

Ross blasts into sectional final

Late home run, defense key victory; Little Giants face Tornadoes Saturday

By **TIM HARMON**
Staff writer

SANDUSKY — Derek Thiessen of Fremont Ross said he wasn't trying to hit a home run to win Tuesday's sectional tournament game against Mansfield Madison.

That didn't explain the grunt on the swing that hammered the ball over the center field fence at J.C. Park, breaking a tie and giving Ross a 4-3 victory and its first sectional win since 1992.

"I was trying to get a base hit," Thiessen said. "I knew it

was gone when I made contact. I'm an aggressive hitter. If it's close, I'm going to go after it."

The homer lifted the Little Giants into Saturday's 11 a.m. championship game against top-seeded Tiffin Columbian. The Tornadoes knocked Ross (7-9) from the tournament in the opening game a year ago.

Despite Thiessen's heroics, defense played a bigger part in the Ross victory.

In the bottom of the sixth, Graham Hogan cut down Madison's Matt Dell at the

Tuesday's Sectional Game

Ross	4
Madison	3

Sectional Championship

Saturday vs. Tiffin Columbian
4:30 p.m.

plate as Dell tried to score on Wes Remy's flyball to left field.

"First, I was worried about the out. Then I realized where I was," Hogan said. "I thought the throw was real accurate."

Hogan's throw bounced twice before catcher Bucky Byers tagged out Dell.

Thiessen took a ball, lined a

long foul down the left field line and took another ball before finding a letter high fastball from Madison reliever Rick Belcher to his liking. It made a winner of Bryan Coonrod (2-3).

"I got more than what I expected (out of Coonrod)," Ross coach Dan Fought said. "Bucky was concerned in the sixth when he started getting pitches up, but Coonrod said he was OK and he got back down."

"In the tournament, good pitching and defense will advance you. We tended to do

both real well tonight."

Coonrod scattered nine hits and did not allow an earned run, although Ross made just two errors. He struck out three and didn't walk a batter.

The Rams (7-12) committed five errors.

"I told the kids there are two reasons why they're celebrating and we're not. We didn't take advantage of our opportunities, and we didn't make the plays," Madison coach Rob Peterson said.

Thiessen and the Little Giants did.



THIESSEN ...
Seventh-inning home run provided winning run for Little Giants.