



October 8, 2009

Ross sophomores take top two spots, team finishes second

BY JEFF ARENZ

Sports writer

HURON -- A pair of Fremont Ross sophomores put on a show Wednesday during an OHSAA Division I Sectional Tournament at Thunderbird Hills Golf Course.

The Little Giants' Brandon Hoelzer became the medalist after shooting a 1-under 71 and teammate Clay Schwartz finished as the runner-up by firing a 3-over 75 to help Ross capture second place, four strokes behind team champion Ashland (309-313).

"Out of the 20 other Division I teams in this tournament, we took first and second place with a pair of sophomores," Little Giants coach Nick Rider said. "It was unbelievable how well they played. These guys are just good friends who have grown up together and they hang out at the golf course non-stop. Their hard work really paid off for them."

A birdie at No. 1 gave Hoelzer a great start before he turned in another birdie at No. 5. But after nine holes, he stood even with 36 shots. Hoelzer remained consistent with his round until draining back-to-back birdies on Nos. 14 and 15.

"This course was in good shape and the greens were pretty quick," said Hoelzer, who needed only 24 putts Wednesday. "My putting was definitely my strong-point."

For Hoelzer, he seized the opportunity to overcome a disappointing effort at the Greater Buckeye Conference Tournament on Sept. 28 at Fremont Country Club, where he shot 90.

"I don't think I could have played any worse then, and I don't think I could have played any better here (at the sectional)," Hoelzer said.

Schwartz credited putting for his success.

"It was one of the best days I've had for putting," said Schwartz, who putted 28 times Wednesday.

Schwartz found himself 2-under after two holes with birdies at Nos. 1 and 2. But a double bogey at No. 3 erased his positive start and left him looking to refocus.

"I just had to block it out," Schwartz said. "I can't think about it as I'm going to the next hole. It was like starting all over again because I was even again."

After nine holes, Schwartz was 1-over with 37 shots before taking 38 strokes to complete his final nine holes.

Alex Chudzinski, who finished third in the GBC, supported the Little Giants' cause with an 82. He posted a 40 at the turn before using 42 strokes on the back nine.

Garrett Steinle, who was tied with Chudzinski after nine holes, finished with an 85 after recording a 45 on the back nine. His score was the final one Ross counted in its team total.

The Little Giants' Ian Mowry added a 90 by having a 44-46 split.

"I think our kids had a wakeup call when they played poorly at the GBC Tournament," Rider said. "They decided that they didn't want to end their season at the sectional level."

Ashland and Ross were among five teams that advanced to the OHSAA Division I District Tournament on Thursday at Red Hawk Run Golf Course in Findlay. Avon Lake (325), Tiffin Columbian (331) and Olmsted Falls (331) also moved on.

The top five individuals who are not part of an advancing team also move to the district level. They included Jake Houston (Lexington, 80), Louis Elbert (Midview, 80), Matt Kreider (Westlake, 80), Chris Nader (Westlake, 81) and Dustin Lieber (Norwalk, 81).
