

Area Bas

Last season, only three area baseball teams — St. Joseph Central Catholic, Woodmore and Oak Harbor — escaped the sectional round of the postseason tournament. Needless to say, area expectations are much higher for 1999.

Here's a capsule look at the 11 area high schools:

FREMONT ROSS

Coach: Chuck Lindsey (55-25 career record in four seasons)

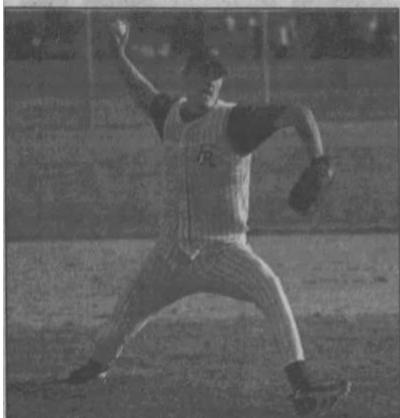
1998 record: 19-6

Key players: Aaron Coonrod, P/3B, Sr.; Dan Cobb, P, Sr., Aaron Bates, P/SS; Kyle Gegorski, 3B; Kyle Myers, IF/OF; Spencer Root, OF; Pete Goetz, OF; Jeremy Fitzgerald, 1B/P; TJ Hammer, OF; Aaron Hines, IF; Nick Lance, C; Pryde Yost, OF; Dustin Shively, 2B.

Key losses: 1B Brett Hufford, 2B Roy Nino, SS Mike Hickey, C Julian Domiray, P Bill Sheets, OF Wesley Esquivel

Outlook: Coonrod, who signed to pitch at Ohio State, went 4-2 last year and will anchor a solid rotation which also includes Cobb (4-2 in 1998) and Bates (2-0). "I think we'll be as good as our pitching and as far as seniors take us," said Lindsey, who begins the second season of his second stint as Ross coach. Lozano, who hit .394 last season seeing action at several positions, will take over for Domiray as the No. 1 catcher. Root will start in center field and bring a .300 average and a solid glove to the team. Franks (.305) and Gegorski (.560) will also contribute to the offense. The key graduation losses came in the infield, as Hufford, Nino and Hickey all departed. Lindsey is hoping the experience gained by several of his players in American Legion action last summer will prove beneficial. "These kids have a lot of background," Lindsey said. "We'll be inexperienced at second and at short, but we should have a decent year. Hopefully the kids will come together."

Baseball



News-Messenger/Guy Schultz

DAN COBB, who pitched the first five innings for Ross, also knocked in the winning run in the Little Giants' 5-4 win Tuesday.

Cobb's single lifts Ross

Little Giants win in eighth

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

The sun was falling at Joe Lotycz Field, and so was the temperature, but the heat was on Ross senior Dan Cobb in the Little Giants' season opener Tuesday against Anthony Wayne.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Cobb came to bat with the bases loaded and two outs, and calmly smacked a single to center field, driving in Dustin Shively to give Ross a 5-4 win.

"I was just trying to put the ball in play, let them field it," Cobb said.

That plan worked to near-perfection.

Facing Nate Whewell for the second straight inning, Cobb laced a curveball back through the box to score Shively from third base. Cobb, who had singled sharply off Whewell to open the seventh inning, said he was surprised with the pitch he saw.

"He came back with (the curveball), and I was kind of surprised he did, because I almost took his head off with the first one," said Cobb, who went 3-for-5.

Tuesday
Ross 5
Anthony Wayne 4

Next Thursday
Margaretta at Ross, 4:30 p.m.

With the game knotted 4-4 after seven innings, winning pitcher Kyle Myers worked a 1-2-3 top of the eighth for Ross (1-0). Shively led off the bottom of the inning with a walk, and stole second base.

"We hadn't run much, because we were behind, and (Anthony Wayne's catcher) didn't have a real good arm," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey. "Dusty got a good jump and got himself into scoring

position."

After a strikeout, Shively moved to third base on Whewell's wild pitch, and remained on third through walks to Cody Franks and Spencer Root, as well as several unorthodox defensive maneuvers by Anthony Wayne (0-1).

After Root was walked intentionally to set up a force at home, Generals coach Cory Miller pulled his outfielders to within several feet of the infield dirt, hoping to cut down the gaps left by his infielders, who were also playing in.

See ROSS, B3

Ross beats Anthony Wayne in season opener

Continued from B1

The move did not fail, as Josh Lozano struck out swinging on a 3-2 pitch by Whewell. But with two outs, Cobb delivered his game-winner.

"It seemed like that inning just took forever, trying to get a run," said Myers. "Josh is a good hitter, but Cobbie's just as good, and I knew he was going to pull through."

Said Shively: "We knew we were going to score."

It looked like Ross was going to score runs in bunches early, as Cody Franks led off the bottom of the first inning with a towering home run to left field. Franks went 2-for-3 with two walks, and scored three runs.

But Ross went scoreless for the

next three innings, and Anthony Wayne took a 4-1 lead with four runs in the top of the third. Two errors and an infield mix-up put runners on base for the Generals, and Erik Maas, who went 4-for-4, cleared the bases with a double.

Ross closed to within 4-3 in the fifth inning, as Franks and Root scored on Lozano's single and Pete Goetz's sacrifice fly, respectively. Root's single scored Franks to tie the game in the sixth inning, but after advancing on a steal and a wild pitch, Root was stranded on third base.

Anthony Wayne threatened briefly in the top of the seventh, with Maas advancing to second with one out. But with Maas running, centerfielder Pryde Yost chased down a fly ball in the right-center gap, and threw to second base for the double play.

Cobb started and pitched five innings for Ross, allowing six hits and striking out eight in 95 pitches of work. Myers, who struck out the first two batters he faced, allowed just one hit in three innings.

"Our pitching is what's going to take us where we're supposed to be," said Lindsey. "I thought Myers came in and did a nice job for us, and it'll look like Dan Cobb had a bad inning, but if we make the plays defensively we get out of the inning."

Ross returns to action April 8, when Margaretta comes to Joe Lotycz Field.

NOTES: Ross pitcher/infielder Aaron Coonrod missed Tuesday's game with a sprained left ankle. Coonrod, who suffered the injury going for a ground ball in practice, said he expects to miss about a week of action.

Baseball

Polar Bears drill Little Giants 14-2

By MICHAEL PIDANICK

Staff writer

After Fremont Ross was out-hit, out-pitched and out-fielded by Margaretta Thursday in a 14-2 loss at Joe Lotycz Field, Little Giants coach Chuck Lindsey chose to take the optimistic view of the game.

With Great Lakes League opponents filling four of the next five slots on the Ross schedule, the coach said he was glad his team got the bad game out of its system.

"I'd rather have it happen now instead of later on in the year," Lindsey said after his team fell to 1-1. "When you play games like this, you're not as bad as you look. They got momentum, they made contact, they got some key hits, and we didn't hit the ball as well as I thought we would."

Meanwhile, Margaretta coach Chris Cullen was, as expected, pleased with his team's effort in all areas of the game. The Polar Bears improved to 3-3 and prepared for the start of a tough Sandusky Bay Conference schedule.

