12 hits, striking out three and walking three.

The Little Giants finally got to her in the third inning, plating four runs.

Meghan Michael and Kelsey Ivy singled before advancing to second and third on a sacrifice bunt by Gowitzka. Kaylee Amor drew a walk to load the bases, and Ally Hotz brought home Michael and Ivy on a single to left. Two batters later, Amor and Hotz scored when Sidney Swaisgood reached on an error.

"The enthusiasm was always there. The kids stayed up. That's what you got to have," Gilbert said. "I think we have to have a killer instinct, though. When you get up 4-1 you can't get complacent. We need to keep scoring runs and we didn't do that. We waited until they caught up, then we decided to score runs."

Ross had two hits and left

three on in the next two innings.

Port Clinton tied the game 4-4 in the top of the sixth. An RBI-single from Keira Hall in the bottom-half of the inning got Ross back on top 6-4.

The Little Giants were an out away from winning in the top of the seventh. But another error brought home two Redskins to tie the game 6-6.

Ross' half of the seventh inning started with McKenzie Schneider reaching base via a hit before she advanced to second on a hit by Gallagher. Schneider was thrown out at third for the first out after Michael hit a fly ball to center that was dropped by Port Clinton's center-fielder. But Ivy got Gallagher and Michael both into position for Gowitzka on a nicely-laid sacrifice bunt.

"Give Port Clinton credit, they played really well," Gilbert said. "But I got to give my kids a lot of credit too. They didn't quit and they kept coming back. A lot of times we could've just folded up the tent and said heck with it. But I kind of liked their heart.

"We have to get better."

Gallagher gave up seven hits for Ross, striking out seven and walking two in earning the win.

At the plate, Michael was 4 for 5 with three runs scored. Ivy was 2 for 4 with a double and a run scored.

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Fremont Ross Mckenzie Gallagher fields a bunt and throws to first as she is backed up by Meghan Michael against St. Ursula on Friday.

JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Michael's hot streak continues in Ross win

By Kevin Shields

Sports writer

FREMONT — Ross' Meghan Michael was a home run away from hitting for the cycle Friday.

But everything she hit found its way to the outfield. Even a fly ball to center field in the

FREMONT ROSS	11
ST. URSULA	1

fourth inning — the only time St. Ursula got her out.

Michael finished 3 for 4 with a triple, single and double to go with four RBIs and three runs scored as the Little Giants opened Three Rivers Athletic Conference play with a six-inning 11-1 rout of the Arrows at Alumni Fields.

See ROSS, page 2B

Ross

Continued from Page 18

So far, Michael is hitting .778 for Ross (2-0, 1-0), getting seven hits in her first nine at-bats of the season. She was 4 for 5 in a 7-6 win over Port Clinton on Tuesday.

"I've just been really concentrating on my swing and relaxing when I go up to bat," Michael said. "We've been practicing a lot off tees in practice."

Michael hit a triple in the first inning that scored McKenzie Schneider from third and McKenzie Gallagher from first. The Little Giants scored three in the opening inning and added five more in the third after St. Ursula got within 3-1.

"I'm really happy and pleased with the way we played," Ross coach Mike Gilbert said. "I mean what can you say? We got bunts down. We hit the ball hard."

"We just had a few hiccups on defense, but other than that we have to be happy with this performance and hopefully we get better."

Gallagher struck out seven and walked four in the circle. The Arrows recorded only a single hit, tallying their run in the third via an error.

"For a couple of innings she was walking about a batter an inning, which is really unusual for her," Gilbert said. "She's a good pitcher. She did what we had to do towards the end."

Gallagher retired three of the final eight batters she faced on strikes. Stephanie Tylicki's single up the middle to leadoff the sixth was the only hit against her to leave the infield.

Gallagher got as many hits at the plate, going 2 for 3, as she gave up in the circle. She tripled to lead off the Little Giants' sixth inning, and then scored on a double to right field by Michael, who scored two batters later on a double to right by Sara Gowitzka.

Sidney Swaisgood brought home the winning run with a one-out single up the middle to score Gowitzka from second.

All but two batters in Ross' lineup recorded hits.

Behind Michael in the four spot, Kelsey Ivy was 3 for 4 with an RBI and run scored. Kiera Hall was 2 for 3 with two RBIs, a run scored and two stolen bases. Lindsay Overmyer was 2 for 3 with a double, an RBI and two stolen bags.

"I'm not sure how much talent we have, but I know we got a good team," Gilbert said. "And hopefully each day it'll be someone else that picks us up. But today was a team effort and everyone contributed either by doing something on offense or defense. And we ran the bases so much better than we did against Port Clinton."

Ross will visit Notre Dame Academy on Monday. The Eagles were the preseason favorite to win the TRAC.

"We're hoping to get a lot of wins this year," Michael said. "We're working hard at it and this was a good way to start league play."

Ross can't create runs in close game

By Brian Buckey

News-Messenger correspondent

TOLEDO — Ross had its chances, but the Little Giants couldn't manage any runs in a 1-0 Three Rivers Athletic Conference loss at Notre Dame Academy on Monday.

