

Good start for Ross

Little Giants finish sixth, Hoelzer shoots 74

By Kevin Shields
Sports writer

TOLEDO – Brandon Hoelzer isn't afraid to set a high bar for himself on the golf course.

The Fremont Ross senior is again the Little Giants' No. 1 player and he expects great things each time he tees it up.

So, when he carded a 3-over 74 at the Maumee Invitational at Heather Downs Country Club on Tuesday, Hoelzer wasn't satisfied — even though it was the third-best round in a 126-player field.

"My goal is to shoot even par at every course we play this season," Hoelzer said. "It's a goal that I think is definitely possible. It's not something too far out of my reach."

As a team, Ross finished sixth with a total of 316. Toledo St. Francis De Sales won with a score of 305. Napoleon was second at 311.

"It was a good round for some of the shots I hit, but I expected to do a lot better than I did," Hoelzer said. "You'll have bad rounds though. Not that 74 is a bad round. I just felt I left a few shots out there with the course being in the good scoring condition it was in."

Rain fell most of early Tuesday morning, dampening the greens and making the surfaces much easier to control.

A bad start to his round, though, left Hoelzer scrambling to reach par.

"I was 4-over through the first three holes, then got on a birdie train and got things back to even par," Hoelzer said. "But on the finishing holes, I finished bogey, bogey, par, bogey, which hurt me coming down the stretch."

Hoelzer likes to play a draw off the tee from right to left. That was hampered by a case of the hooks on Tuesday, as his ball was hooking into the rough.

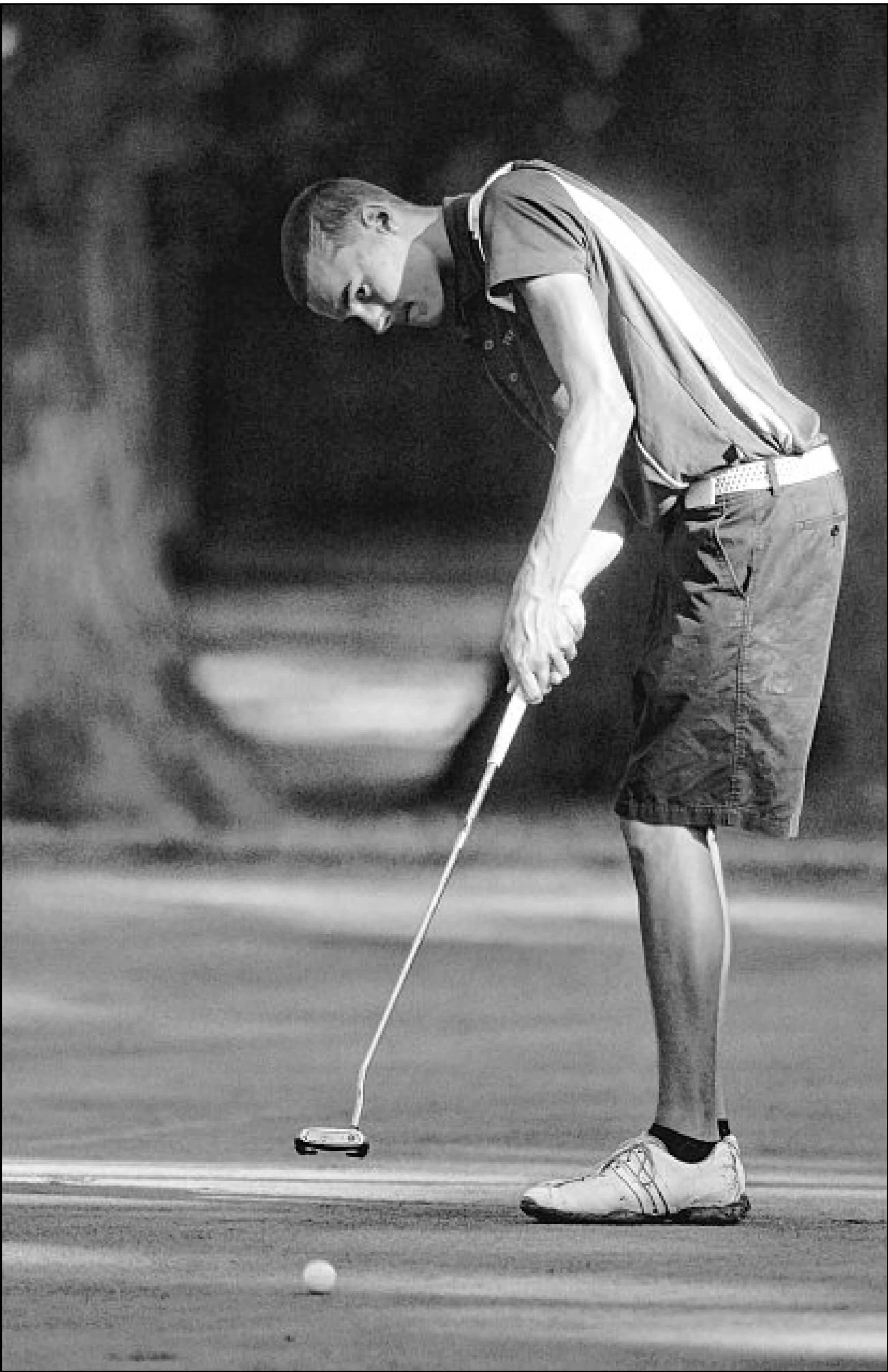
"This is definitely a fade-biased course, which makes it a little tougher for me since I like to play that draw shot," Hoelzer said. "I was over-hooking too many fairways."

