

Ross newcomer Szymanowski won't be secret weapon for Long

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There was a fireworks display Friday on a football field in Oregon.

Social distancing guidelines restricted fans who could watch to a select few. Those who made the most noise had Fremont on their minds.

Fremont Ross had plenty of stories to tell as it exploded for 341 yards of offense, including 232 on 33 carries in a 35-21 victory over Clay. It won't take memories for granted, but would like to share them with loved ones.

The Little Giants failed to generate points on consecutive trips inside the red zone to start the game. Ross coach Chad Long thought Spencer Price caught a back shoulder pass in bounds for a touchdown.

"We were able to run the ball and we didn't have to show much passing," he said. "Our offensive line. They were able to do a good job blocking. We have two running backs, plus (quarterback) Kaden (Holmes).

"It's a tandem. They wore people down. They're hard to tackle and Kaden can pull it down. You can't just play the running backs. He's slick."



Senior newcomer Jon Szymanowski had 97 yards on nine tries and Labronze Barnett added 86 yards and one touchdown on 13 carries. Holmes rushed for three touchdowns, including one covering 42 yards.

"He hasn't played high school football," Long said of Szymanowski. "He plays like (former Tampa Bay Buccaneers fullback) Mike Alstott. He doesn't want to run out of bounds. You can see from the stands, he's going to find somebody to hit running the ball.

"He's an unbelievable addition to the team. He's a leader and everybody knows he does everything 100% to push the younger kids to be better. He's the secret weapon on our team to complement Labronze."

Sophomore Kelandre Jones is in the mix in the backfield with Kelijah Perkins out for the season. Szymanowski and Barnett are also linebackers.

"There's good rhythm and we'll continue to get better," Long said. "It's the best one-two punch we've had in a while."



Barnett planned to concentrate on defense this season. He was pushed into reps at running back when two-a-days began because of the depth.

He was such a pleasant surprise that he starts on both sides.

"Labronze was so productive," Long said. "He ran hard and ran through tackles. He stands out with his durability to perform. He was going to just play defense and be fresh. He's smart. He knows the offense.

"He'll do whatever he's asked. His toughness and grit surprised me. He's grown up and he's a good team player, as a junior."

Sophomore linebackers Anthony Vann and Mason Villarreal earned varsity time last year.

"The experience we went through is paying dividends this year on both sides," Long said.

Holmes made quick decisions and misfired on only 4 of 19 passes.

"We wanted to go fast pace and wear them down," Long said. "Put it in the playmakers hands. Bryson Hammer had seven catches. Anthony Vann had six catches."

Even if Ross continues to ignite a show on offense, not many will see it. Crowds won't exceed 15% capacity because of coronavirus guidelines.

"It was a different setting," Long said. "It's tough. The kids want their families to know that even though they can't be there, we're playing for them."

It might still feel a bit like a road game, but Fremont returns home Friday as Findlay visits. The Trojans beat Toledo Whitmer last week.

The Little Giants circle this as rivalry week on any schedule. It feels good preparing after erupting on the field.

"They're big," Long said. "We're small up front. We're fast. Can they keep up? (We) have no room to be satisfied. We won one game last year. These guys want more than one. They want to win these six games."

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