

Little Giants Reach District Final

Fremont teams win district games

Raney, Ross
whip Wapak

By TIM HARMON
Staff writer

Pitching and defense. Fremont Ross put those two ingredients together for a 3-1 victory over Wapakoneta in the Class AAA District Baseball Tournament Tuesday at Anderson Field.

Craig Raney scattered eight hits and the Ross defense helped bottle up the Redskins as the Little Giants advanced to the district final.

Ross, 14-6, will play Sandusky, 18-1, at 4:30 p.m. Thursday for the district championship and a berth in the regional tournament.

Raney disposed of the Redskins on 105 pitches. The senior right-hander struck out six and walked just one, but the tone for the game was set by the Ross infield.

Wapakoneta, 13-14, started quickly. Chris DeBell roped a first-pitch double to left-center field, and a single by Daren Stiles put runners on first and third.

Dave Lightle then hit a sharp ground ball to third that Scott Mezinger stabbed and turned into a 3-4-3 double play.

"The infield really likes turning the double play," said Ross Coach Dan Fought. "They say 'coach, we work on it so much that we like to turn it.'"

The Redskins' fast start had fizzled, and Ross wasted no time playing two runs in the home half of the first with the help of two Wapakoneta errors.

Aaron Meade reached base on an error and Mezinger followed with a double. Raney singled sharply to left scoring Meade and Mezinger scored when Chuck Hinegardner bobbled the ball.

Raney made the runs stand up. "Craig has pitched against the tough competition all year," said Fought. "He did an outstanding job today. He kept the ball in the right spots."

"He got behind in the count, but he was able to use his pitch and come back on the hitters."

Raney's pitch was the forkball. "That's his pitch and he feels he can throw it for a strike anytime. He's got a lot of confidence

See ROSS, B-3



News-Messenger/Chris Walker

Hit or miss decision

Fremont Ross batter Shane McConnell prepares to make contact with the baseball during high school baseball action Tuesday in the Fremont District Tournament.

McGrath near perfect as St. Joe girls beat St. Wendelin

News-Messenger reports

Clutch hitting in the late innings and a near-perfect pitching performance by Michelle McGrath helped St. Joe to its first district tournament win ever Tuesday, an 8-2 decision over St. Wendelin at the Class AA tourney at Bettsville.

The victory sends the Crimson Streaks into Thursday's finals against once-beaten Tiffin Calvert at 4:30 p.m.

In other games, Clyde tripped St. Mary's 7-5 and Otsego nipped Oak Harbor 17-16.

McGrath pitched a one-hitter but could not breathe easily until a 5-run sixth inning gave her a cushion.

"Michelle pitched an excellent

Girls Softball

game; she got (St. Wendelin) to hit into a lot of fly ball outs," said St. Joe Coach Gary Geller. "What worried me was we weren't scoring any runs for her. Fortunately, we finally got it together."

McGrath walked seven and struck out six, but found herself in a 2-2 tie entering the sixth despite the one-hitter. St. Joe stranded runners in scoring position in both the second and third innings, while the Mohawks made the most of their seven free passes.

But in the fifth the Streaks pounded out five hits for a 7-2 lead. They added an insurance

run in the eighth.

McGrath and Amy Gonya led St. Joe on offense. McGrath had a double and three RBI and Gonya had two hits, one a double.

Defensively, St. Joe backed up McGrath with an errorless game.

Clyde 7, St. Mary's 5

Teri Meyer scattered five hits and her Flier teammates pounded out 12 in the Sandusky Bay Conference victory.

Heather Dick, Cari Zontini, Heidi Scheck and Theresa Skiller all had two hits apiece for the Fliers, 7-2 and 6-4 in the SBC. Dick and Amy Maines had triples and Scheck hit a double. St. Mary's fell to 3-13, 0-11.

Manufactured win for SJCC

By BOB MARKER
Staff writer

OLD FORT — Mike Gabel had to agree. Instead of Crimson Streaks, he had a group of "Manufacturers" on his hands.

The "Manufacturers" built a Fremont St. Joseph Central Catholic 5-2 win over Bettsville in the Class A District Baseball Tournament semifinals Tuesday.

"We manufactured some runs today," said Gabel, the St. Joe coach, "and we are going to need that against (Sandusky) St. Mary's (in the finals)."

St. Joe will play St. Mary's, 22-1, at 4:30 p.m. Friday at Old Fort High School for the district title and a berth in the regional tournament.

St. Joe scored a run in the first, added two in the third and punched across single runs in the sixth and seventh innings.

In the first, St. Joe lived up to its new label, scoring a single run on Brad Young's leadoff double, stolen base and Scott Radde's sacrifice fly.

In the third, St. Joe scored twice on a single by Chris Rivi, Young's second double and Radde's two-run single.

Winning pitcher Jeff Blanton cruised through the first three innings but ran into trouble in the fourth.

See STREAKS, B-3

Otsego 17, Oak Harbor 16

A game-tying rally went for naught when Oak Harbor allowed an unearned run in the bottom of the seventh inning.

The Rockets committed 11 errors in all in falling to 6-18, but the most costly was the last. Janice Butzin and Jenny Almendinger capped two-run singles to highlight a six-run seventh inning as Oak Harbor rallied from a 16-10 deficit to tie the score. The comeback fell to the wayside in the home half of the seventh when an error led to the winning run for Otsego, 15-8.

Amy Harrel hit a home run and Shelley Whitaker added three hits for Oak Harbor.

Ross

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in his pitching and so do I."

The Ross infield also turned a 4-6-3 double play that helped kill a two-on, no-out threat in the fourth inning.

Aaron Meade, who was the pivot man on the first double

play, made a nice play on a hard-hit grounder to start the second run killing.

Ross scratched a run across in the fourth inning. Talbot Aldrich opened the frame with the first of two doubles he had in the game. Following a sacrifice bunt by Mark Gonzalez and a walk to Bob Hrynyciw, Aldrich scored when Hrynyciw got caught in a run-down between first and sec-

ond.

Wapakoneta, 13-14, scored its run in the sixth inning. Stiles doubled, moved to third on a throwing error by Hrynyciw and scored on a single by Dave Horn.

"We were expecting a close game," said Fought, "especially after watching (Monday's) game."

In Monday's other semifinal, Sandusky edged Defiance 2-1 in a pitcher's duel that lasted nine innings.

Despite an error by Gonzales and a single by Mitch Boedicker — both with two out — in the seventh inning, Raney maintained his composure and fanned Stiles to end the game.

"When I see something like that, an error with two outs that would have ended the game, usually I worry," said Fought, "but Raney shook it off right away."

"It didn't affect him, so I felt confident."