

Little Giants finish 3rd; miss chance for state berth

TOLEDO — Fremont Ross' hopes for a successful defense of its "AAA" state golfing championship went down the drain at Toledo's Glengary Country Club. The Little Giants finished two strokes back of Port Clinton and Sylvania for the "AAA" Northwestern District golf crown and the right to participate in the state tournament next weekend.

Ross fired an aggregate of 313 but missed out on the Columbus trip because of only two teams going out of the district to the state tourney. Port Clinton eventually finished second to Sylvania in a playoff. Both teams had finished at 311, the same score that Ross had won the same tournament with last year.

John Gill of Port Clinton was involved in a sudden death playoff for the individual medalist honors of the tourney with Findlay's John Zitkovic. Both players finished the regulation 18 holes with 73s.

Zitkovic, playing as an individual vying for individual titles only, apparently had the medalist honors wrapped up on the first hole of sudden death. The Findlay product was 10 feet from the pin and putting for a birdie. Gill was off the green and chipped up 25 feet short of the cup on his third shot. The Port Clinton golfer calmly rolled the ball into the cup from that distance to save par while Zitkovic two-putted for a par and another extra hole.

On the second sudden death hole, Zitkovic again was closer to the hole than Gill and was putting for another birdie. But

Gill, his putter literally blazing, rolled in another long one for a birdie while Zitkovic missed his putt and handed the medalist honors to Gill.

The loss for Zitkovic knocked him out of a chance to go to the state tourney. Only the top two teams and individual medalist, if not a member of the winning team, go to the state.

Steve Schaft and Doug Brandt, the latter Sylvania's fifth man, led the team in the sudden death playoff win with regulation 74s. No other Sylvania player broke 80.

Bob Gardner had 74 for Port Clinton's second best. Bob Belden finished with an 81 while Mark Cedoz had an 84 and Mark Martin, an 83.

Ross was led by Buck Baumann and Rob Hall with 75s. Baumann's round included a 35 on the back nine while Hall fired a 38-37-75. Scott Young with an 80, Alex Garcia, 83, and Pat Brady, 89, rounded out the Ross lineup.

The play started in the rain with the first five foursomes playing in a downpour through the first five holes of play. Some coaches described the course as having the characteristics of sponge thanks to the early morning rain that delayed the start of the tourney 90 minutes.

TEAM STANDINGS: Sylvania and Port Clinton (tie) 311*; Ross 313, Celina 320, Bowsher 321, Mansfield Malabar 322, Maumee 327, Lima Senior 341
Tourney medalist: John Gill, Port Clinton, 73*

*Won first place in sudden death playoff.