Hoelzer has also been working hard with the putter, a club that let him down at times during Tuesday's play.

"My putting has been really good, except for today," he said. "I had kind of a bad putting day out there. But putting was the main thing I worked on this summer and I've seen pretty good improvement with that."

As a whole, Hoelzer was happy with what happened behind him.

Ross's No. 2 player, Clay Schwartz, recorded an 11-over 82, as did No. 3 player Albert Baumann. Brandon Weiker fired a 12-over 83, and Michael Hall had a ca-



Fremont Ross senior Brandon Hoelzer hits a putt during the Maumee Panther Invitational on Tuesday at Heather Downs Country Club. Hoelzer shot 74 and the Little Giants finished sixth. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS- MESSENGER

reer-best 7-over 78 at the No. 5 spot. Jared Hutton, the No. 6, shot a 91.

"Brandon is pretty solid for having not played competitive golf before," Hoelzer said. "And with Michael Hall shooting a 78 — that's pretty good for a No.4 and No. 5 man."

His coach agreed. "I think that's as good as we've done since I've been here,

having our highest team total be an 83," Ross second-year coach Jim Scharer said. "Those are all scores that are respectable."

Hank Austin of St. Francis earned overall medalist honors with an even-par round of 71. Maumee's Mitchell Kontak was second with a 2-over 73.

Ross was second among the four Three Rivers Athletic Con-

ference schools in the tournament.

"We're right there, we're just a little bit of seasoning away from getting back to where we belong, around 310-mark," Scharer said. "Our score of 316 isn't a bad score, but we left some shots out on the course."

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ROUNDUP

Ross wins St. Francis Invite

News-Messenger reports

OREGON — The Fremont Ross golf team concluded its first week of competition by shooting 303 at Maumee Bay Golf Course on Friday to win the St. Francis Invite.

The Little Giants finished two strokes ahead of Three Rivers Athletic Conference rival Findlay and four ahead of St. John's Jesuit and Van Buren.

Brandon Hoelzer led Ross by shooting an even-par 72, which tied the low round in the tournament. Albert Baumann and Michael Hall each fired 76 and Clay Schwartz had a 79.

Hoelzer and Hall were named to the all-tournament team, while Baumann was edged out in a score card playoff for the all tourney team.

The event was the second jamboree for the newly formed TRAC. After two events St. John's leads with a score of 617, Findlay is second at 626, Ross is third at 628 and St. Francis is fourth with 644. The third Jamboree will be at at 9 a.m. Friday at Fremont Country Club.