"This is best game I've

Thursday

Margaretta	14
Ross	2

Tonight

Findlay at Ross, Monday
Margaretta at Willard, Saturday

seen us play all the way around," Cullen said. "We beat a real good ballclub; and that's a tribute to them and a tribute to us. We showed we can play with them."

The Polar Bears collected 14 hits off three Ross pitchers and scored in six of the seven innings. Tim Dorsey was 4-for-4 with four runs and two RBI and Tim Christian homered and drove in four runs to lead Margaretta.

"We hit well," Dorsey said. "We'd been struggling at the plate, but tonight we came out swinging the bat well against some tough pitching."

Three Little Giants pitchers were victimized by poor fielding by Ross. Although the team committed only two errors, several mental mistakes and misplays resulted in easy Polar Bear hits.

Inside: Clyde beats Lakota
17-11. Page B2

See MARGARETTA, B2

Margaretta beats Ross in non-conference play

Continued from B1

The Little Giants were limited to just seven hits — all singles — by Margaretta right-hander Jake Gray, who struck out eight in seven innings.

Gray was able to relax on the mound after being staked to a 3-0 lead in the top of the first inning. The tying run never came to the plate for Ross.

"It made it easier when we got off to a good lead. If I give up a couple of runs we're still in the lead," Gray said. "Coach had me mixing up my pitches, I had a good mix of curves and change-ups, and had them guessing."

With one out in the top of the first, Nick Kane grounded a single to left and Dorsey

followed with an RBI triple to right. Christian then ripped a two-run home run to right off Ross pitcher Kyle Myers (1-1), giving Margaretta a 3-0 lead.

Dustin Cullen doubled and scored on a passed ball in the second inning to stretch Margaretta's lead.

Margaretta used some timely hitting to take control of the game, scoring six two-out runs over the next two innings.

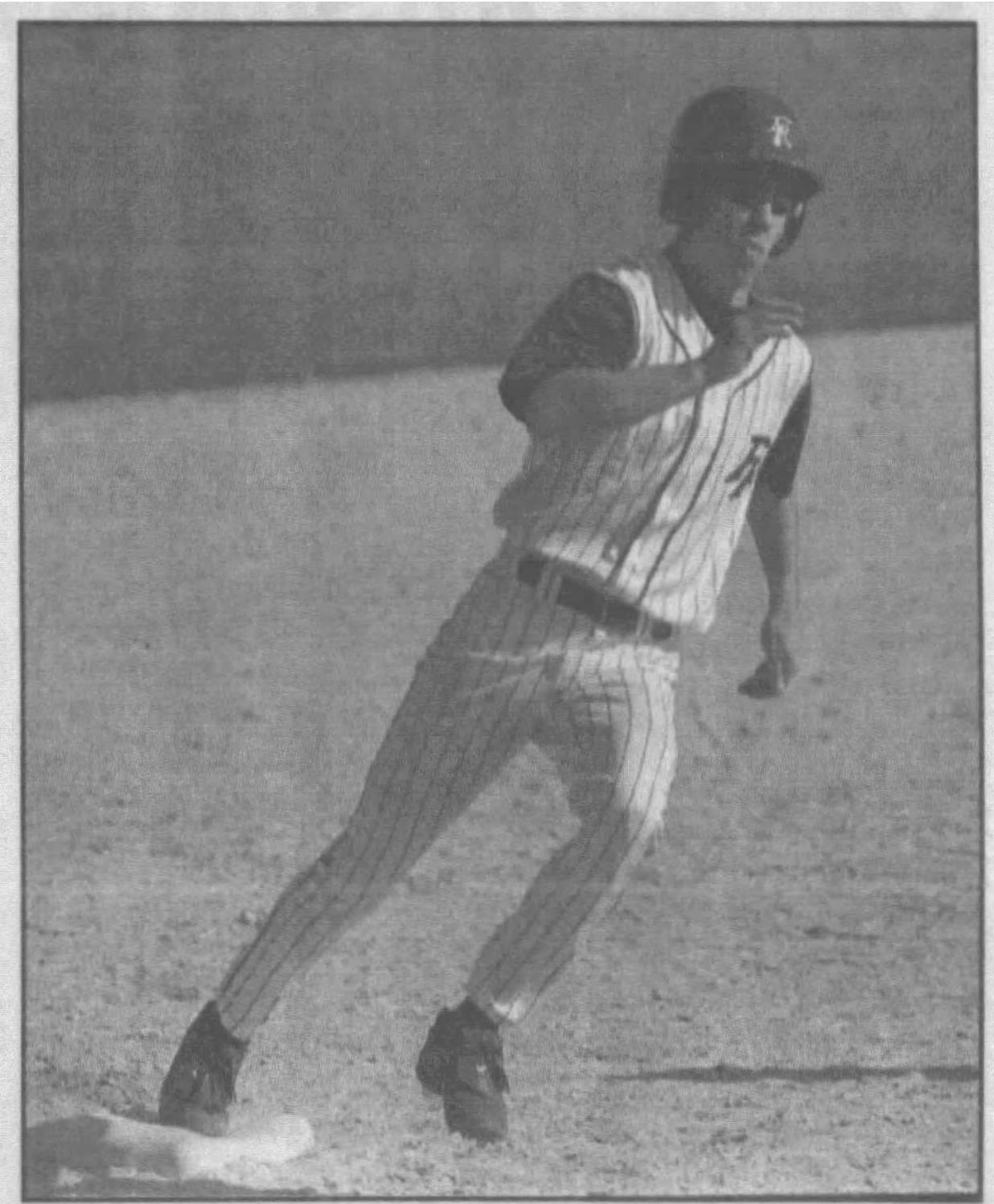
"The guys again stepped up to the plate and hit the ball when necessary," coach Cullen said. "That's always real nice to see."

Dorsey led off the third inning with a single and stole second. Two outs later Keimer hustled out an infield single and Cullen drove

home two runs with a single to center.

Ross answered in the bottom of the inning. Dustin Shively led off with a single and after a fielder's choice and a groundout, Josh Lozano drew a walk. Dan Cobb followed with a bloop single to right to score two runs, cutting the gap to 6-2.

But Margaretta put the game away in the fourth. Mike Zabel singled to lead off the inning and stole second. Two outs later, Dorsey delivered an RBI single to left. After a walk by Christian, Gray drove in Dorsey with a single. Christian scored on an error and Gray scored as Ross botched a rundown on a pick-off play, and Margaretta took a 10-2 lead.



News-Messenger/Guy Schultz

CODY FRANKS and Fremont Ross lost 14-2 to Margaretta in a non-conference game Thursday at Joe Lotycz Field.

Big second inning lifts Findlay past Ross

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Findlay baseball coach Jack Foltz didn't like his team's chances.

Foltz's Trojans had just fallen behind Fremont Ross 3-0 after one inning of play Monday at Joe Lotycz Field, and Little Giants ace Aaron Coonrod was on the mound.

No problem.