"We just were lacking that one big hit," Ross coach Mike Gilbert said. "We had pressure on them a couple times but when we needed a hit, we just couldn't do it. But that's the way it goes."

Both starting pitchers were

NOTRE DAME	1
FREMONT ROSS	0

Three Rivers Athletic Conference

dominant, with Notre Dame's Jenna Inman outlasting McKenzie Gallagher of Ross (2-1, 1-1).

Inman pitched seven scoreless innings, giving up five hits while striking out four.

"Their pitcher is good," Gilbert said. "She kept them in the game."

Obviously we didn't score on her so what can you say. She pitched a great game."

Gallagher battled toe to toe with Inman for most of the game, also giving up five hits along with six strikeouts.

"McKenzie pitched a great game," Gilbert said. "You can't ask anything more of her. She's going to keep us in ball games."

Ross threatened to score right from the beginning. Gallagher singled with one out in the first inning and advanced to second on a Meghan Michael single. Then Gal-

lagher stole third. With runners on first and third with one out, Kelsey Ivy and Sara Gowitzka both flew out to end the inning.

In the top of the second inning, Ross' Kiera Hall singled with two outs. She advanced to second on a wild pitch and then stole third. But Lindsay Overmeyer flied out to end the scoring opportunity.

Ross then scattered one hit over the next two innings.

In the top of the fifth, Ross mounted a two-out rally. McKenzie

See ROSS, page 9A

Ross

Continued from Page 8A

Schneider singled and then stole second and third base. Gallagher followed with a walk, putting runners on first and third with two outs. However, Michael flied out to end the threat.

Notre Dame (4-1, 2-0) finally broke the scoreless tie in the bottom of the fifth. Alexa Beale walked with one out. The next batter, Mary Ambruster, laid down a bunt. Ross fielded the

bunt cleanly and the out was made at first base, but Beale attempted to go from first to third on the play. The throw from first to third was in the dirt and bounced past third base, allowing Beale to score what would turn out to be the winning run.

Ross then went down in order in the final two innings.

Notre Dame was the preseason pick to win the TRAC.

"I think we can play in this league," Gilbert said. "I think we showed that we're competitive. Hopefully we'll continue to get better. That's all we can hope for."

Toledo Central Catholic 2, Fremont Ross 0

Mckenzie Gallagher allowed only one earned run but Ross fell in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

Gallagher (2-2) struck out six and walked one while allowing five hits in seven innings. She had the only hit and stole a base for the Little Giants (2-2, 1-2).

HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL » WOODMORE 2, FREMONT ROSS 1

Woodmore pitcher hurts Ross

No sophomore slump for Madeline Phillips

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — The freshman jitters have left Woodmore's Madeline Phillips, a scary thought for any hitter opposing the Wildcats' ace in the circle.

All Phillips did in her first varsity season was lead her team to a 14-9 record and an appearance in the district finals. Oh yeah, and she tossed consecutive perfect games.

Thus far in 2012, there's no signs of a sophomore slump as she surrendered a single run on five hits in Woodmore's 2-1 win over Fremont Ross Thursday at Ross's Alumni Fields.

"I'm more comfortable this year," Phillips said. "I'm hitting my spots a lot better than I was last year."

Wildcats coach Aaron Clouse pointed to one noticeable change he's seen in his star hurler.

"She trusts her defense this year," he said. "She's not trying to go out there and strike everybody out. She's hitting a spot and the defense behind her is making plays."

Woodmore (5-1) scored single



Fremont Ross catcher Kiera Hall has a word with pitcher Mckenzie Gallagher during a game Thursday against Woodmore. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

runs in the first and third innings.

Courtney Clowers stroked an RBI-single to open the scoring. Phillips had singled down the left field line in front of her and scored from second after moving over on a steal.

Phillips then helped her own

cause in the third, recording an RBI-single up the middle of the infield that scored Kalyn Tate.

Meanwhile, Ross (2-3) was struggling to package hits together. The Little Giants were facing a premier pitcher for the third time in the week.

Ally Hotz hit a one-out single — the first of three straight — to load up the bases in the bottom of the third. Lindsay Overmyer moved her to third on a double off the left field fence, before

See WOODMORE, page 5A

Woodmore

Continued from Page 4A

McKenzie Schneider reached on a bunt single.

A line-out and a groundout ended the threat.

"I know I can pitch it and let the other team hit wherever with the defense I have behind me," Phillips said. "They always have my back."

Phillips doesn't have the strongest arm, but she has a quick release and she knows how to work the strike zone.

"She's got good movement and her off-speed pitch is work-

ing very well," Clouse said. "She's keeping hitters off-balance. And she moves inside and outside real well."

Mckenzie Gallagher had six strikeouts and two walks in the circle for the Little Giants. She stranded seven Wildcat runners in the final four innings to give her team a chance.

"Typically, we've been having a hard time getting runners on base, but today that wasn't the issue," Clouse said. "Our issue was getting them in."

The Wildcats stranded 10 total runners on base.

"League play comes around, we got to start knocking those girls in," Clouse said.

