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Fremont high schools falter in season debut in Bowling Green

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BOWLING GREEN -- The St. Joseph Crimson Streaks and the Fremont Ross Little Giants struggled Monday as the high school boys golf season began for both teams Monday at the Toledo Central Catholic Invitational.

At Stone Ridge Country Club in Bowling Green, SJCC finished in a tie with Toledo Whitmer for 17th, two spots ahead of Ross, among 20 teams. The Crimson Streaks and Panthers used 363 strokes while the Little Giants needed 381 shots.

SJCC freshman Connor Dudley had the lone bright spot for either Fremont school Monday. He made a statement in his varsity debut by recording a 77 in his first 18 holes.

"This morning was the most nervous I have ever been on the first tee box," said Dudley. "I'm ecstatic with my round, especially considering it's my first high school match, and also because I was playing with a lot of kids from Division I schools."

Crimson Streaks coach Tom Dudley agreed.

"Today was a good confidence-builder for Connor," Coach Dudley said. "It helped him a lot mentally. Playing with three top golfers from Division I schools and knowing he can shoot just as well, if not better than them, is going to go a long way for him."

Also scoring for SJCC was Brett Michael with a 90, Joe Steinle with a 90, Tom Spader with a 107 and Tom Auxier with a 114.

"It was very encouraging that Brett was our second lowest scorer," Coach Dudley said. "Knowing our top three scorers on average are very young, this is a good thing. We'll take a few lumps this year but, in the long run, these boys will succeed."

The results for the Little Giants were surprising. Ross, which went 11-1 in dual meets in 2008, ended up in 19th place -- 18 shots behind SJCC.

"Coming off a successful summer, this was a huge letdown for us," Ross coach Nick Rider said. "The conditions were tough -- it was breezy and the pin placements were tough. But we shot about 20 strokes worse than I expected. With all five players returning from last year, there's no need to ever shoot a 340. We need to improve from today's scores, if we want to compete."

Ross's Clay Schwartz, the Lake Erie Junior Golf Association Player of the Year, found out firsthand how tough things were for the Little Giants on Monday.

"I played good on the back nine, but shot a 46 on the front side," said Schwartz, who finished with an 84.

Alex Chudzinski had an 81 for Ross while Brandon Hoelzer and Garrett Steinle turned in a pair of 88s before Ian Mowry chipped in a 91.

Toledo St. Francis Red edged Ashland 313-314 to win the tournament. Toledo St. Francis Blue finished third with 318 strokes.