Showing patience at the plate and flair in the field, Findlay scored eight runs in the second inning and went on to beat Ross 13-9 in the Great Lakes League opener for both teams.

"I've seen Aaron when he's at his best, and this obviously wasn't his best," Foltz said of Coonrod, who pitched 1½ innings, allowing six runs on five walks. "When Fremont went up 3-zip, I figured we'd be lucky to come back."

The top of the lineup propelled Ross early, as Cody Franks led off the first with an infield single, and advanced to third on Spencer Root's double. Dan Cobb's single scored Franks, and Kyle Gegorski's single

Monday	
Findlay	13
Ross	9
Today	
Tiffin Columbian at Ross, 4:30 p.m.	

scored Root.

But the roof caved in on Ross during the eight-run second. Findlay (4-1) sent 14 batters to the plate during the inning; seven walked, one was hit by a pitch and two singled.

Coonrod threw 40 pitches in the inning before being relieved by Dan Cobb, who worked the final 5½ innings for Ross (1-2).

"(Coonrod) had been throwing the ball well, maybe I stayed with him a little longer than I should have," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey. "(I was thinking) just one more pitch, just one more pitch and he'll be all right, but it just never happened."

Findlay starter B.J. Preston allowed two more runs in the second inning, with Franks and Root scoring on Josh Lozano's single, but settled down to pitch four consecutive scoreless innings. Preston (2-

1) said pitching against Coonrod served as motivation.

"It's exhilarating pitching against him, because I know his reputation," Preston said.

So did approximately 20 scouts and representatives from major league organizations, who showed up with speed guns and notebooks to watch Coonrod, an Ohio State signee. The scouts saw a patient and efficient Findlay lineup turn just seven hits into 13 runs.

"The ump had a really small (strike) zone, so we knew we had to wait for our pitch, and when we did get our pitch, we sat on it and hit it," Preston said.

The middle innings passed without much action, but Findlay scored four insurance runs in the top of the seventh inning. The run proved useful, as Ross scored four runs in the bottom of the seventh.

Lozano went 3-for-4 with two RBI for Ross, Franks went 3-for-4 with two runs, and Root and Cobb each went 2-for-4 with two runs.

Ross hosts Tiffin Columbian today.

Little Giants bounce back, crush Columbian

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Coming into Tuesday's game with Tiffin Columbian, the Fremont Ross baseball team's two-game losing streak seemed exponentially longer to Little Giants coach Chuck Lindsey.

"We were 1-2, and it felt like we were 0-30," Lindsey said. "It seems that way when you have high expectations."

Ross showed why it still merits high expectations Tuesday, beating the Tornadoes 15-3 in a five-inning game.

Jeremy Fitzgerald pitched all five innings for Ross (2-2), scattering five walks and four hits, to pick up his first win of the season. Eight of the nine Little Giants starters scored runs, with five scoring two or more.

"We bounced back," Lindsey said. "Everybody's got to be patient, and I've got to be patient."

Tuesday	
Ross	15
Columbian	3
Today	

Ross at Oregon Clay, 4:30 p.m.

Ross showed patience from the start, as Spencer Root and Josh Lozano drew first inning walks and scored on Dan Cobb's single. After a Cobb steal and an Aaron Coonrod walk, Kyle Gegorski's infield grounder scored Cobb, and Pete Goetz's single scored Coonrod.

Columbian starter Brad Moore did not make it out of the first inning, giving up five walks and two hits before being relieved by Kyle Albert. Albert was no more effective than Moore, allowing three runs in the second inning before being relieved by John Slosser.

"Today we didn't come to play baseball, I was very dis-

appointed in my team," said Columbian coach Adam Schmucker. "(Ross) took advantage of our walks early, they hit the ball hard, and they didn't let us back in."

With one out in the second, Cobb and Coonrod hit singles, and Gegorski's walk loaded the bases. Fitzgerald helped himself out with a single, scoring Cobb and Coonrod.

"You've just got to wait for the right pitch, you don't want to swing at a bad pitch," said Fitzgerald, who was 2-for-2 with two RBI and two runs scored.

Gegorski then scored on Dustin Shively's two-out single to make it 9-0 after two innings.

"Some of the kids came in and took a little more batting practice after school," Lindsey said. "We talked about being more patient at the plate,

See FITZGERALD, B3

Fitzgerald pitches Ross to win

Continued from B1

and I thought they did a little bit better job of that today."

Ross put the game away with six runs in the third. Coonrod hit a double, and scored on Gegorski's single. After walks to Fitzgerald and Pete Goetz, Pryde Yost's bases-loaded walk forced in Gegorski, and Shively's grounder scored Fitzgerald.

Root provided the knockout punch with a three-run blast to right field. The support was more than enough for Fitzgerald, who earned the win after pitching for the junior varsity team earlier this season.

"Jeremy came out and pitched a pretty decent game," Lindsey said. "He got the ball across the plate, let the guys hit it, and we made some nice plays in the field."

Ross started and ended the game with double plays, as Gegorski and Shively teamed up in the first inning and Shively and Cobb combined for a fifth-inning twin killing.

"I thought I did pretty good for my first time out, my defense really helped me out a lot," Fitzgerald said.

Coonrod went 2-for-3 with three runs, Cobb was 2-for-3 with two runs and two RBI, Goetz scored two runs and Yost walked three times.

Ross travels to Oregon Clay for a Great Lakes League game today.

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Ross, SJCC fall; Clyde's Brown one-hits

News-Messenger reports

WOODVILLE — Dave Mason doubled in Jason Runion with the game-winning run with two outs in the top of the eighth to lift Gibsonburg to a 4-3 win over Woodmore.

The Wildcats fell to 3-7 and 0-4 in the Suburban Lakes League with its seventh straight loss.

Gibsonburg improved to 5-2 and 1-2.

Runion was the winning pitcher, going the distance and giving up six hits while striking out eight.

Kurt Rood took the loss, going three innings and allowing one run in relief. Scott Harsanje went five innings and gave up three runs on four hits, with two strikeouts and three walks. Harsanje went 2-for-3 with a double and one RBI.

Clay 14, Ross 9

OREGON — A seven-run fifth inning lifted Oregon Clay to a 14-9 Great

Lakes League win over Fremont Ross.

The loss dropped Ross's record to 2-3 overall and 0-2 in the GLL, but coach Chuck Lindsey was still pleased with his team's effort.

"We played real hard," said Lindsey. "We were fundamentally in the game until the fifth inning. Defensively we played well. We have to play every out and every inning like it's our last."

Dan Cobb was 4-for-5 to lead the Little Giants. Josh Lozano, Kyle Gegorski and Dustin Shively added two hits in the loss.

Hopewell 11, SJCC 10

BASCOM — Chad Smith hit a two-run home run in the bottom of the seventh to lift Hopewell-Loudon to an 11-10 win over St. Joseph Central Catholic.

The loss was the fifth straight to start the year for

St. Joe and second in the Midland Athletic League.

The Crimson Streaks held a 9-5 lead heading into the bottom of the sixth, but Hopewell scored four times to tie it. St. Joe scored a run in the top of the seventh, but Smith homered to win the game.

