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Little Giant Golfers Columbus Bound

Decker, Moll, Baumann & Hall Take AAA District Title

TOLEDO — Jim Decker, Bob Moll, Buck Baumann and Rob Hall sliced a full year off Charlie Baker's timetable.

The veteran Ross golf coach didn't plan on taking a squad to the state high school tournament until next spring.

They'll be in Columbus next Friday and Saturday for this year's edition, however, after streaking to first place in the Northwest District Class AAA meet at Glangary Country Club Friday.

"I never believed we could go this year," Baker said. "I thought we were too young and didn't think the kids had the maturity to go — I underestimated them."

The Little Giants, who only got into the district field by defeating Sandusky in a sudden death playoff for the third position in the sectional meet, totaled 324 and had a five-stroke bulge over Sylvania, which will also be in the state field.

Ross pocketed its state credentials after firing a horrendous 177 over the front nine holes.

"That was our highest total of the year for nine holes," Baker said. "I couldn't see how any of the other teams would shoot that bad, but they did. I was ready to go sit in the bus after learning what our kids had done."

But somewhere between the ninth green and 10th tee all of the Ross players found the right combination. They carded a brilliant 152 over the back which was the lowest aggregate round of the day for any team.

"Since I've been coach at Ross, the golfers have had a

continuing history of folding in the stretch," Baker said. "This has got to be the greatest come-from-behind effort I've ever seen on the golf course."

"You figure that each of our kids averaged 43 on the front side. Then they came back to average 38 on the back — that's quite an improvement."

Junior Bob Moll was low for the Little Giants with a 40-38-78. Next in line was Jim Decker, who missed the sectional tournament. The junior putting specialist carded a 42-37-79.

Sophomore Buck Baumann, who has been consistent throughout the spring, had the high nine hole score of the day — 46 — over the front side but came back in with a one over par 36 to finish with 82. Another soph, Bob Hall, fired a 44-41-85.

"It was a total team effort," Baker said. "That's the beautiful thing about it. It was a total team effort in the sectional when we were without Decker. Today Jim was back and he knew he had to shoot under 80 for us."

Hall was singled out by Baker for being able to handle the pressure in extremely good fashion for a sophomore.

"He was the last man to tee off today and the pressure was with him more than our other kids," Baker said. "We have various hand signals and the fellows have a way of knowing what's going on all the time."

"After the 16th hole Rob knew it was up to him. And he just played tremendously over the last two holes. He had a

brilliant par on the 17th and followed it with another outstanding par at 18."

Hall's tee shot on the 370-yard par four 17th only went about 130 yards. His second shot was within pitching wedge range of the green and he put his third within four feet of the cup after hitting to an elevated green.

Then at 18 with a large gallery surrounding the green, Hall got off a good tee shot but put the second in a trap behind the green. He blasted to within a foot of the cup from 50 feet away to pick up the par.

"When Rob came to 18 he could tell by the emotionality that there was a chance we could get second," Baker said. "Our kids never knew we were in the lead or even had a chance of winning until the final scores were posted."

Decker, who was plagued with a case of the shanks, had a triple bogey seven on the par four fourth hole which contributed to his 42 on the front. He also bogeyed 10, 12 and 14 on the back, but also had a bird at 11.

Moll, who had the second low round of the day, carded 11 pars and seven bogeys.

"He was extremely consistent," Baker said. "Bob has made tremendous improvement from last year, not only with his golf but also his degree of maturity and strength."

Baumann got off to a wrong start with a double bogey on the first hole. Then he took a quadruple bogey eight on the eighth hole.

"After that 46 his 82 has got to be good," Baker said. "Earlier in the season I said 'Buck doesn't bind' (tighten up). Today I had to change that to 'Buck doesn't bind often'."

Baumann had eight pars and a bogey on the back side. He parred the final five holes.

"The course played like it did during our practice round Tuesday," Baker said. "The only difference today was that there was a wind which was a slight factor and the players were hitting from the back of all the tees. This possibly added a maximum of two shots but the pins were very fairly placed."

Sylvania had the tournament medalist — Alan Padel (74). The Wildcats also received an 81 from Jeff Poole and 87s from Paul Kerscher and Steve Burke.

Marion with a 331 was third in the team standings. Toledo Rogers, Findlay and Mansfield Malabar tied for the next shot at 33. They were followed by Toledo St. John's (334) and Ashland (337).

Port Clinton was disqualified after one of the Redskins signed an incorrect scorecard.

The 44th Annual State Tournament will be played Friday and Saturday at Ohio State University. Each team that qualified for the state meet will play 18 holes Friday and 18 more Saturday.