Phillips and Hana Zollinger each were 2 for 3 at the plate for the Wildcats. Andrea Bouldin had two stolen bases.

"We just got beat by a better team tonight," Little Giants coach Mike Gilbert said. No one from Ross had more than a single hit. The Little Giants left seven runners on base.

"If the defense and the pitching stay solid, we're going to be all right," Clouse said. "We're a pretty good team. But we're not ready for league play yet. We need to up our run production because we got some pretty good teams in our league."

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Ross 3, Carey 0

Ross 10, Fostoria 6

McKenzie Gallagher struck out 20 total batters as Ross won two non-conference matchups.

Gallagher (4-3) struck out 15, walked one and allowed two hits against Carey. Gallagher, Kiera Hall and Brina Hrynciw each scored one run.

Meghan Michael drove in two runs while Hall and Kelsey Ivy each added an RBI.

Gallagher scored three runs against Fostoria. Hall tripled twice, drove in two and scored once, Michael hit a home run, drove in three and scored once, and McKenzie Schneider scored twice and stole six bases.

Sara Gowitzka drove in a run and Ivy scored one. Lindsay Overmyer scored once and drove in a run for Ross (4-3).

ROUNDUP

Little Giants' Gallagher stymies Waite

News-Messenger reports

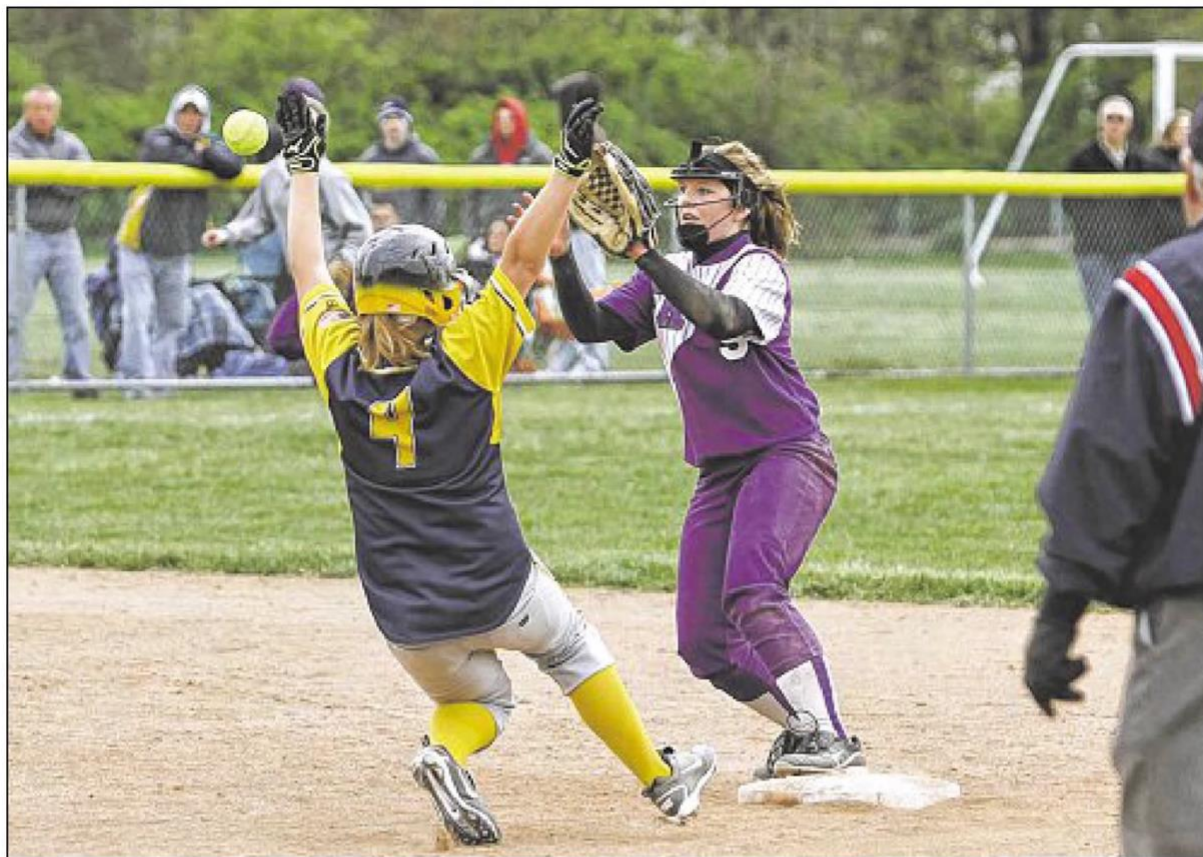
Mckenzie Gallagher struck out 12 and allowed a single hit in the circle, while Meghan Michael hit a two-run homer and drove in four runs and scored four more as the Fremont Ross softball team shutout Toledo Waite 27-0 in Monday non-league play.

Michael, a junior, finished 4 for 5 for the Little Giants (5-3).

Sara Gowitzka was 3 for 5 with five RBIs. Sidney Swaisgood had four hits and two RBIs, while Kelsey Ivy had three hits and two RBIs. Kaylee Amor added two hits and an RBI.