Jake Burroughs went 5-for-5 to lead St. Joe. Dave Stover, Matt Gabel and Pete Lewton added two hits for SJCC. Stover also made "two outstanding catches in centerfield to keep us in it," said St. Joe coach Rick Barbour.

Clyde 7, Margaretta 0

CASTALIA — Lyle Brown fired a one-hit shutout as Clyde whipped Sandusky Bay Conference rival Margaretta 7-0 on the road.

Brown pitched seven innings and struck out eight. He did not walk a batter.

"Lyle pitched a great

Cobb pitches, hits Ross to win; Clyde edged by Perkins

News-Messenger reports

FOSTORIA — Dan Cobb pitched a two-hitter, and helped himself out with a three-run home run as Fremont Ross beat Fostoria 16-1 in a Great Lakes League game Monday.

"Dan threw an outstanding game," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey, whose team improved to 3-3 overall, 1-2 in the GLL. "They got one infield single, and had one really hard-hit ball, but Dan kept them off balance."

Cobb got things going offensively in the first inning. After Spencer Root walked and Josh Lozano singled, Cobb hit a three-run homer. Aaron Coonrod walked, Kyle Gegorski singled, Jeremy Fitzgerald singled home Coonrod and Pete Goetz singled home Gegorski.

After Goetz hit a two-run homer in the third inning, Ross put the game away with six runs in the fifth. Dustin Shively and Root walked, Lozano singled home Shively, and Coonrod walked. Fitzgerald singled home Root and Lozano, and Goetz singled

Baseball

home Coonrod.

"We're feeling a little bit better," said Lindsey. "We jumped on them early, and tonight Dan did a nice job pitching. The kids responded."

Ross hosts Napoleon in a non-league game today.

Perkins 5, Clyde 4

SANDUSKY — Clyde pushed Sandusky Bay Conference power Perkins to the limit before falling 5-4.

With runners on first and second and two out in the top of the seventh inning, Jason Beard singled to right for Clyde. Pirates right fielder Mike Bixler threw a perfect strike to the plate, though, nailing a Fliers pinch runner.

"We've got to send him home," said Clyde coach Terry Miracle. "With two outs, you might not get another chance like that again. We couldn't have beat the throw."

Mike Nieset had two doubles for Clyde (5-3, 1-2), and John Norman and Lyle Brown

also doubled. Brown took the loss for Clyde to fall to 2-2, but has allowed just two earned runs in 13 SBC innings, Miracle said. Bixler earned the win for Perkins.

"I don't foresee them getting down, they played as hard as they could," Miracle said of his team. "You have to keep it in perspective, they're going to win some. We pushed them to the limit."

Clyde hosts Sandusky St. Mary's today.

**Eastwood 10,
Gibsonburg 0**

PEMBERVILLE — Gibsonburg was held to just one hit by Eastwood's Mike Mocek as the Eagles defeated the Golden Bears 10-0 in a five-inning Suburban Lakes League game.

Dave Mason recorded the lone hit for Gibsonburg, which fell to 5-3.

Corey Loomis led off the game with a home run for Eastwood, which scored seven runs in the fifth inning to put the game away.

See LAKOTA, B2

Coonrod strikes out 12 in win

Ross beats Napoleon 8-3

News-Messenger reports

Aaron Coonrod struck out at least one batter in all seven innings and also went 3-for-4 to lead Fremont Ross to a 8-3 win over Napoleon on Tuesday.

Coonrod struck out 12 batters and scattered six hits in the win over the Wildcats, who entered the game ranked No. 20 in the Division II Ohio coaches poll, released Tuesday.

"Aaron came out and pitched a strong game," said Lindsey, whose team improved to 4-3. "He went out and concentrated on getting

the ball around the plate, and took a little off to get a little more confidence, and after the first inning he said he felt a lot more comfortable."

Coonrod struck out two batters in the first, second, fourth, fifth and seventh innings, and one batter in both the third and sixth inning.

At the plate, Coonrod just missed hitting for the cycle, knocking a single, double and a triple.

Pryde Yost powered the Little Giants from the bottom of the lineup, driving in four runs on 3-for-3 hitting.

"Pryde Yost had a great night," said Lindsey. "Once in the fourth and once in the fifth, he came up with two big two-out hits."

Tuesday

Ross.....8

Napoleon3

Thursday

Mans. Madison at Ross, 4:30 p.m.

Spencer Root went 2-for-3 with an RBI for Ross, Dan Cobb was 1-for-2 and Kyle Gegorski also had an RBI. Lindsey said Gegorski's biggest contribution came in the field, where the senior third baseman made what the coach called two "outstanding plays."

Lindsey also praised the play of freshman shortstop Adam Garcia, who filled in nicely with Coonrod on the mound.

Ross hosts Mansfield

Madison in another non-league game Thursday. Madison is ranked third in the Division I poll.

"They hit the ball like crazy," Lindsey said of the 11-0 Rams. "They're in our sectional, so it should be interesting to see."

Lindsey said Jeremy Fitzgerald will start against Madison, with Cobb starting Friday against Toledo Whitmer.

"If we can get Whitmer, we're right back in the thick of the GLL," Lindsey said.

The Little Giants continue their week against ranked opponents on Saturday, when they travel to play Columbus Watterson, ranked 14th in Division II.

■ State rankings, B2.

Baseball

No. 3 with a bullet



News-Messenger/Guy Schultz

DUSTIN SHIVELY lunges for a Mansfield Madison base runner in the Little Giants' 12-5 loss Thursday.

Madison justifies ranking with win over Ross

News-Messenger reports

No. 3 Mansfield Madison paid a visit to Joe Lotycz Field on Thursday, and showed why it merits the lofty ranking, beating Fremont Ross 12-5 in a non-league game.

"They have a reason to be ranked that high," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey, whose team fell to 4-4. "They are an outstanding hitting team."

The Rams pounded out 13 hits, exploding for 11 runs in the first three innings.

"We got down early," said Lindsey. "We tried to come back, but we just didn't get it done today."

Jeremy Fitzgerald took the loss for Ross, and Spencer Root pitched in relief. Aaron Coonrod and T.J. Hammer each doubled for the Little Giants.

Ross travels to Toledo Whitmer for a 4:30 p.m. Great Lakes League game today.

**New Riegel 9,
Woodmore 5**

WOODVILLE — The

Thursday

Mans. Madison 12

Ross 5

Today

Ross at Whitmer, 4:30 p.m.

Wildcats led 4-2 after four innings before New Riegel used a grand slam home run off Jason Dunn in the fifth inning to roar back for the non-league win.

Woodmore pitchers walked three straight batters to open the fifth.

"We were playing well up

to that point," Woodmore coach Scott Smith said. "How do you walk three guys in a row to start an inning? They didn't hit us hard, we just made a lot of mistakes."

"We played Northwood real well yesterday (in a 12-2 win) and I thought it would carry over."

The Wildcats, who committed six errors, fell to 4-9.

Scott Harsanje went 2-for-3 and drove in a run while Kurt Rood went 2-for-4 with a double for the Wildcats.