High School Sports

BOYS GOLF

LAKE FLYER INVITATIONAL

- » **Site:** Brandywine Country Club (par 71).
- » **Team Scores:** 1. Toledo St. John's Jesuit 316, 2. Woodmore 332, 3. Fremont Ross 333, 4. Genoa 340, 5. Kalida 341, 6. St. Joseph CC 344, 7. Lake 354, 8. Liberty-Benton 355, 9. Van Buren 362, 10. Bellevue 365, 11. Arlington 369, 12. Liberty Center 370, 13. Tinora 376, 14. Cardinal Stritch 387, 15. Swanton 408, 16. Carey 422.
- » **WOODMORE:** Billy Blausey 85, Ty Burner 76, Mikayla Baer 88, Matt Zatko 83, Devin Fisher 89.
- » **GENOA:** Trevor McLearn 85, Taylor Darling 86, Andrew Goeckerman 82, Chris Chapinski 89, Swartzmiller 99.
- » **BELLEVUE:** Justin Schoen 85, C. Rospert 92, D. Sabo 112, J. Smith 96, D. Dylan DeWitt 92.
- » **FREMONT ROSS:** Brandon Hoelzer 79, Clay Schwartz 78, Albert Baumann 88, Brandon Weiker 93, Michael Hall 88.
- » **ST. JOSEPH CC:** Connor Dudley 83, Joe Steinle 87, Aaron Staib 92, Brett Michael 84, Aaron Burns 90.

Ross handles tough course

Golfers tie for 3rd in Fremont Invite at Stone Ridge

By Kevin Shields

Sports writer

FREMONT — The Fremont Country Club can be one tough golf course to navigate when it's in pristine condition.

And on Friday, the course — dry and fast — was getting the best of some of the best golfers in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference, as well as some of its better club members from Fremont Ross and St. Joseph Central Catholic.

However, there are always those few exceptions.

The Little Giants still managed to get a 6-over 77 from their No. 2 golfer, Clay Schwartz, and a 7-over 78 from No. 1 Brandon Hoelzer. Their efforts allowed Ross to finish tied for third as a team with a 322 at the Fremont Invitational, the third and final TRAC invite before the league meet Sept. 28 at Stone Ridge Golf Club in Bowling Green.

Dan Todd, of Findlay, and Hayden Austin, of St. Francis de Sales, tied for medalist honors with a 4-over 75 to lead the Trojans (310) and Knights (315) to first- and second-place honors, respectively. St. John's Jesuit tied the Little Giants for third with a 322, while SJCC — competing as a non-TRAC

member — was fifth at 330.

Brett Michael shot an 8-over 79 to lead the Crimson Streaks. SJCC was able to compete in the meet after being invited by Ross coach Jim Scharer.

"The scores were a little higher than I thought they'd be," SJCC coach Tom Dudley said. "Findlay is fantastic, but I thought St. John's would be lower than they were. It had shot a 300 earlier in the year at Bowling Green.

"Just shows you this course can play tough."

Schwartz, a club member, has seen his home course plenty of times. But even he was surprised he tied for the third-best totals.

"I didn't even really play that well," he said. "But I was hitting my irons good."

Schwartz had three birdies during his round.

Ross's fourth man, Brandon Weiker, accounted for the Little Giant's third-best score, turning in a 11-over 82.

"That's by far Brandon's best score in these invites," Scharer said. "He asked me beforehand what I wanted him to shoot, and I told him anywhere between 78 and 83. So he did exactly what I asked of him."

Scharer likes his team's position heading into the league championship tournament. The Little Giants are in the midst of what's been a four-team race at the top of the standings.

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Ross

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"It's going to come down to Stone Ridge," Scharer said. "Once again, there were four schools that were very close. And Findlay is definitely in the captain's seat, but they have to play one more day yet."

St. John's had three players shoot 77 or better to shoot a 310 and win the first TRAC invitational at Red Hawk Run Golf Course on Aug. 10. Findlay was second there with a 321, St. Francis was third at 324 and Ross was fourth at 325.

But Ross captured the St. Francis Invitational last Friday, the second of the four invites, carding a 303 at Maumee Bay Golf Course to put themselves back in contention entering Friday's home tournament. The Little Giants fin-

ished two strokes ahead of Findlay and four ahead of St. John's last week.