Brina Hrynciw was 3 for 4 with three runs scored.

HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL



Ross' Kelsey Ivy attempts to make a play at second during Wednesday's Three Rivers Athletic Conference game at Whitmer. LEE WELCH/NEWS-MESSENGER CORRESPONDENT

Ivy's great play can't lift Little Giants

By Brian Buckey
News-Messenger correspondent

TOLEDO — Ross sophomore short-stop Kelsey Ivy had three hits against Whitmer on Wednesday afternoon, but it was three Panther home runs that did in the Little Giants, in a 9-4 Three Rivers Athletic Conference loss.

"We got whipped pretty bad," Ross coach Mike Gilbert said. "They hit the ball a lot harder than we did, and I thought they played better than we did."

WHITMER 9
FREMONT ROSS 4

Three Rivers Athletic Conference

Ivy hit a home run over the left field fence in the second inning and added two singles, one driving in a run in the fifth inning.

But the Whitmer offense overpowered the Little Giants, beginning in the

first inning when the Panthers scored three runs on three hits.

The inning started well for junior pitcher McKenzie Gallagher, who struck out the first two batters. However a single by Taylor Derr ignited a two-out rally for Whitmer.

Gallagher walked the next batter and then Meghan Franz knocked in two runs on a double. Makayla Taylor then singled to drive in the third run of the

See ROSS, page 2B

Ross

Continued from Page 1B

inning.

Ross answered with one run in the second inning on the home run by Ivy. After Gallagher retired Whitmer in order in the bottom of the second, the Little Giants would cut the lead to 3-2 when Gallagher doubled and came around to score on a Whitmer error.

The Panthers added a run in the bottom of the third on a home run over the left field fence by Kailyn Bates.

Whitmer pitcher Alexis Shively set down the Little Giants in order in the top of the fourth, before the Panthers would score four more runs in the bottom half.

Mallory Rao led off with her first home run of the game, making the score 5-2. Three Whitmer singles and a walk would lead to the final three runs of the inning.

With one out in the top of the fifth inning, Ross rallied with three straight singles by Kiera Hall, Meghan Michael and Sara Gowitzka to load the bases. Ivy answered with an RBI single, her second RBI of the game. After McKenzie Schneider popped out, Kaylee Amor drew a walk to plate another run. Pinch hitter Lindsay Overmyer struck out to end the threat and leave the bases loaded.

"We had plenty of opportunities again, but when we needed the big hit, we just didn't get it," Gilbert said.

Rao hit her second home run of the game to lead off the fifth inning for Whitmer, extending the lead to 9-4. Ross would scatter a hit and two walks over the last two innings of the game, keeping the final score at 9-4.

Ross will get another chance to face Whitmer at home on April 30 and Gilbert says his team needs to play better than they did on Wednesday in order to get a different result.



Fremont Ross' Meghan Michael connects for a hit against Sandusky on Friday. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Errors cost Little Giants

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — Ross pitcher McKenzie Gallagher looked to be well on her way to getting out of a tight seventh-inning jam on Friday.

With the Little Giants leading arch-rival Sandusky by a single run in the top of the seventh, the Blue Streaks had runners at second and third and one of their big bats, Courtney Chaney, was at the plate with a single out. Gallagher won the nine-pitch at-bat getting

SANDUSKY	6
FREMONT ROSS	5

Chaney to go down swinging at a high change-up.

Unfortunately for Gallagher, it was just the second out.

Sandusky's Kylie Neer followed Chaney and belted Gallagher's first pitch for a two-RBI single through the right side as the Blue Streaks handed Ross a 6-5 loss.

It was a Ross error that al-

lowed the winning run to get on base.

"We just lost focus," Little Giants coach Mike Gilbert said. "Sandusky's girls came back and played hard. They deserved to win."

Errors and mistakes in the field plagued the Little Giants (5-5) throughout. Gallagher limited the Blue Streaks (6-6) to just three earned runs on six hits.

"(Ross) made a few mistakes out there tonight, and we took advantage of them," Sandusky coach Tom Garard said.

Sandusky scored the game's opening run in the first when a single by Kelsey Peters turned into a triple. She then scored on a passed ball.

In the second inning an error each by Ross' shortstop and second baseman put runners on. All three Blue Streak runs that inning were unearned.

"They definitely gave us a lot of stuff tonight," Garard said. "But we gave them some things as well. It just wasn't a

See ROSS, page 2B

Ross

Continued from Page 1B

very clean game by both sides.”

Gallagher’s sacrifice fly in the third brought home Brina Hrynciw for a run as Ross inched its way back.

“When we were ahead 4-0, we knew it wasn’t over,” Garard said. “Mike always has a competitive team.”

The Little Giants tied the game in the fourth inning, making good use of Sandusky’s mistakes. Meghan Michael walked to open the inning, then advanced to third and scored on two errors that allowed Kelsey Ivy and McKenzie Schneider to reach base. Kaylee Amor’s fielder’s choice scored Ivy and Hrynciw’s hit scored Schneider.