Ross splits with Watterson

Coonrod strikes out 12 in win

News-Messenger reports

COLUMBUS — Fremont Ross pitcher Aaron Coonrod has signed a letter of intent to play baseball for Ohio State next year, and in a doubleheader against state-ranked Columbus Watterson on Saturday, the senior gave his future coaches a glimpse of things to come.

Coonrod scattered seven hits and struck out 12 in the first game, as the Little Giants held on to beat Watterson 7-6. Watterson won the second game 11-4.

"Aaron did a great job," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey. "The key to the whole thing was his consistency. He did go deep in the count sometimes, but he was in total control of the game."

"He was really excited, the (Ohio State) coaching staff was there, and after the game we went to the Ohio State-Penn State game."

Ross built its lead with five runs in the fifth inning and two in the seventh. In the fifth, Adam Garcia singled,

Baseball

Spencer Root walked, Josh Lozano tripled and Dan Cobb doubled. Then, with two outs, T.J. Hammer and Dustin Shively hit run-scoring singles to put Ross ahead 5-4.

After Watterson took a 6-5 lead in the bottom of the inning, Ross regained the lead in the seventh. Garcia led off with a walk, Root doubled and Lozano singled.

"That was an outstanding game, they're a pretty good baseball team," Lindsey said of Watterson, ranked 14th in Division II. "Our kids really hung in there."

In the second game, Ross took a 4-3 lead before yielding eight straight runs. Lindsey said he played nine freshmen in the second game.

Ross (5-5) hosts Sandusky at 4:30 p.m. today in a Great Lakes League game. Lindsey said Cobb will start for the Little Giants.

See WOODMORE, B3

Ross cruises past Bobcats

News-Messenger reports

BOWLING GREEN — Dan Cobb pitched a three-hitter and Dustin Shively and Spencer Root provided the offense as Fremont Ross beat Bowling Green 6-1 in a non-league game Tuesday.

"I think we're playing consistently," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey, whose team improved to 6-5. "Bowling Green was a pretty good hitting team, and (Cobb) had them off balance all night."

Cobb struck out eight and walked three, and did not allow an earned run.

"When Dan Cobb or Aaron Coonrod are on the mound, we're pretty good," Lindsey said.

Root was 2-for-4 for Ross, which scored one run in the first, fourth, fifth and sixth innings, and two in the seventh. Shively, hitting in the No. 8 spot in the lineup, was 3-for-4.

"We had him leading off,

Baseball

but he started to struggle, so we put him down to eighth and he relaxed a little more," said Lindsey. "I'm really happy with his play."

Ross plays a Great Lakes League game at Findlay today, with an eye on Saturday's sectional semifinal against Mansfield Senior, at Mansfield. Ross did not get a seed, with Mansfield Madison and Sandusky grabbing the top two spots.

"With a couple breaks here or there, we probably could have gotten a second seed," said Lindsey. "But when my kids asked if they could get another shot at Madison (which beat Ross 12-5 on Thursday), that's what they wanted to do. They feel like they can play with anybody."

Mansfield is currently 2-10, Lindsey said. The coach also said that while Dan Cobb is the early projected starter for Saturday's game, it is still too early to be certain.

Inside: Baseball, softball
sectional pairings. Page B2

See RAIDERS, B3

Ross, St. Joe fall in league

News-Messenger reports

GIBSONBURG — Justin Donnell pitched five solid innings to earn the win as Gibsonburg beat Otsego 9-7 in a Suburban Lakes League game Wednesday.

Donnell yielded two runs in the victory. His twin brother Josh added a hit and an RBI for the Golden Bears (8-5, 4-5). Andy Bricker was 2-for-2 with two RBI in the win. Gibsonburg scored six runs in the third to take command of the game.

In other baseball action Wednesday:

Findlay 4, Ross 0

FINDLAY — Findlay used a big sixth inning to beat Fremont Ross 4-0 in a Great Lakes League game.

“Everything was cruising along for both teams, we’re playing good, they’re playing good,” said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey, whose team fell to 6-6, 1-3 in the GLL. “They hit a single, they bunted the guy to second, then we misplayed a fly ball. The next guy singled, and then they hit a three-run homer.”

Aaron Coonrod took the loss for Ross, yielding six hits and two earned runs in six innings, striking out six.

“He threw well, I can’t say anything more about how he pitched,” Lindsey said.

The Little Giants mustered just four hits, with Josh Lozano going 2-for-3 with a double, and Spencer Root also doubled.

Baseball

“Every time we hit the ball, it was right at them,” Lindsey said. “They made plays, they played well.”

Ross hosts Oregon Clay in a GLL game Friday.

Bettsville 10, St. Joe 2

BETTSVILLE — Nick Baker ripped three doubles as Bettsville posted its first win of the year, beating St. Joseph Central Catholic 10-2 in a Midland Athletic League game.

St. Joe managed just four hits off winning pitcher Jon Rollins, one of which was a Jake Burroughs double.

“Unfortunately, they held us in check, we didn’t hit,” said SJCC coach Rick Barbour.

St. Joe (2-7, 2-4) took advantage of some poor Bettsville fielding to take a 2-0 lead in the top of the first. But, the Bobcats (1-13, 1-5) scored four in the second and five in the fifth in the win.

“They made errors on the first two plays of the game,” said Barbour. “But after that they settled down and fielded everything.”

Huron 18, Clyde 8

HURON — An eight-run fourth lifted Huron to an 18-8 Sandusky Bay Conference win over Clyde.

See OAK HARBOR, B2

Ross outlasts Oregon Clay

By MICHAEL PIDANICK

Staff writer

The Fremont Ross baseball team had been frustrated at the plate in recent games with its inability to convert scoring chances.

The Little Giants put a stop to that Friday night and Oregon Clay paid the price, as the Little Giants' bats came alive in a 17-13 Great Lakes League win over the Eagles at Joe Lotycz Field.

"We haven't been getting the real clutch hit lately, but today we got some big hits," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey. "Gegorski had a couple hits, Aaron Coonrod had a big hit."

Ross collected 15 hits and took advantage of six Clay errors and improved to 7-6 overall and 2-3 in the league. Kyle Gegorski had three run-scoring singles and scored three runs in the win. Winning pitcher Spencer Root was 3-for-5 with two runs, Aaron Coonrod was 2-for-4 with three RBI, Dan Cobb was 2-for-5 with two RBI and

Baseball

Friday

Ross.....	17
Clay	13

Today

Sectional semifinal
Ross vs. Mansfield Senior 11 a.m.

two runs and Josh Lozano scored four runs for Ross.

"We wanted to go out hit ball well," said Gegorski. "In the last few games, I left some guys in scoring position. I just wanted to get the runners in or move over, and try to get some RBI."

Root pitched six solid innings to earn the win on the mound. He allowed 12 runs, only six of which were earned. He overcame six errors by the Little Giants.

"Spencer did a real nice job," Lindsey said. "He came out hard. He ran into a little trouble here and there but I'm really proud of him, he's doing what we asked him to do."