Points earned in the three regular-season events will be added to tournament totals to determine the 2011 TRAC boys golf champion, as well as all-league players.

"We'll be ready," Scharer said. "We got a long time to prepare."

As for SJCC, it's rare to see a golfer not named Connor Dudley leading the team total.

"I can't even remember the last time I beat Connor," Michael said. "Anytime you beat him, though, you know you're having a good day."

Michael tallied three birdies in his low round.

"I knew I was going to break out soon, I was struggling off the tee lately, but I started hitting my tee ball better today," Michael said. "Then my iron game has

been strong all year, which has been nice, and I putted well today."

Joe Steinle had SJCC's second-best total, carding a 83.

For the younger Dudley, troubles off the tee were a big factor. He took a nine on hole 13 and an eight on the sixth hole.

"Connor didn't play his best, but then to have Brett play like he did was a big lift," coach Dudley said. "But Brett has been consistent all year. It was good to see him shoot 79 because he's been consistently in the low 80s."

The Crimson Streaks will be back in action Monday when they take part in the Tiffin Calvert Invitational. Ross and SJCC will then meet again in a dual at the Fremont Country Club Tuesday at 10 a.m.

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Fremont improving, not enough to beat SJCC

By Kevin Shields

Sports writer

FREMONT — Brandon Hoelzer is done letting a course's landscape determine his ability to post low scores.

So much so, he's taken matters into his own hands — and arms.

To avoid those trees that affected him in the past, Hoelzer has changed his usual draw shot off the tee that went right to left, to be more of a left to right fade shot. And after seeing his scores spike and dive in the last two weeks with

it, he's hoping he's finally found the right touch.

Hoelzer earned medalist honors for Fremont Ross with an even-par round of 71 Tuesday, but the Little Giants fell to St. Joseph Central Catholic 327-334 in a dual match played at the Fremont Country Club.

"It wasn't a real good day for us, except for what Brandon did," Ross coach Jim Scharer said. "When you shoot par that's good golf, I don't care where you're playing at.

"I think he's got his swing angle

down to where he wants it to be. I know he struggled a little bit last week coming over the top and hooking some things, but from what I saw today, that was a non-issue."

Hoelzer previously liked to play a natural 20-yard draw shot off the tee from right to left. But after shooting a 3-over 74 two weeks ago at Heather Downs Country Club, Ross' No. 1 golfer was disgruntled, to say the least.

"That's a fade-biased course

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Fremont Ross' Brandon Hoelzer chips onto the green during a golf match against Fremont SJCC at the Fremont Country Club on Tuesday.

JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Golf

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that I should've ate alive, but I couldn't make any birdies because I wasn't giving myself opportunities," Hoelzer said. "I couldn't even put the ball in the fairway because there were trees on the right side."

Since his change, Hoelzer tied for medalist honors with an even-par 72 as the Little Giants won the St. Francis Invite on Aug. 12 as part of the Three Rivers Athletic Conference's three regular-season invitationals. He then struggled to a 7-over 78 this past Friday at the Fremont Invite played the Fremont Country Club — the third and final regular-season TRAC invite.

"That's been the only problem, I can be streaky with it," Hoelzer said of his change. "Today was a pretty solid round, and I think it's all starting to come around now, but last Friday when I shot 78 here, it was just the beginning of

it. I've spent quite a few hours on the range since then."

On Tuesday, the putter was another good friend to Hoelzer, as he tallied five birdies in his round. That included four on the final five holes on the back-nine where he fired a 1-under 35.

"He's really started to have a lot of confidence in his putter," Scharer said. "And when you're making five birdies, you're making some putts."

Two birdies on the final two holes brought Hoelzer back to even-par.

"That was a good feeling to get it back to even-par there," Hoelzer said. "And it always helps when you're making 10 to 15 foot putts like I was today."

Connor Dudley's 5-over 76 led the Crimson Streaks who also improved their scores from Friday's Fremont Invite where they finished fifth with a 330 total.

"Find me the coach out there that can tell me why that is," Connor's father and Crimson Streaks coach Tom Dudley said. "But the

truth is, these are still young men we're talking about. It's tough to always get consistency from kids."