Hrynciw as the lone Ross hitter to record multiple hits, going 2 for 3.

Sandusky’s Maddie Hayberger limited the Little Giants to just four total hits. Still, Ross found a way to grab a late lead in the fifth inning. Kiera Hall singled and scored the go-ahead run when Sandusky’s right fielder dropped a fly ball.

But Hayberger got the Little Giants to go down fairly easily in the seventh, allowing a single hit to close things out.

Peters was the Blue Streaks’ lone multiple hitter going 2 for 3.

“This is always a fun game when we play each other,” Garard said. “I know it’s a rivalry and all that good stuff, but I respect that team and their coaches.

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Roundup

Continued from Page 6A

non-league victory.

Softball

Ross 21, Tiffin Columbian 2 (Game 1);

Ross 8, Columbian 1 (Game 2)

Mckenzie Gallagher gave up just three hits in the circle during two rain-filled games as the Little Giants swept the Tornadoes in non-league action Saturday.

Gallagher gave up two runs on two hits, striking out one and walking four in a game one rout. She was also 3 for 4 at the plate, tripling twice, hitting a double a knocking in five. Meghan Michael was 4 for 5 with two homers, a double and a game-high six RBIs.

Lindsay Overmyer homered in game one as well for Ross (7-5).

Gallagher gave up a single

unearned run in game two on one hit, striking out five and walking one.

Overmyer was 2 for 4 with a triple and two RBIs, while Sidney Swaisgood, Kelsey Ivy, McKenzie Schneider and Michael each had two hits and drove in a run.

Track

St. Wendelin Invitational

Kelsey Burkin was runner of the meet and Rebecca Reinhart was field event athlete of the meet as St. Joseph Central Catholic took first at Saturday's St. Wendelin Track Invitational in Fostoria.

Burkin won the 100 (13.17) and 200 (27.61) as the Crimson Streaks topped Wynford 99-66 for the overall team title.

Reinhart won the discus with a toss of 118 feet, 7 inches. She was fourth in the shot put. Katie Blohm was second in the 300 and third in the 100 hurdles.

Softball

Ross 9, Findlay 0

Mckenzie Gallagher homered, went 3 for 3 at the plate and struck out seven in the circle for Ross in a four-hit shutout win at Findlay Monday in Three Rivers Athletic Conference play.

Meghan Michael also homered for the Little Giants (8-5, 2-3) going 3 for 4 with two RBIs, while Sara Gowitzka was 3 for 4 with three RBIs. Kelsey Ivy was 2 for 4 with an RBI.

CLAY 2, FREMONT ROSS 0 (8 INNINGS)

(Wednesday Late Box)

Clay	00000002—	2	6	0
Ross	00000000—	0	6	1

LP: Mckenzie Gallagher 8-6 (CG, 5 SO, 0 BB).

Two or more hits: Ross — Brina Hrynciw 3-4.

Records: Ross 8-6 (2-4 TRAC).

Next: Lima Sr. at Ross, today.

Softball

Fremont Ross 11,

Lima Senior 0

Mckenzie Gallagher struck out 10 and walked none while allowing one hit in five innings as Ross won in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

Meghan Michael was 3-for-3 with two runs, two doubles and an RBI for the Little Giants (9-6, 3-4).

**Anthony Wayne 3, Fremont
Ross 0**

Ross 4, Bowling Green 2

Mckenzie Gallagher (10-7)
didn't walk a batter in seven in-
nings and added two hits as Ross
won Game 2.

Sara Gowitzka had two hits
and scored a run in the victory
for the Little Giants (10-7, 3-4).

ROUNDUP

Ross softball tops St. Ursula with 7th-inning run

News-Messenger reports

Mckenzie Gallagher tripled with two outs in the top of the seventh inning and pinch-runner McKenna Pettiford scored the go-ahead run Monday on a single from Meghan Michael as Fremont Ross' softball team topped St. Ursula 2-1 in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

Gallagher (11-7) allowed one run and six hits while striking out 12 and walking two in the circle.

Lindsay Lagrou walked, stole second and scored on a throwing error after a single from Michael in the third for Ross (11-7, 4-4).

play is going to cause problems. That is exactly what we did.

"We pushed enough over the plate for the win. We hit the ball hard and were smart on the bases — two things we have been working on throughout the season."

Kidd set the tone on defense Monday as she threw a runner out at the plate after retrieving an errant toss to third.

Lakota 16, North Baltimore 1

Abby Durst scored three times and drove in two runs, and struck out five as Lakota won in five innings to remain unbeaten in the Midland Athletic League.

Stephanie Miller homered and

Hotz's bat delivers TRAC win for Ross

By Yaneek Smith

News-Messenger correspondent

FREMONT — When the Fremont Ross softball team needed a clutch hit, Ally Hotz was ready.

Facing a one-ball, two-strike count with two outs and runners on second and third in the bottom of the sixth inning of a tie game, Hotz ripped a double into left-center field. Sara Gowitzka and Brina Hrynciw scored to give Ross the lead on the way to a 5-4 Three Rivers Athletic Conference victory over Notre Dame Academy on

FREMONT ROSS 5
TOLEDO NOTRE DAME 4

Three Rivers Athletic Conference

Wednesday.

