

Rams oust Little Giants 13-11

Giants drop sectional final

By SCOTT TAPPA
Sports editor

MANSFIELD — Doug Rickert had seen this before. The Mansfield Madison baseball coach had watched his team surrender 12 runs in an inning in a loss to Celina last year. He had also watched Fremont Ross torch the Rams for a big inning in a 1986 tournament loss.

Tuesday, though, Madison came back from Ross's big

sixth inning to win a wild 13-11 Division I sectional final at Mansfield's Arlin Field.

"We've seen it enough times here at Madison," said Rickert, whose team improved to 22-1 and advances to next Tuesday's district semifinal.

The gruesome scene Rickert would rather not see again was the Little Giants' seven-run sixth inning, when Ross sent 12 batters to the plate and turned a 10-4 deficit into a stunning 11-10 lead.

"I always teach the kids one thing: stay close," said Ross coach Chuck Lindsey,

Tuesday

Madison 13

Ross 11

Today

Fostoria at Ross, 4:30 p.m.

whose team saw its tournament run ended. "Stay close, and you never know when you're going to have a big inning."

The inning started innocently enough, with Aaron Coonrod singling and Pete Goetz grounding out. Aaron Hines singled to score Coonrod, and the rally was on.

"(The lead) went from six,

to five, to four, to three, and I'm thinking that we had to stop the bleeding somehow," said winning pitcher Tim Mergel.

Rickert's bandage of choice was second baseman Greg McKenzie, who proceeded to walk Dustin Shively and yield a long single to Pryde Yost, loading the bases. Spencer Root's walk forced in Hines, and shortstop Daniel Lunsford booted Kyle Gegorski's ground ball, allowing Shively to score.

Mergel returned to the mound, but the onslaught continued as Josh Lozano hit

an RBI single and Dan Cobb drove in two runs with a single. Goetz hit into a fielder's choice, scoring Lozano and giving Ross (8-8) its first lead since Lozano's first inning home run.

Just as quickly, though, Madison responded. With one out in the bottom of the sixth, Brandon O'Brien hit an infield single, and Matt Hughes followed suit. With two outs, Buzz Miller singled to drive in O'Brien with the tying run, and Greg Barker followed with a two-run single to provide for the final margin.

"I thought we had made it

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over the hump, but they came out and got the three singles in a row," Lindsey said.

Ross mounted a final scoring threat in the seventh inning, with Yost and Root reaching base. With two outs, Mergel intentionally walked Lozano, putting the potential tying run in scoring position, and ended the game by striking out Cobb.

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