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## Gridiron return: Local teams hit practice field

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FREMONT -- Fremont Ross and St. Joseph Central Catholic football players hit the practice fields Monday for the first session of two-a-day training camps.

Ross coaches Derek Kidwell his SJCC counterpart Todd Drusbac reported both teams were injury-free on Day 1.

### FREMONT ROSS

Kidwell is guiding a team that has gone through the football motions without pads for much of the summer. The Little Giants won 7-on-7 tournaments at Kenton and Fremont and need a change of pace.

"It was a typical first day," Kidwell said. "Our varsity kids were rather bored because we were doing this kind of practice during our football camp last week. The majority of our varsity kids are anxious to get shoulder pads on, turn the tempo up a little bit and get more physical."

Kidwell said the biggest battles for playing time are brewing on the Little Giants offensive and defensive lines.

"On offense, our right guard position has three guys (Brad Beck, Jerome Conley and Cory Barron) rotating in and out," Kidwell said. "We have four or five guys (Rob Heberling, Trent Stout, Aaron Gonzalez, Shane Durnwald and Nick Parrish) rotating in and out on our defensive line, but I know we're going to use a lot of different guys there anyway."

Kidwell said Heberling has moved onto the defensive line after seeing time at linebacker last season. Stout, a sophomore, and Parrish are vying for time, while Gonzalez, a senior, returns after suffering a hand injury. Durnwald is a returning starter.

As the football season begins, Kidwell would like to see the focus of the Little Giants remain in tact.

"The concerns right now are having some kids lose their focus because camps make for long days and it gets monotonous on the practice field," Kidwell said. "It's the start of a three-week camp and there's no light at the end of the tunnel. We have a veteran group of seniors who can stay focused and it's their job to be keep everyone else focused so that we get better as a team each day."

The leadership will come seniors Cody Foos (quarterback), James Aaron Spencer (running back) and Brett Mierke (safety and wide receiver), who all received Division I All-Ohio special mention in 2008. Other key players include wide receivers and defensive backs Justin Hines and Greg Brown and running back and outside linebacker Tylor Trautwein.

### ST. JOSEPH CENTRAL CATHOLIC

Coach Todd Drusbac was pleased with the Crimson Streaks' progress on Day 1.

"Our kids' effort and attitudes were good," Drusback said. "We told them to make sure they control the things they can control, and that is effort, toughness and attitude. You can always control those three things. We will find out about the toughness part in a few days. There's only so much that you can do with your team in shorts and helmets from the middle of summer. The real work will get done when we put the pads on."

Drusback relishes the depth SJCC has at several key positions.

"I think we have some depth with our backs and receivers," Drusback said. "The more people that we can play means the more fresh our players will be. We want to have an excuse to play everyone. I hope it all pans out and we can have a nice rotation."

Garrett Walker and Ben Zyski are competing to become the quarterback of the Crimson Streaks. Zyski won the job out of camp last season before Walker saw some time under center late in 2008.

Walker, who is also SJCC's top returning receiver, could have a dual role in 2009.

"No matter what happens, both (Garrett and Ben) are going to be on the field," Drusback said. "They're two good players who are both leaders."

Austin Hilty, who spent some time last season as a Crimson Streaks running back, is also seeing the field as a slot receiver. Zach Bowman and Danbury transfer Alex Burns have entered the race to be an SJCC ground-gainer.

"We have some depth and that means our players need to know multiple positions," Drusback said. "Running back and inside slot are kind of similar, and then we have outside receivers as well. We're going to be moving some guys around."

On defense, Jeremy Durbin is looking to make a bigger impact from his tackle position after being an All-Midland Athletic League and All-Northwest District selection in 2008.

Walker, Hilty, Bowman, Sean Brawley and Brant Reardon return to provide depth in the Crimson Streaks' defensive secondary.

"We have some experience in the secondary, but the key for us will be to fill the inside linebacker spots that (SJCC graduates) Jake Kusmer and Travis Walker filled last year," Drusback said.