It was an especially sweet victory for the Little Giants (12-7, 5-4), considering that they had lost 1-0 earlier in the season to the Eagles (8-4, 6-3), one of the top teams in the TRAC.

"I was just trying to be positive (at the plate)," Hotz said. "I knew

that we needed (a) big hit and I was just trying to fight the whole way through. We just needed to come together as a team and get the win, and we did. It was a really big win."

Pitcher McKenzie Gallagher had a solid outing for the Little Giants, allowing three runs (two earned) on seven hits in seven innings of work while striking out four and walking two.

After Hotz's double gave Ross a 5-3 lead, the Eagles responded in the top of the seventh inning. They loaded the bases with one out be-

fore cutting the deficit to one on an infield hit by Amanda Del Monte. Drama ensued when the next hitter, Jenna Inman, grounded to Ross shortstop Kelsey Ivy, who threw home and got Katie McKenty by a hair, preserving the lead for the Little Giants.

Gallagher ended the threat by striking out the next batter, Nikki Wilkins, to give Ross the victory.

"It was very nerve-racking, but once we won, it was (great)," Gallagher said. "We're the underdogs

See **SOFTBALL**, page 2B

Softball

Continued from Page 1B

in the TRAC and to beat someone that is ranked higher in the (league) is an amazing feeling."

Little Giants head coach Mike Gilbert spoke highly of the effort put forth by his club.

"It's a huge win for us," Gilbert said. "This team never quits. That's all I can say. I'm really proud of them."

"Overall, we were a little shaky defensively, but we made the plays when we had to. The kids came through, you can't ask for more."

"It was a good game," Notre Dame coach Norm Kujawa said. "Those are always fun and exciting

(games) — we're evenly matched. Kudos to them — they made the big play when they had to."

The Eagles took an early 1-0 lead in the top of the first, only to see Ross respond with a run in the bottom half on a base hit by Gowitzka that scored Sidney Swaisgood.

Notre Dame took the lead back with two runs in the third inning, keyed by a Cassie Gillespie solo home run and an RBI single by Nikki Wilkins. The Little Giants, as they did all game, responded, tying the game at three by scoring a run in both the third and fourth inning on RBI singles by Mackenzie Schneider and Kiera Hall to set up the late-game drama.

ROUNDUP

Little Giants top Central Catholic

TOLEDO — The Little Giants couldn't overcome a five-run third inning by Toledo Central Catholic in a 5-1 Three Rivers Athletic Conference loss Friday.

McKenzie Gallagher took the loss for Ross. Her record, and the Little Giants' is 12-8 (5-5 TRAC). Gallagher scored Ross's only run in the fourth, when she walked, took second when Meghan Michael walked, advanced on a passed ball and scored on a wild pitch.

Kelsey Ivy got the only hit for Ross.

Roundup

Continued from Page 6A

on the hill for Lakota (7-8, 4-3).

Carey 13, Old Fort 12

In Carey, the Stockaders (1-14, 0-6) couldn't overcome an early five-run deficit in a loss to the Blue Devils (6-11, 3-5) in the MAL.

Zach Thompson homered twice for Old Fort and doubled, finishing with five RBIs. Cole Davidson tripled and Gareth Kimmet added a double. Nick Yeakle singled twice and drove in two runs.

Softball

St. Joseph CC 17, St. Wendelin 7

Be Reardon struck out eight in the circle earning the victory, while she doubled and singled twice in the batter's box as the Crimson Streaks won in the MAL.

Katie Stroup hit a two-run homer for SJCC (10-7, 4-4) and Jensen LeJeune tripled. Ashley Burns, Emily Ronski and Amanda Binder all doubled. Ronski had four RBIs with Binder and Burns each driving in two runs each.

Fremont Ross 2, Whitmer 1

Mckenzie Gallagher's RBI single in the bottom of the seventh scored Sidney Swaisgood from second on a close play at the plate as the Little Giants earned a come-from-behind walk-off win over the Panthers in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

The Little Giants (13-8, 6-5) tied the game earlier in the inning with an out when Kiera Hall scored on fielder's choice with Kaylee Amor hitting.

Gallagher earned the win holding Whitmer to four hits. She struck out five and walked three.

Edison 10, Oak Harbor 0

Susan Knight tossed a five-inning perfect game as Oak Harbor (6-15, 4-6) lost to a state-ranked opponent in the SBC.

Gibsonburg 2, Tiffin Columbian 1

In Tiffin, two early runs by the Golden Bears held up in a non-league victory.

Elena Macha, Marisa Alvarado and Katelyn Bryant all doubled for Gibsonburg (12-6). Lexi Busdeker singled twice and scored a run.

Danielle Fisher had nine strikeouts and one walk during a winning effort in the circle.

Tennis

Ashland 4, Fremont Ross 1

Malcolm Leake was honored before his team's match Monday, then went out and scored a 6-0, 6-4 win at No. 1 singles as the Little Giants dropped the non-league match.