First tee off time Friday is 10 a.m. Tee times begin Saturday at 7:30 a.m.



ROSS GOLFERS who won the district championship at Toledo Glangary Country Club Friday surround head coach Charlie Baker who holds the team trophy. From left to right are Rob Hall, Jim Decker, Buck

Baumann and Bob Moll. The first place finish earned the Little Giants a berth in next week's state competition at Columbus. (News-Messenger Photo)

'Cats Take League Title

By MARK CARLSON

N-M Sports Editor

WOODVILLE — Woodmore didn't play its best game of the spring.

In fact, head coach Dave Schwartz said his club played its worst defensive contest in 15 games. Still they were good enough to beat Ottawa Hills, 3-2, Friday to gain undisputed possession of the Lakeshore Conference championship for the third time in four years.

"This was the worst we've looked on defense this season," Schwartz said after the 'Cats were charged with six errors. "We made mistakes that should

never be made this late in the season. If this would have been the first or second game I might be able to excuse them."

"We were just terrible in run-downs. Twice Jeff (Little) had runners picked off and we let them get to second base."

The young Wildcats, who have reeled off nine consecutive victories in the league and are 11-5-1 overall, tallied their runs in the third inning after two were out.

A walk to Gary Perkins started the rally. A stolen base and error followed before senior outfielder Ron Busdaker tripled inside the left field line. Another Ottawa

Hills error on a grounder by Jeff Little allowed Busdaker to score and made it 3-1.

Mitch Bowen followed Little with a single but a fly ball to center by Don Flick ended the inning.

"The hit by Busdaker made us," Schwartz said. "Every time we've needed a big hit this year to get runners home or to get a rally started it seems that Ron has been the one to come through. I bet you can look back through the scorebook and find eight or nine times where he has either started a rally off or kept us going."

"We're really going to miss him next year. Of the kids we

have playing for us now, Ron and Little are the only power hitters."

Early in the season, Schwartz predicted this was going to be a rebuilding year. A league championship wasn't expected, especially after a glance at the lineup which showed only one senior, Schwartz also started two juniors, five sophomores and one freshman.

"On paper that club (Ottawa Hills) was the team to beat this year," Schwartz said as he watched the Green Bears walk away from the diamond.

"They had beaten us last year

and lost only one or two players from that club. I honestly figured they were the best team in the league."

North Baltimore, which was the only team that had a chance of catching the Wildcats until last night, did not enter into the early season rankings.

"I never figured on North Baltimore being in the race," Schwartz said. "They've made tremendous strides with that program this year."

Little, a crafty junior left-hander, who's now 6-1 for the season and 15-0 in three years, has been the winning pitcher in seven of Woodmore's nine league victories.

"I don't know where we would be if we didn't have Jeff," Schwartz said. "He has been just tremendous."

"And, he has been a big help to the young kids. They've made mistakes but Jeff just seemed to overlook them and work harder. Tonight, it was our errors that kept Jeff in trouble, but he just grew harder to get out of the jams."

The 64 fireballer yielded three hits — none figured in the Hills' scoring — while fanning 11 and giving three free passes.

"We were lucky to get out with a win," Schwartz said. "This seems to be our year. We've been in a lot of jams but always get out

In Non-Conference Tilt

St. Joseph Nicks Perkins, 7-6

St. Joe tuned up for its semi-final contest this afternoon with Meersville in the Sandusky St. Mary's Invitational with a 7-6 decision over Sandusky Perkins Friday at Anderson Field.

The victory opened the Critson Streaks to 8-0 on the season. Perkins, a Class AA powerhouse, will be playing in the Lima Class AA Regional Tournament next week.

The Streaks scored a pair of

runs in each the first and third innings and then rallied for three more in the fifth to hold off the charging Pirates.

Perkins scored its first tally in the fourth frame and then rallied for two in the fifth and three in the seventh but fell just one run short.

St. Joe's Rager Rhoad was credited with the victory. The senior right-hander went the first six frames before being relieved

by John Barrington in the seventh.

Powerful Dave Frederick blasted a two-run homer in the first after Jerry Yeager had gained second base on a single and a steal.

The Streaks made it 4-0 in the third stanza. With one out, Frederick powered his second safety, a single to center field. Bill Halm sacrificed him to second before Mark Rimelapach

Streak errors and scored on long fly out to right field by Bill Schaeffer.

Frederick led the Streaks in their fifth-inning rally with his third consecutive hit, a single up the alley in left field. Halm's base hit sent Frederick to third and Rimelapach's sacrifice advanced Halm to second.

Barrington's long single to left center scored two St. Joe runs. Big John stole second and scored