

Giants Tournament Road Ends

HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL: MANSFIELD MADISON 14, FREMONT ROSS 3

Ross falls flat

By CURT CONRAD
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MANSFIELD — The Fremont Ross pitching staff was its own worst enemy during Friday's Division I sectional championship game at Madison.

Three Ross pitchers combined for seven walks and two hit batsmen in a five-inning 14-3 loss to host Mansfield Madison. Eight of the nine Rams who reached on free passes came around to score.

"We had too many walks and gave them too many base runners," said Ross coach Andy Dennings. "We had been pitching the ball well recently, but for whatever reason, we had problems today."

"Give Madison credit. They weren't chasing pitches and they were swinging the bats well."

The Little Giants (12-7) struck for three runs in the top of the first. Kurt Munson led off the game with a single and moved to third on Stephen Stout's

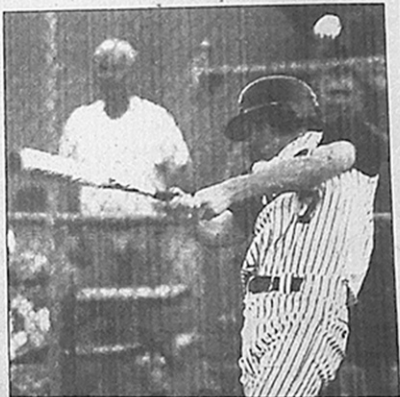
single to left. Munson scored on Jared King's single before Trent Logan delivered a two-run single.

"We got off to a good start, but no lead is safe in the tournament," Dennings said. "They got back in it and we couldn't get anything going after that."

Madison (18-8) answered with two in the home half of the inning before blowing the game open with a six-run second. Ross starter Ryan Damman surrendered six runs in 1 2/3 innings, walking three and hitting a batter.

"We showed a lot of discipline at the plate," said Madison shortstop Matt Brown, who stroked a pair of singles, scored twice and drove in three runs. "We wanted to be aggressive, but we wanted to make them throw strikes. The guys at the top of the order were patient and got on base. That gave us the chance to drive in some runs."

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Author Brown/Gannett News Service

CODY FOOS of Fremont Ross takes a swing and fouls over the top of the back stop in Friday's Division I sectional tournament game at Madison.

The News-Messenger, Fremont, Ohio, Saturday, May 12, 2007

Pitching fails Little Giants

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Brown and Madison designated hitter Matt Peters each had two-run singles in the second. Peters, who missed a majority of the season after an emergency appendectomy, was 3-for-3 with a double and four RBIs.

"Peters has only played about seven games for us," said Madison coach Doug Rickert. "It's nice to have them back in the lineup."

The Rams struck for five more runs in the third. Devin Ohl delivered the big blow, a three-run triple to the base of the wall in right-center. Ohl was 2-for-3 with a double, a triple and four RBIs.

"We got good production from the entire lineup," Rickert said. "The guys at the bottom of the order did a good job of getting on base and setting the table."

Madison pitcher Touby Bender settled down after a rocky start for the com-

plete game win. Bender gave up six hits, five in the first inning, and three runs.

"Touby really settled down after the first inning," Brown said. "We were joking with him before the game because he usually gives up a home run in the first inning."

Bender struck out seven, walked two and limited the Little Giants to an infield single over the final four innings.

The sectional title was Madison's ninth in Rickert's nine seasons. The Rams, who lost a wealth of talent to graduation, will play Bowling Green in the Bowling Green district semifinal Thursday.

The Little Giants remain in the Greater Buckeye Conference title hunt, with games next week against Findlay and Napoleon.

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