

Ashland Gets the Knock Out in Sectional Final

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Arrows knock off Ross

Fremont falls out of tourney, turns to GLL

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MANSFIELD — Fremont Ross's sectional tournament opener turned on what T.J. Hammer did with the bases loaded.

Thursday's second-round game may have been decided once and for all by the same situation.

Hammer, whose grand slam broke a 1-all tie and paved the way for a 12-1 vic-

tory over Mansfield in Saturday's opener, approached the plate with two outs and the bases loaded and his team trailing Ashland 3-0 in the fifth inning.

The senior captain and left fielder took a wicked cut at the first offering from Arrows pitcher Brian Miller but fouled it straight back. Two pitches later, Hammer popped up harmlessly to Ashland shortstop Matt Wurster.

A deflated Ross squad promptly surrendered six runs in the next inning and fell 9-3 at Mansfield's Arlin Field.

"I think they went down a

Div. I baseball sectional

little bit," Ross coach Chuck Lindsey said. "They're young kids. ... There was no doubt in my mind that we were going to come down here and get it done. We just didn't get it."

Ashland (9-9) advances to meet Mansfield Madison at 5 p.m. Tuesday for the right to play in the district final at Findlay.

While Ross bows out of the tournament with a 9-7 record, the Little Giants still have plenty of season remaining. Ross leads the

Great Lakes League with a 5-0 record and gets back into league play today by hosting Findlay.

But Thursday's game belonged to Ashland from the outset. The visiting Arrows scored two runs off Ross junior starter Adam Garcia in the first inning when Wurster, the clean-up hitter, drove home two runs with a single to center.

Luke Painter doubled with one out in the fourth inning, and pinch-runner Adam Hobson came around to score on a base hit by ninth-hitter Todd Riley.

ASHLAND, B2

Ashland clinches tourney victory with big sixth

Continued From B1

Riley finished 3-for-4 with an RBI and a run scored. Jake Howell, the leadoff hitter, also went 3-for-4 and scored twice.

"This was a very good team effort. When we've been at our best, the bottom part of our order has done a decent job for us," Ashland coach Harley Eichhorn said. "We've had two or three kids who have had a pretty solid year, but they can't do it all."

Meanwhile, the Little Giants strug-

gled against Miller, a crafty junior right-hander. Ross's only base runner through the first four innings came on a Hammer walk in the first and a Garcia bloop single in the third.

But Mike Davis opened the fifth with a walk. Two outs later, freshman third baseman Jonathon Franks reached on an error and Dash Yost beat out an infield single. But Miller got Hammer to escape trouble.

"We just didn't hit the ball. I don't have a clue. I wish I did," Lindsey said. "We had guys on base and the guys up who I thought would get it

done. A couple days ago, they got it done."

The Arrows put the game away in the sixth by knocking Garcia off the mound. After Garcia struck out Painter to open the frame, Ashland put together a string of five straight singles. On came Ross junior pitcher Josh Harnish, but not soon enough to prevent six runs from crossing the plate.

"I think we answered a little bit offensively," Eichhorn said. "Three runs is not a whole lot in high school. A bloop, a bloop and a blast and all of a

sudden it's 3-3. They've got guys who are capable of doing that."

Ross scored a run in the sixth and two in the seventh inning off Miller. Nick Lance led off the sixth with a double deep to left-center field. He came around on a single by Aaron Hines. Garcia led off the seventh with a hit. Yost followed with a hit, Lance walked and Garcia and Yost scored on an error by Wurster.

Yost and Garcia each went 2-for-4 to lead the Little Giants offense.

Ross hosts Findlay at 4:30 p.m. today.