

BOYS GOLF ■ D-I DISTRICT TOURNAMENT

# Little Giants fall short of state

BY JEFF ARENZ  
Sports writer

FINDLAY — The Fremont Ross golfers hung in there until the very end during the Division I OHSA District Tournament on Thursday at Red Hawk Run Golf Course in Findlay.

Sophomore Brandon Hoelzer, who led Ross with a 7-over 79 on a cold, rainy and windy day, was eliminated from a four-way playoff for an individual state berth on the second hole.

"Brandon always does a great job on the golf course," said Little Giants coach Nick Rider after Ross shot a 331 team score to finish in a fourth-place tie with Ashland. He almost had (the state berth) outright, but he missed a couple of putts on the last few holes. But everybody looks back when their

*"What it came down to is that we didn't finish it, but we gave it a good shot. A 331 and tied for fourth with Ashland is nothing to be ashamed of."*

NICK RIDER  
Fremont Ross boys golf coach

tied in a four-man playoff and says, 'I could have made a few more putts.' He gave it a good effort, but just came up a little short."

Hoelzer missed an uphill putt from 4 feet on the No. 2 green to end up with a double-bogey after remaining tied with Findlay's Michael Popovec, Avon Lake's Brandon Aussem and Ashland's Nick Adkins.

"The ball had the line (to the

hole), but it didn't have the speed," Hoelzer said of his final putt. "It was uphill from 4 feet. I make them all day, every day."

But the weather conditions made the easiest of shots more difficult.

"I had a good mind-set heading into the playoff," Hoelzer said. "I was staying positive, and I thought that I had just as good of a chance as anybody else out there."

Adkins was also eliminated after

two playoff holes. He was forced to take a 1-stroke penalty when his tee shot at No. 2 landed in the heavy rough to the right of the fairway. After a search party failed to find his ball, he took the penalty before finding a bunker on the right side of the green and 2-putting the hole for a double-bogey.

Aussem defeated Popovec by paring the fourth playoff hole. The Findlay golfer could not recover from a 1-stroke penalty that was handed to him for hitting the ball into a creek that runs through the No. 4 fairway.

West Lake's Chris Nader shot a 77 to qualify for the first individual state tournament berth before Aussem emerged with the state tournament berth from the playoff.

SEE DISTRICTS I B5

## DISTRICTS FROM B1

Michael Balcar became the district medalist after firing a 75 and leading Toledo St. John's Jesuit to the team championship with a 323. Josh Gaspar topped Anthony Wayne with a 79 to help the Generals secure the other state tournament berth with a 324.

Findlay (325) was third, followed by Ross (331) and Ashland (331).

The Little Giants were paced by Hoelzer and Ian Mowry

During regulation, Hoelzer converted birdies at Nos.

3 and 9 and came up with pars on eight different holes. Mowry had a birdie on No. 3 and added pars at Nos. 6, 7, 10, 11 and 17. He finished with identical 41s for an 82 total.

"Ian Mowry stepped up at a time when we needed him to do that," Rider said. "He's our fifth man and he came in with an 82. I asked him to step up, and I appreciate that he did."

Clay Schwartz, who had a 4-over 40 at the turn, used 45 shots on the back nine to record an 85 for Ross. His score of 9 at the par-5 No. 17 put a damper on Schwartz's

round. Alex Chudzinski found the back nine to be more favorable with a 41 after he posted a 44 on the front for an 85. Garrett Steinfeld found trouble on both sides of the course, scoring a 44 on the front and an 47 on the back for a 91.

"We struggled as a team on the last few holes in regulation," Rider said. "What it came down to is that we didn't finish it, but we gave it a good shot. A 331 and tied for fourth with Ashland is nothing to be ashamed of."

E-mail Jeff Arenz at  
jarenz@gannett.com.