Leake has a career Ross record of 86-29 and is 21-6 overall this year.

St. Mary CC 4, Clyde 1

Blaine MacFarland earned a hard fought 6-3, 6-7 (5), 7-6 (3) second singles win over St. Mary Central Catholic's Alex Opfer for the Fliers (7-6, 5-3) lone win in an SBC tilt.

Ace is getting stronger



Fremont Ross senior Ally Hotz throws for an out over the head of McKenzie Gallagher as Kelsey Ivy looks on during a Three Rivers Athletic Conference softball game Wednesday against Findlay. The Little Giants won, 5-0. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSANGER

Gallagher throws one-hitter, Ross whips Findlay

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

FREMONT — McKenzie Gallagher has pitched every game for Ross this spring.

But she's showing no signs of wearing down. In fact if you ask her, she's only getting stronger.

Gallagher tossed a one-hitter, striking out nine and walking one Wednesday as the Little Giants beat Findlay 5-0 in a Three Rivers Athletic Conference game on Senior Night at Alumni Fields.

"Most pitchers are usually getting tired this time of year where they're getting weaker and their legs go. I've been working a lot on my strength and I feel like I've only gotten stronger. I haven't gone downhill yet."

Gallagher's secrets are plenty of sleep, water and a special kind of cheese.

"I eat a lot of coach's (Ross coach Mike Gilbert) string cheese," she said.

Gallagher had a perfect game going through four innings and a no-hitter going through six. The Trojans (4-17, 2-10) lone hit came on a single by Maddie Willis to lead off the seventh inning. Willis beat out a throw from third on a bunt that would've been a close play at first, but the throw was bobbled at

"Most pitchers are usually getting tired this time of year where they're getting weaker and their legs go. I've been working a lot on my strength and I feel like I've only gotten stronger. I haven't gone downhill yet."

MCKENZIE GALLAGHER
Fremont Ross pitcher



first just as Willis stepped on the bag.

Gallagher's only other base runner reached on a leadoff walk in the fifth on a 3-2 count she battled back on after being down 3-0.

"She's been pitching really well the past four or five game now," Gilbert said. "We've had some real close ones in that stretch and she pitched well. She's been a trooper for us."

The changeup was Gallagher's top pitch. It set up her fastball throughout and she did a nice job of locating it for strikeouts.

"Her off-speed is awesome," Gilbert said. "When she gets that across the plate that makes her really hard to hit."

"She was trying to jam them inside and was doing a really good job of that."

Gallagher wasn't pleased with

her off-speed pitch until it started getting outs for her in the past two weeks.

"That's finally started working in the past few games," she said.

Gallagher helped her own cause leading off the Little Giants' first inning with a single through the right side. She scored a batter later after she stole second base and was moved to third on a groundout by McKenzie Schneider. She was awarded home on an errant throw over the fence.

Meghan Michael then tallied her first of two singles, before Kelsey Ivy and Sara Gowitzka had back-to-back base hits through the right side of the infield to load up the bases. Michael was out at home a batter later on a fielder's choice, but Ivy scored when Kaylee Amor was hit by a pitch.

McKenzie Schneider had an RBI sacrifice fly in the second inning for Ross (14-8, 7-5) and Gallagher scored on a passed ball to make 4-0.

Michael had an RBI single in the fifth, but the Little Giants settled for six hits. After their two-run first with three balls hit through the right side of the infield, Findlay played its outfielders up, making it tough to get a hit unless it was over everyone's heads.

"We were struggling," Gilbert said. "I think we saw the pulled in outfield and we were trying to crank it out there instead of just going through with our swings. So I think that got in our heads a bit. But that's the way it goes. We scored enough to win and we played good defense. We're playing really well right now."

Ross will host Sandusky on Saturday at 11 a.m. in a Division I sectional title game. The Blue Streaks won at Ross on April 13 in the lone meeting between the two arch-rivals.

"We're looking forward to playing Sandusky," Gilbert said. "We're playing with a lot of confidence right now and we're excited to see what happens."

Email Kevin Shields at
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Softball

OREGON CLAY 7, FREMONT ROSS 2

Ross	0000011—	2	6	5
Clay	011203x—	7	9	2

LP: McKenzie Gallagher (3 ER, 2 SO, 4 BB).

Doubles: Ross 1 (Kaylee Armor).

Two or more hits: Ross — Gallagher 2-4, R.

Records: Ross 14-9 (7-6 TRAC).

Next: Sandusky at Ross, D-I sectional, today.

HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL

FREMONT ROSS
SANDUSKY

10
7

Division I sectional final

Little Giants break late tie to win sectional

By Yaneek Smith

News-Messenger correspondent

FREMONT — In a dramatic back-and-forth affair that featured five ties and three lead changes, Fremont Ross scored three runs in the sixth inning to defeat rival Sandusky 10-7 in a Division I sectional final Saturday at Alumni Fields.

Little Giants coach Mike Gilbert earned his 200th victory.

