

Ross advances to districts

Consistently good Brandon Hoelzer chosen as TRAC Player of the Year

By Kevin Shields

Sports writer

BOWLING GREEN — You'd have to look hard to find a more consistently good high school golfer than Fremont Ross' Brandon Hoelzer.

All the senior has done the last few seasons is go out and fire rounds in the low to high 70s — seldomly, if ever, challenging to shoot in the 80s.

His steady play with the clubs earned him the Three Rivers Athletic Conference Player of the Year and on Tuesday, it helped the Little Giants advance to the Division I district tournament. Hoelzer carded the second-best overall score, shooting a 2-over 74 as Ross shot a 321 to finish fourth at the Division I

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JIM SCHARER, Fremont Ross boys golf coach

sectional tournament played at Stone Ridge Golf Club.

"His consistency is what makes him the best," Little Giants coach Jim Scharer said of Hoelzer. "There's not many kids that can go out and shoot 72, 73 or 74 all the time. He does that no matter which course he plays."

Clay Schwartz and Albert Baumann each had a pair of 82s for Ross, while Michael Hall

came up big in the No. 5 spot, carding an 83.

"I'm very proud of our kids because this is a great accomplishment for them," Scharer said. "We got sent over here to Bowling Green from Thunderbird Hills this year, and there's a lot of great golf teams here. And to finish fourth is a great feat."

Toledo St. John's Jesuit topped the team list, shooting a com-

bined score of 310, beating Findlay in a fifth-man playoff. Behind the Trojans (310) was Toledo St. Francis de Sales (321), which also won a fifth-man playoff over Ross. Sylvania Northview earned the final district team spot with a score of 324.

"For a score of 324 to get out of sectionals was surprising," Scharer said. "Even with as nice of a day as it was, the scores weren't that great. The courses have been so wet lately, it made putting on fast greens again very difficult. There were a lot of three putts out there"

There weren't any from Hoelzer, though, who overcame some early trouble to finish a stroke behind the leaders.

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Fremont Ross senior Brandon Hoelzer putts Aug. 9 on the green during the Panther Invitational at Heatherdowns Country Club. Hoelzer was recently chosen as the Three Rivers Athletic Conference Player of the Year. On Tuesday, Hoelzer shot a 2-over 74 to lead Ross to a fourth-place finish at the Division I sectional at Stone Ridge Golf Club in Bowling Green. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Golf

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After his tee shot on the first hole went out of bounds — leading him to open with a double-bogey — he picked himself off the mat with a birdie on his second-hole.

“After I birdied that hole, I knew I could bring it back,” Hoelzer said. “It’s been easier this year to shrug off a double-bogey, just because I know two birdies isn’t something out of my reach. I can come back from those kinds of mistakes, so it doesn’t bug me too much.”

Hoelzer won the inaugural TRAC player of the year by 20 strokes. The honor was based on his overall totals in all four of the league’s tournament, ending last week in the final tournament, which just so happened to be played at Stone Ridge.

“He deserves every accolade he gets,” Scharer said. “He’s worked hard. He’s put the time in, and he’s been spectacular.”

^N And for once his consistency was rewarded.

“That meant a lot to me to win Player of the Year, having never won that the previous three years in the GBC (Greater Buckeye Conference),” Hoelzer said. “I always used to complain that in my old league it was an honor based on one day and one tournament. Anyone can play well on a certain day. Then this year, it was based on more than one day and I won, so I was excited.”

Back in August, Hoelzer changed his usual draw shot off the tee that went right to left^N, to be more of a left to right fade shot. It’s

a movement that has become second-nature to him in the last month.

“My hook is gone,” he said. “It’s just a natural shot for me now. I’m excited to play with it at districts this year.”

Hoelzer was on his putting game Tuesday, which is a great combination to have with strong tee to green play.

“I’ve been hitting really good iron shots lately, and it’s allowed me to hit a lot of greens,” Hoelzer said. “During the TRAC championships here, I hit 16 greens. I was hitting a lot again today.”

But like many other sports, Hoelzer considers golf a team sport, and he was more happy he could share a district trip with his teammates.

“It’s pretty exciting that we made it as a team, considering it’s the last year for me and Clay (Schwartz),” Hoelzer said. “For a second I didn’t think we were going to make it. But luckily Michael Hall came in with an 83, and that really secured it for us.”

“It feels good to go as a team and not having to have to go alone.”

Hoelzer’s score would’ve been the top individual score to advance had the Little Giants not qualified.

New to Division I this fall was Clyde, which finished tied for 13th with a score of 358.

Garret Rupert led the Fliers with an 8-over 80. Luke Hohenstein tallied a 90.

“I hit my bad shots on the wrong holes today,” Rupert said. “But my chipping saved me. I didn’t hit too many greens today.”^N

*Email Kevin Shields
at kshields@gannett.com.*