

# Sports

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## Central power ends Ross's tournament trail

By BOB MARKER

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OREGON — Toledo Central Catholic unleashed its "Irish luck" and brought Fremont Ross's high school baseball tournament trail to an end here Monday night.

The Irish hammered two home runs and a pair of doubles in a 6-4 victory over the Little Giants. Central, now 19-6, will play in the Class AAA District Tournament at Lucas County Recreation Center next Monday in a 7:30 p.m. game.

Ross bows out of the tournament with an 11-4 mark but are sitting on top of the Buckeye Conference Western Division race.

"The kids played their hearts out," a sullen Chuck Lindsey, coach of the Little Giants, said quietly after the game. "But they (Central) has a nice ball team. They hit the ball well and they had good pitching."

Lanky junior right-hander Chip Ruth took over for starter Clayton Stidham with no cuts and a Ross runner on third in the sixth. Central was up 6-4. Ruth fanned Steve Ebert on a called third strike and got John Rios on a swinging third strike. Doug Gallagher's fly ball to right got the Irish out of the inning.

Ruth retired Ross one-two-three in the bottom of the seventh but had to have an outstanding defensive play to do it. Brian Humbarger, leading off Ross's final turn at the plate, lofted a long fly to left field.

Central's Joe Hahn turned his back to the infield and lofted his body toward the fence and caught the ball one-handed while hanging onto it when he hit the ground for the first out. Ruth fanned Jay Bowers and got Bobby Clark on a soft liner to first baseman Cleves Delp to ice the game.

Delp was Central's motivation. He hammered a two-run homer off Little Giants starting pitcher

Tom Pena in the first. He came back to drive in the eventual winning run with a double off the right centerfield fence in the two-run fifth and scored the final run of the night for Central on Scott Hoffman's single to right.

Ross, after spotting the Irish the 2-0 lead, took advantage of Stidham's wildness to take a 3-2 lead in the bottom of the first.

Leadoff hitter Rios singled. He stole second and continued to third as catcher Hoffman's throw went into center. Gallagher walked to put runners at first and third. Rios scored when Humbarger grounded to Delp for the first out.

A wild pitch as Bowers walked put Gallagher at third and he scored when Clark grounded to third. Gallagher was safe when he beat the throw to the plate.

A fielder's choice and passed ball, allowing Bowers to score gave Ross the lead.

Tim Ritter, Central's ninth batter, tied the game with two out in the second, blasting his fourth homer of the season over the centerfield fence.

"We have been living on Irish luck — the long ball," Central Coach Rick Briggie said.

Lindsey inserted lefthanded Rios on the mound for Pena in the fifth. "I wanted to give Central a different look and it worked on the first two hitters," Lindsey said about the move.

Rios got Randy Guerrero on a grounder and fanned Mickey Mitchell to start the inning but then ran into trouble. Clark lost Stidham's fly to left in the twilight for a double. Delp followed with a double and Hoffman's single gave Central a 6-3 lead.

Central topped off the game with a run on a walk, sacrifice and a Ross error in the sixth.

The Little Giants got their final run in the fifth on a walk to Humbarger and Farr's double.