Ross (15-9) plays the winner of Perrysburg and Bowling Green in the district semifinals at 5 p.m. May 15 at Tiffin University.

With one out and the bases loaded in the bottom of the sixth, Ross catcher Kiera Hall hit a sacrifice fly to center to score Meghan Michael and advance the runners to second and third. The next hitter, senior leftfielder Kaylee Amor, came through in the clutch with a base hit up the middle to score Sara Gowitzka and Brina Hrynciw to cap the scoring.

"We played (Friday) against Clay (a 7-2 loss) and looked like the Bad News Bears," Little Giants coach Mike Gilbert said. "I talked to the kids last night about playing with focus and not getting down.

"We hit the ball really well (Saturday) — I think they really wanted to win the game. There was no quit in either team."

Hall followed graduated Casey Clark at catcher and is an important part of the team's chemistry. Hall was a bit discouraged after an error in the third inning but regrouped under pressure.

"Forget about it (and) help us win the game," Gilbert said. "She did that. Kiera is an amazing athlete. She didn't pick up a softball until her freshman year (and) she came out of nowhere to be a catcher.

"She has a positive attitude, the kids like her and she likes being part of the team."

See ROSS, page 7A

Softball

Ross 23, Lima Senior 0

The Little Giants (16-9, 8-6) scored five or more runs in four of the game's five innings Tuesday in a Three Rivers Athletic Conference triumph on the road against the Spartans.

McKenzie Gallagher allowed two hits and struck out eight to pick up the win in the circle. At the plate, she was 4 for 5, scoring three runs and driving in another.

Kaylee Amor was 4 for 5 with six RBIs and scored four runs. McKenzie Schneider added two hits and crossed the plate three times, while tallying an RBI and a stolen base. Meghan Michael provided Ross with a double.

Whitmer 5, Fremont Ross 4

Meghan Michael and Kiera Hall each had two hits and drove in a run, but Ross fell in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference.

McKenzie Schneider tripled for the Little Giants (16-11, 8-6).

HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL

Ross wins two in TRAC

News Herald staff report

Fremont Ross's softball team defeated Lima Senior 19-0 in five innings and Notre Dame 8-2 on Saturday in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference tournament.

McKenzie Gallagher allowed three hits, struck out eight and walked none for the win against Lima Senior. She struck out four and walked two for the victory versus Notre Dame.

Gallagher was 4-for-4 with two runs and an RBI, McKenzie Schneider had two hits, scored three runs and stole three bases, and Meghan Michael scored three runs, stole three bases, tripled and doubled twice against the Spartans for the Little Giants.

Kelsey Ivy had two hits,

scored three runs and drove in two, Sara Gowitzka had two hits and scored three runs, and Kiera Hall had two hits and an RBI. Kaylee Amor had two hits, scored a run and drove in two, Sidney Swaisgood had two hits, three steals, two runs and an RBI, and Lindsay Overmyer added two hits and an RBI.

Ross scored eight runs in the second inning and eight more in the third. It had 21 hits in the game.

The Little Giants scored six runs in the fourth against the Eagles. Michael had three hits, three RBIs and scored twice, Gowitzka had three hits, drove in two and scored once, and Gallagher and Hall each had two hits and scored a run in the game.

THREE RIVERS ATHLETIC CONFERENCE HONORS

Two Little Giant trios



Fremont Ross McKenzie Gallagher fields a bunt and throws to first as she is backed up by Meghan Michael during a Three Rivers Athletic Conference softball game against St Ursula. Both were named first team all-TRAC. JONATHAN BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Ross gets three on all-TRAC baseball and softball teams

News-Messenger report

Ross seniors Jordan Garcia and TJ Harkness, along with junior Tyler Wolf, have been named first-team all-conference as the Three Rivers Athletic Conference recently released its all-conference baseball and softball squads.

Little Giants' junior Michael Egbert was second-team, while Trent Stout, Clay Barron and Brandon Weiker were honorable mention.

Ross finished 17-11 overall and went 4-6 in TRAC play in the conference's first season. The Little Giants advanced to the league championship game with tournament wins over St. Francis de Sales and Clay.

St. John's Jesuit senior Jesse Adams was the inaugural player of the year. His coach, Mike O'Reilly, was conference coach of the year, after leading the Titans to the title with an 8-4 victory over Ross in the championship game on Memorial Day.

Clay junior Jordan Grosjean was named pitcher of the year.

Softball: Three Little Giants are first teamers

Ross junior first baseman Meghan Michael, senior outfielder Sara Gowitzka and junior McKenzie Gallagher — an at large selection — were all recognized first-team all-conference for the Little Giants on the softball diamond.

Little Giants coach Mike

Gilbert, who won his 200th career game this season, was named TRAC coach of the year.

Sophomore infielder Kelsey Ivy was second-team, while senior McKenzie Schneider, senior Kaylee Amor and junior Kiera Hall were honorable mention.

Clay's Kim Crawford was TRAC player of the year and Central Catholic's Erin Seiler was pitcher of the year. Seiler struck out 13 as the Irish topped the Eagles 2-0 in the league championship game.