See ROSS, B2

Ross bats come alive in win

continued from B1

Root got into some trouble in the first inning. He hit a batter and walked two more to load the bases and Jim Phillips ripped a three-run double to center to clear the bases. Eric Hugueley followed with an RBI single to right to give Clay a 4-0 lead.

Ross bounced back in the bottom of the inning. Root ripped a one-out single to left and Lozano followed with a fly ball that was dropped by the right fielder for a two-base error. Cobb then belted a double to score both runners.

"It was a 2-0 pitch and he threw me a fastball right

down the middle," Cobb said. "I got all of it."

Cobb came around to score on a wild pitch to cut the gap to 4-3.

Clay scored an unearned run in the top of the second to take a 5-3 lead but Ross answered in the bottom of the inning as Pete Goetz walked and scored on an error.

Clyde extended its lead in the top of the third with another unearned run, but Ross rallied to take the lead in the bottom of the inning.

Lozano drew a leadoff walk and advanced to second on a groundout and scored on a wild pitch. Coonrod reached on an error and Gegorski followed with an RBI single to

left to tie the game. Coonrod scored on an RBI groundout by Goetz and Dustin Shively's single scored Gegorski.

Clay got one run back, but Ross extended its lead with five runs in the fourth, as Aaron Coonrod's two-run triple drove home Root and Lozano to give the Little Giants a 10-7 lead.

Gegorski drove home Coonrod with a single and Pryde Yost capped the inning with a two run single to left to put Ross in control.

The Little Giants will open sectional play at 11 a.m. today against Mansfield Senior (2-10) in Mansfield. Lindsey named Cobb as his starting pitcher.

Lozano grand in Ross win

Golden Bears top 'Cats

News-Messenger reports

Josh Lozano hit his third home run in two days, a grand slam, as Fremont Ross beat Fostoria 8-3 in a Great Lakes League game at Joe Lotycz Field.

"The kids came out and played relaxed and had a great time," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey, whose team improved to 9-8, 3-4 in the GLL.

Lozano's grand slam highlighted a six-run second inning in which the Little Giants took a lead they would not relinquish.



LOZANO

Pete Goetz led off with a single, Adam Garcia followed with a single and Pryde Yost walked. Spencer Root reached on a fielder's choice, Kyle Gegorski walked and Lozano followed with his grand slam to left field.

Dan Cobb earned the win for Ross, scattering 10 hits, to improve to 4-0.

Lindsey said Ross, which was eliminated from state tournament play on Tuesday, will spend the rest of the year playing the spoiler's role in the GLL.

"(The GLL) is really balanced, and the kids know they can beat all these teams," he said. "We just didn't get it done, and it's really frustrating. We may not be able to win the GLL, but we can decide who does win it."

Lindsey also said he would use the team's remaining games to get certain players more playing time, including Aaron Hines, Adam Garcia, Goetz and T.J. Hammer.

Ross is off until Monday, when Toledo Whitmer comes to Fremont. The Little Giants then play Sandusky on Wednesday and Friday.

In other high school baseball action Wednesday:

Baseball

the second inning and never trailed as the Pirates beat Clyde 13-5 in a Sandusky Bay Conference game.

Perkins pounded out 16 hits and took advantage of four Fliers errors in the win.

"When you're playing a team like that, four errors isn't going to get it done," said Clyde coach Terry Miracle. "We've been living on the edge for two weeks, not hitting the ball real great, and every time we made an error, they scored three or four runs."

Brandon Bulkowski hit a three-run home run for Clyde (8-8), and Jason Beard was 2-for-4. Mike Bixler was 4-for-4 with a double and a triple for Perkins (19-1).

Clyde faces Oak Harbor tonight in a 5 p.m. sectional semifinal at Perkins. Miracle will send ace Lyle Brown to the mound against the Rockets, who beat Clyde 5-4 two weeks ago when Nathan Gaines hit a two-run home run in the top of the seventh inning.

"I'm throwing my best," said Miracle, who also has No. 2 Mike Nieset ready for relief work.

Gibsonburg 11,

Woodmore 5

GIBSONBURG — Mike Mason provided the offense and Dave Mason provided the pitching as Gibsonburg beat Woodmore 11-5 in the Suburban Lakes League.

Mike Mason hit a home run, drove in two runs and scored two runs, and Dave Mason went 3-for-3 with a triple and three runs in addition to raising his record to 2-1.

Jason Runion doubled for Gibsonburg (10-5), and Justin Young went 3-for-4. Jon Blechinger hit a home run for Woodmore (8-14).

Gibsonburg hosts Tiffin

Giants down Whitmer in GLL

Clyde outlasts Edison in SBC

News-Messenger reports

Aaron Coonrod struck out 10 batters and the Fremont Ross offense manufactured seven runs on just three hits as the Little Giants beat Toledo Whitmer 7-1 in a Great Lakes League game Monday.

"They had a couple errors, and those had basically hurt us in the last few games," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey. "We put pressure on them by running. Every opportunity we got, we took advantage."

Spencer Root's bases-loaded single in the fifth inning was the big hit, as Ross scored four runs in the inning. Root finished with three RBI, and Josh Lozano tripled for the Little Giants (10-8, 4-4).

Coonrod allowed just four hits and walked only one to improve to 3-3 for Ross. Rob Hutka took the loss.

Ross travels to play Sandusky in the GLL on Wednesday.

In other high school baseball action Monday:

Baseball

Clyde 6, Edison 2

(9 inn.)

MILAN — Clyde scored four runs in the ninth inning to beat Edison 6-2 in a Sandusky Bay Conference game.

Lyle Brown pitched all nine innings for the Fliers (11-9, 6-7), striking out 10 and scattering six hits.

"Lyle Brown pitched a really great game," said Clyde coach Terry Miracle. "He only threw 121 pitches, that's phenomenal. A lot of pitchers throw that many in six or seven innings."

Mike Nieset homered for the Fliers and went 2-for-4, Tom Conley and John Norman doubled and Brown was 2-for-4 with three RBI.

Clyde hosts Port Clinton on Wednesday, and Miracle said he hopes his team can finish SBC play with a .500 record.

"7-7 sounds good in the conference," he said. "If we can win just one more game ..."

Inside: Eastwood edges Gibsonburg. Page B2

Ross takes step two in post-tourney quest

News-Messenger reports

SANDUSKY — Dan Cobb improved his record to 5-0, striking out 10 and scattering six hits as Fremont Ross beat Sandusky 3-2 in a Great Lakes League game Tuesday.

"Dan pitched an outstanding game," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey, whose team improved to 11-8 overall, 5-4 in the GLL. "He threw them a lot of off-speed pitches, just totally had them off balance. He got in trouble a couple innings, there were maybe three innings where he had guys on first and second with nobody out, but he would get those key strikeouts."

Ross led off the scoring in the first inning, with Kyle Gogorski doubling and Cobb driving him home. The Little Giants added another run in the fourth, with Dustin Shively singling, stealing second and scoring on Spencer Root's single.

