

SECTIONAL TITLE COMES TO FREMONT

Ross wins sectional title

Cobb nearly shuts out Madison

By MICHAEL BOSI
Staff writer

SANDUSKY — Pitching and defense win ballgames.

The baseball philosophy is plain and simple. And Friday it was oh-so-true as Fremont Ross advanced to the Division I district tournament.

Three Little Giants double plays overshadowed three errors and provided more than enough backing for sophomore right-hander Dan Cobb, who came within one out of his first varsity shutout in a 5-1 victory over Mansfield Madison at Jaycee Park.

There was no trickery, no deceit and certainly no stealing home — it is Tuesday's win over Mansfield Senior. Just pure fundamentals.

"I don't think you'll see a better defensive game than what they played," Madison coach Rob Peterson said.

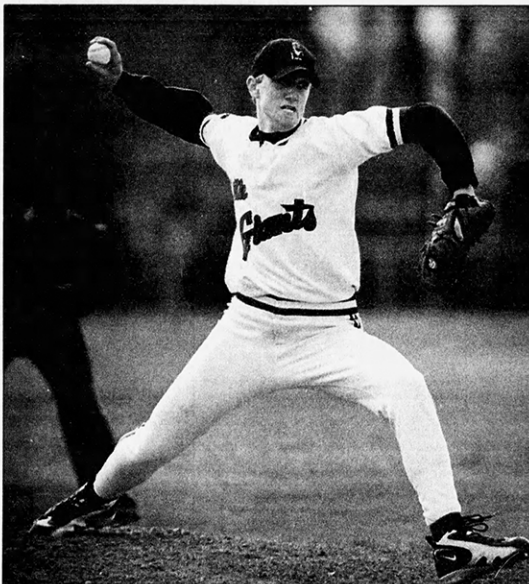
That's coming from a coach whose team was flawless in the field itself but fell prey to Cobb's six-hit pitching and the vacuum created in the middle of the infield by shortstop Michael Hickey and second baseman Roy Nino.

Take away Terry Cisco's one-man gang performance — he produced four of his team's runs — and Madison pitcher Doug Estep (4-3), who lost with a five-hitter, was even better than Cobb.

Those are the couzdas, shouldas and wouldas that the Rams (14-9), co-champs of the Ohio Heartland Conference, can lament now that their season is over. The 10-5 Little Giants, meanwhile, have plenty of business to take care of.

Fremont Ross will have this dilemma Tuesday: baseball or softball. While the ladies begin their district quest in Tiffin against Ashland, the baseball squad will be in district play for the first time since 1988, when it reached to the regionals.

With all due respect to Ross's next opponent, Defiance, "Our



DAN COBB of Fremont Ross came one hit shy of a shutout Friday against Mansfield Madison.

BASEBALL

Tournament

FRIDAY'S RESULTS

Division I Sectional at Sandusky

Ross 5, Mansfield Madison 1

MONDAY'S GAMES

Division IV District at Old Fort

St. Wendelin vs. Woodmont

TUESDAY'S GAMES

Division I District at Findlay

Fremont Ross vs. Defiance

Division II District at Sandusky

Bellevue vs. Lexington

Division IV District at Old Fort

Gibsonburg vs. New Riegel

goal is to get to the Sweet 16; we want Findlay back," Cisco said, referring to a 7-1 loss to the Trojans April 9.

A year ago at this time, Cisco wasn't so thrilled. Ross's post-season stalled in the sectional final with an 11-3 loss to Tiffin Columbian. But Cisco got the engines turning Friday.

With the game scoreless in the bottom of the third, Cisco earned a second life on a dropped foul ball before drawing a one-out walk. After Nino grounded out, Sam Root (2-for-2) hit an RBI single to right field for the first run.

Ross changed the game's complexion with a three-run fourth. A one-out walk to Aaron Conrod loaded the bases and brought the infield in, and Julian Domiray made it 2-0 when he dribbled a slow roller to third base to score Derek

Thiessen.

Cisco immediately followed by lining a two-run single to left field for a four-run lead.

Cisco added an RBI single in the bottom of the sixth for a 5-0 lead.

With the comfortable cushion, Cobb (2-3) grew stronger. Through three innings he threw 41 pitches, but needed just 38 over the final four.

"That's a nice lead to work with, 4-0. But I just go out and throw strikes and try to get people out," said Cobb, who had gone 10 days since his last start.

Cobb had just one strikeout but recorded 15 outs on the

See COBB, B3

Cobb nearly shuts out Madison

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ground, including the twin-killings in the third, fifth and sixth innings.

"He kept the ball down and we hit a lot of ground balls in the grass. He was impressive today," Peterson said.

After showering Cobb with his own praise, Peterson paused and then rolled his eyes as he let his realization that Cobb is only a sophomore be known:

"Great, we get to see that pitcher two more years."

Madison spoiled Cobb's shutout

bid when Ross committed a pair of errors and Estep's infield single with two out produced the lone Rams run.

"Dan's got great control, he can put the ball where he wants it," Ross coach Dan Fought said. "He doesn't get upset about anything; it's a perfect pitcher's scenario. You can't let errors effect you and you can't let mental errors effect you, and Danny's done that on a daily basis."

LITTLE GIANTS NOTES: Ross has turned five double plays in its two tournament wins. ... In the fifth, Nino started an inning-ending double play by tagging

Estep with authority between first and second base. Nino led off the bottom of the inning and Estep sailed his first pitch over Nino's head, drawing a long stare from the Little Giants infielder. When Nino walked five pitches later, he said more than a "how do you do" to Estep. Although Estep unintentionally hit Thiessen two batters later — he did say, "I'm sorry" — there were no incidents thereafter. ... Friday's Madison team was a different one than the Little Giants beat, 7-6, in eight innings April 23. Three seniors and one junior have since quit.