

# Ross Advances to Sectional Final

## Ross stays aggressive, stays in tourney

By TIM HARMON  
Staff writer

NORWALK — Ross's aggressive and fundamentally sound style of baseball paid off in a 9-7 win over Mansfield Malabar in the Class AAA sectional tournament Tuesday at Bill Baines Park.

The Little Giants, who will play the winner of Thursday's semifinal between Norwalk and Lexington 4 p.m. Saturday for a sectional championship, scored six runs on six hits in the third inning and made the big inning stand up.

"We had the big inning and we stayed aggressive," said Ross Coach Dan Fought. "We were told that (the Falcons) couldn't handle the pressure and that they would fold in their tents if we stayed aggressive."

sive."

Shane McConnell and Talbot Aldrich capped a barrage of five straight hits in the third with back-to-back, two-run doubles. Craig Raney, who had three hits, Mike Zelms and Bob Hrynciw opened the inning with consecutive singles.

Ross, 10-3, collected 12 hits in the game including six doubles.

"I was real pleased with the way we hit the ball," said Fought. "We had been in a slump and it's kind of nice to see some of the kids break out."

Tony Patrick picked up the win in relief of Raney, who gave up four runs on five hits and walked five in 2½ innings.

Fundamentals — and a Malabar base running blunder — in the second inning

prompted the Falcons to pull the stakes from the tents Fought talked about.

With runners on first and third and one out, Raney faked a pick-off attempt to third then caught John Horner off first. Raney threw to second baseman Aaron Meade who siezed the opportunity for a chance at a putout on Mike Dickman, who had strayed away from third.

Meade worked his way across the diamond to the third base foul line before flipping to Aldrich, who put the tag on Dickman. Aldrich then fired to Mark Gonzalez who made the putout on Horner, who had rounded second.

"The turning point was that play," said Fought. "(The Falcons) took themselves out of a big inning.

"They were trying to catch us sleeping, but we practice those situations. We work on first and third and they are playing right into our hands when they try to play in those situations."

Each team scored an unearned run in the first inning, and Ross scored one in the second on an RBI double by John Mallia.

Malabar, 6-11, chased Raney in the third when it took a 4-2 lead. A lead-off double by Mark Meyers and a single by losing pitcher Mike Bekeleski were sandwiched around three walks.

Patrick doubled and scored on a sacrifice fly by Meade in the fifth inning for a 9-4 Ross lead.

The Falcons took advantage of four walks by Patrick in the sixth inning for three runs and the final count.