Aaron Coonrod capped the Ross scoring in the seventh, walking with two outs, advancing to third on T.J. Hammer's single and scoring on a double-steal attempt.

The win was the second in a row for Ross since it was ousted from the state tournament last Tuesday by Mansfield Madison.

Baseball

"We've talked a lot to the kids that we want to go 5-0 after the tournament," Lindsey said. "We're 2-0, and if we end up 5-0 we can either finish tied for first or runner-up."

Ross hosts Sandusky on Friday in a make-up game.
In other baseball action:

Clyde 4,

Port Clinton 3

CLYDE — Brandon Bulkowski's two-run single capped a wild bottom of the seventh, as Clyde scored three times and posted a 4-3 Sandusky Bay Conference

win over Port Clinton.

Ari Norman opened the winning rally with a double and, one out later, Josh Smith singled to send Norman to third. Brandon Bulkowski pinch ran for Smith, and attempted to steal second base as Conley ripped a shot to the gap. Bulkowski rounded second before realizing the ball may be caught.

He headed back to first without re-touching second. But the ball dropped, and Bulkowski ran to third, again without touching second.

Conley scored on the play and Bulkowski stopped at third, but the Redskins ar-

gued that Bulkowski should have been called out for running outside the baseline.

"I think, by rule, as long as there is not a play on the guy he can go outside the baseline," said Clyde coach Terry Miracle. "It was a crazy play. But I think it was the right call."

Conley then stole second, and after an intentional walk to Lyle Brown, Montgomery lined the game winner to left center.

"We have lost games similar to that," Miracle said. "Our kids didn't quit and I'm real proud of that."

Josh Smith (3-3) pitched

Inside: New Riegel tops St. Joe. Page B2

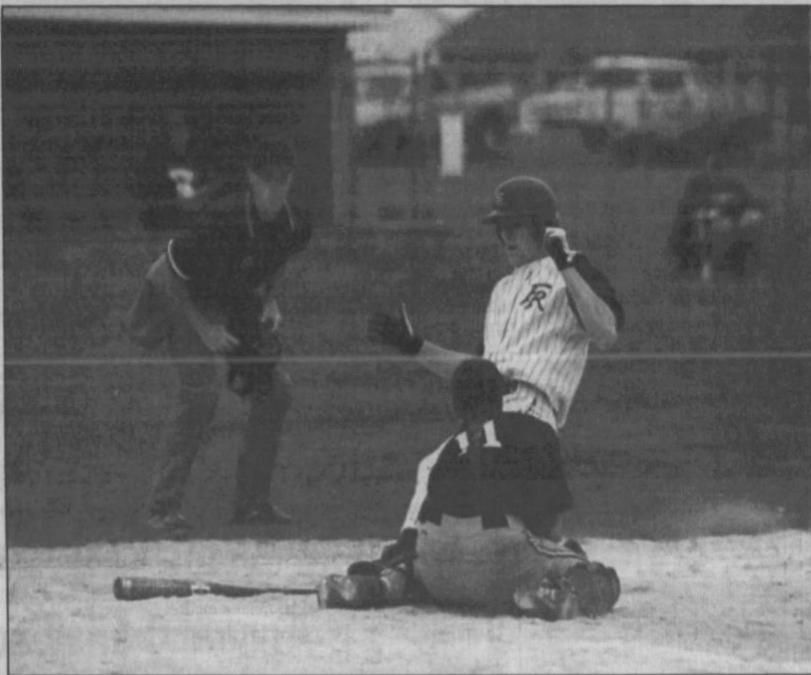
two innings in relief of Mike Nieset and earned the win. Nieset pitched five solid innings, giving up just one hit.

The Fliers finished the season at 12-9 overall and 7-7 in the league. It was a vast improvement from last season's 3-21 finish.

"I'm really happy for our seniors (Smith and Norman) that stuck it out," Miracle said. "We got to .500 (in the SBC) and we have everybody back except two players next year."

Baseball

Relaxed Ross rolls on



News-Messenger/Liz Margerum

DAN COBB slides into home as Sandusky catcher Ryan Taber applies the tag during Ross's 11-2 win Friday.

Coonrod strikes out 14 in win over Streaks

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Fremont Ross pitcher Aaron Coonrod is relaxed on the mound these days, and, as a result, opposing hitters are spending a lot more time relaxing on their respective benches.

Coonrod powered his way through an over-matched Sandusky lineup in an 11-2 Great Lakes League win Friday at Joe Lotycz Field, striking out 14 and allowing just three hits.

"I'm just relaxing, I guess, there's not as much pressure now as there was before," Coonrod said.

Ross improved to 12-8 overall with the win and 6-4 in the GLL. The Little Giants have now won three straight since being eliminated from state tournament contention, and retain an outside shot at tying for the GLL title.

According to Ross coach Chuck Lindsey, in order for Ross to tie first place Findlay, Oregon Clay would have to beat the Trojans and Ross would have to sweep its final two games, Monday at Toledo Whitmer and Tuesday at home

Friday	
Ross	11
Sandusky	2

against Bedford (Mich.).

Given the recent success of Coonrod and No. 2 pitcher Dan Cobb, the scenario is far from unlikely.

"(Coonrod's) just working more on the little things, the mechanics and that, throwing the baseball where it's supposed to be thrown," Lindsey said. "He's becoming a pitcher instead of just a thrower."

In addition to getting starting solid pitching, Ross has also combined solid defense and timely hitting in its winning streak.

Friday, the Ross infield — led by freshman shortstop John Meggett — made several clutch plays, and the offense provided three runs in the second, third and fourth innings, with all but one starter collecting a hit.

"It makes my job a lot easier," Coonrod said of the run support. "I don't have any pressure, I just have to go out there and get outs. It really helps when you get the offensive support."

Coonrod got the ball rolling, leading off the top of the second with an infield single. After advancing to third on Dustin Shively's groundout, Coonrod scored on Meggett's single.

Pryde Yost then tripled home Meggett, and Spencer Root singled home Yost.

After Sandusky scored a pair of runs in the top half of the third, Josh Lozano led off the bottom half with a walk, stole second and scored on Cobb's single. Coonrod singled, and two outs later T.J. Hammer's groundout scored Cobb. Meggett then drove in Coonrod.

"I thought some of the younger kids did a nice job tonight," Lindsey said. "John Meggett really stepped up and had some big hits, and had some nice plays at shortstop."

Root led off the fourth with a walk, stole second and went to third on Kyle Gegorski's single. Lozano doubled home Root and Gegorski and scored on Cobb's single.

Pete Goetz capped the scoring with a two-run pinch hit home run to right

in the sixth inning.

"Today everybody stepped up," Lindsey said. "We took the fastball and hit it, all through the line-up everybody hit the ball well today."

In other baseball action:

Gibsonburg 12, Lakota 6

KANSAS — Gibsonburg pounded out 12 hits in a 12-6 Suburban Lakes League win over Lakota on Friday.

Brian Robinson earned the win for Gibsonburg, which improved to 13-8 overall, 7-8 in the SLL. Jared Lowery took the loss for Lakota, which fell to 8-13, 6-8.