Consistency off the tee has been a problem as of late for the younger Dudley. His round of 84 last Friday was his highest total of the season.

"His driver is the real key to him playing really well," coach Dudley said of his son. "He figured his driver out yesterday at the Calvert Invite, and I think he did OK with it today. I don't think it got him into too much trouble."

Joe Steinle carded an 80 for SJCC's second-lowest score. Aaron Burns — normally the No. 5 golfer in the SJCC lineup — had the Crimson Streaks' third-lowest score, coming in with an 85.

"We used his score again in the top-four, and really, we've been using it quite a bit this season," coach Dudley said. "He's really helped us out this year, and he's been playing well. And for him to be just coming into his sophomore year, that's encour-

aging to see.

"He's playing consistent for his age."

Aaron Staib added an 86 for the Crimson Streaks.

For Ross, it's second-best score came from Clay Schwartz with an 82. Jared Hutton carded an 89 and Brandon Weiker added a 92.

"That's a reasonable round for Jared," Scharer said. "We just have to be more consistent to be successful. And 334 is a little bit worse than what we are. We normally average somewhere around 320."

Ross's normal No. 3 man, Albert Baumann, was sick and unable to compete in Tuesday's dual.

"It's too bad that Baumann was sick," coach Dudley said. "That may have made a difference for them, but I still it would've been really close. But for us, it's nice to beat them because it's never easy to beat Ross."

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Boys Golf: Norwalk Invitational

Clay Schwartz carded a 77 and Brandon Hoelzer a 78 for first-team all-tourney status as Ross finished third at Eagle Creek at 332. Norwalk won the event at 312 and Toledo Central Catholic was second at 331. Albert Baumann had an 84 and Brandon Weiker a 93 for the Little Giants. Bellevue finished 10th.

ROUNDUP

SJCC golfers top tri-match

News-Messenger reports

With its league meet looming on the horizon, the St. Joseph Central Catholic golf team earned an impressive pair of victories, topping Fremont Ross 157-158 and Ottawa Hills 157-164 in a tri-match played at the Fremont Country Club on Thursday.

“Those are good wins for us heading into (today’s) MAL (Midland Athletic League) championships,” Crimson Streaks coach Tom Dudley said. “We seem to be peaking at the right time.”

Connor Dudley led SJCC with a 3-over 38. Joe Steinle and Aaron Burns each fired a pair of 39s, while Aaron Staib shot a 41.

“Steinle was out with a back back for a few weeks, so it was nice to see him step up and post that kind of score today,” Dudley said. “Same with Aaron Burns. He’s a kid that really works hard for us.”

The Crimson Streaks will begin play at Green Hills Golf Course today at 9 a.m.

Ross’s Brandon Hoelzer was medalist for the match with a 1-over 36.

Roundup

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The Little Giants topped the Green Bears 58-164.

Clay Schwartz added a round of 39 for Ross, Albert Baumann shot a 41 and Brandon Weiker mailed a 42.

Ross will play at Stonebridge Golf Club in Bowling Green in the Three Rivers Athletic Conference Championship Tournament on Wednesday.

6-3 at No. 2 doubles.

Sarah Gray fought hard at No. 2 singles, but fell 6-3, 1-6, 5-7.

“Even though her 3½ hour-match ended in a loss, Sarah has certainly been playing competitively for us, and with a lot of athleticism and grace,” Wolfe said.

Sandusky Bay Conference Tournament

Oak Harbor’s top-seed, Ashley LaFountain, didn’t drop a game en

Boys Golf

**ST. JOSEPH CC 157, Fremont Ross 158,
OTTAWA HILLS 164**

- » **Site:** Fremont County Club (par 35).
- » **SJCC:** Connor Dudley 38, Joe Steinle 39, Aaron Staib 41, Aaron Burns 39.
- » **Ross:** Brandon Hoelzer 36, Clay Schwartz 39, Albert Baumann 41, Brandon Weiker 42.
- » **Records:** SJCC 88-42.
- » **Next:** SJCC at MAL Tournament at Green Hills, Friday 9 a.m.