Dave Mason tripled twice, scored twice and drove in two runs for the Golden Bears, and Mike Mason doubled twice and drove in two runs. Also for Gibsonburg, Josh Donnell was 2-for-5 with two RBI, Justin Young was 2-for-3 with an RBI and Corey Kaemming had two RBI.

Duncan Harman was 2-for-3 for Lakota.

Gibsonburg plays Woodmore today in a district semifinal at Old Fort.

Ross wins to close in on title

News-Messenger reports

TOLEDO — Dan Cobb scattered eight hits as Fremont Ross posted a 9-0 win over Toledo Whitmer in the Great Lakes League.

The Little Giants (13-8, 7-4) are tied with Oregon Clay and Findlay atop the GLL. A win today in a 4:30 p.m. showdown with Bedford (Mich.) at Joe Lotycz Field would give Ross a share of its first ever GLL title, said coach Chuck Lindsey.

Cobb, a senior right hander, improved to 6-0 with the victory.

"He didn't do too bad," said Lindsey. "He did a nice job, I've been real happy with his pitching this year."

T.J. Hammer and Jeremy Fitzgerald both went 2-for-3 for Ross. The Little Giants al-

Baseball

so played error-free defensively, something that pleased Lindsey.

"We played great defense, I was really happy with no errors," he said.

Ross opened the scoring in the second, as Hammer walked and was driven in by Fitzgerald. In the top of the fourth, Pete Goetz and Hammer walked, Fitzgerald sacrificed both runners over, John Meggitt delivered an RBI groundout and Dustin Shively singled home Hammer.

In the fifth, Kyle Gegorski walked and scored on a Goetz single. The Little Giants put the game away with four in the seventh.

Baseball

One run short



News-Messenger/Liz Margerum

JOSH LOZANO was 2-for-4 with a home run and four RBI in Fremont Ross's 8-7 Great Lakes League loss to Bedford on Tuesday at Joe Lotycz Field.

Ross season ends with loss

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

Within one minute of the final out in Bedford's 8-7 Great Lakes League victory over Fremont Ross on Tuesday, the overcast skies opened up and unleashed a brief, but heavy rainstorm.

Two storms more significant to the outcome of the Little Giants' season finale had passed about an hour earlier.

The first storm, Bedford's six-run third inning barrage, staked the Kickin' Mules to a lead they would not relinquish. The second storm, four Ross baserunning outs over a three-inning span, held back the Little Giants comeback attempt, and all but eliminated any hopes of tying for the school's first-ever GLL title.

"You look back on the game, and it's one inning again, just like last year," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey, whose team fin-

Tuesday	
Bedford8
Ross7

ished its season 13-9, 7-5 in the GLL. "You've got to make plays, you've got to stay close. This is really frustrating, because we had the guys in the position to get it done, and we just didn't do it, and I don't know why."

Dan Cobb, one day after pitching a shutout against Toledo Whitmer, started for Ross and pitched two effective innings before running into trouble in the third. Aaron Coonrod relieved Cobb and allowed five runs before working out of the inning.

When the inning was over, Bedford had scored six runs on five hits and four walks, building an 8-0 lead that would prove too difficult for Ross to catch.

"We were confident in that inning, everybody went up there and really went after it," said Bed-

ford coach Craig Trychel, whose team improved to 17-5, 7-4. "We didn't make any mistakes, didn't try to pull the ball."

Ross came back strong, scoring five runs in the bottom of the third. With one out, freshman shortstop John Meggitt fought off several two-strike pitches for a walk, advanced to third on two wild pitches and scored on Dustin Shively's groundout.

Spencer Root then walked, and Kyle Gegorski reached on a single to right, setting the stage for Josh Lozano's three-run home run to deep left center field. Continuing his hot streak of the past several weeks, Lozano went 2-for-4 with four RBI.

T.J. Hammer singled home Cobb with the last run of the inning, but a Ross base runner was thrown out at second on the play, killing the rally.

See ROSS, B2

Ross drops season finale to GLL rival Bedford

Continued from B1

The trend continued in the fourth inning, when a promising two-on, no outs rally was stunted by an out at home plate and a baserunner who ran out of the basepath after being forced off by a teammate.

"I always teach the kids to be aggressive, but if you're going to go, go," Lindsey said. "I'm not blaming anybody, it's part coaching, part being indecisive."

Said Trychel: "That was huge, our catcher and third baseman made really smart plays. We work a lot in practice on getting those kind of outs. We've made a lot of base running mistakes this year,

and we've learned from them."

After the third inning Coonrod was dominant, striking out seven and allowing just one hit over the last four innings. Ross scored two more runs, in the fifth inning when Pryde Yost singled home Lozano, and in the seventh, when Lozano drove home Gegorski, but the comeback was not enough.

"I'm proud of the way the kids hung in there, they got behind and they battled back, and we were one

run from where we want to be," Lindsey said.

The loss marked the final high school game for the five Ross seniors, Cobb, Coonrod, Root, Gegorski and Pryde Yost.

"We lose two of our best hitters in Spencer Root and Kyle Gegorski, and Dan and Aaron are going to be really hard to replace on the mound," Lindsey said. "They'll be missed, but we had seven underclassmen playing, too."

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Great Lakes League

Final League Standings

School	League	Overall
Bedford.....	8-4	22-8
Clay.....	8-4	18-8
Findlay.....	8-4	12-7
Fremont.....	7-5	13-9
Whitmer.....	5-7	12-16
Sandusky.....	4-8	10-13
Fostoria.....	2-10	6-17

All-GLL

First Team

Pitcher—Dan Cobb, Sr., Ross, B.J. Preston, Jr., Findlay; Catcher—Josh Lozano, Jr., Ross; First Base—Paul Beck, Sr., Findlay; Second Base—Chris Ploszaj, Sr., Findlay; Third Base—Kyle Gegorski, Sr., Ross; Shortstop—Chad Cotton, Jr., Sandusky; Outfield—Tim Haynes, Jr., Clay, Mike Iriti, Jr., Findlay, Spencer Root, Sr., Ross; Designated Hitter—Ryan Donley, Jr., Clay; Utility Player—Mark Rabbitt, Sr., Clay

MVP—Paul Beck, Sr., Findlay

Second Team

Pitcher—Aaron Coonrod, Sr., Ross, Brad Baer, Sr., Bedford; Catcher—Mike Meridieth, Sr., Whitmer; First Base—Eric Hugueley, Jr., Clay; Second Base—Ryan Gerritsen, Jr., Fostoria; Third Base—Jim Phillips, So., Clay; Shortstop—Joe Romano, Sr., Clay; Outfield—Nick Roberts, Sr., Bedford, John Garrow, Sr., Whitmer, Tony Agapiou, Sr., Fostoria; Designated Hitter—Nick Branyan, So., Clay; Utility Player—B. Roethlisberger, Jr., Findlay

Honorable Mention

Second Base—Dustin Shively, Jr., Ross Outfield—T.J. Hammer, So., Ross, Peter Goetz, Jr., Ross, Pryde Yost, Sr., Ross