

2004 State Tournament...



JUNIOR STAR Andrew Aseltine — who has six medalist honors, including last week's district tournament, this season — leads Fremont Ross to this weekend's state tournament. It's the first appearance in Columbus for the Little Giants since 1973.

News-Messenger/David Distelhorst

Perfect policy

Junior Aseltine provides Ross with 'insurance'

By **MATTHEW HORN**
Sports Writer

By his own admission, Fremont Ross's Andrew Aseltine is a perfectionist when it comes to golf.

And by the standards of just about everybody else, Aseltine is nearly perfect.

Aseltine was medalist at five regular-season events this year and his 73 was the low score as he and his teammates qualified for this weekend's Division I state tournament in Columbus by winning districts last Thursday.

Aseltine was the Little Giants' top finisher at all but two events over the course of the season and shot 80 or higher only once — and that was in the rain.

Not surprisingly, Ross coach Mark Miesle said Aseltine has been consistent all year and his 73.87 stroke average certainly bears that out.

"By my standards he didn't have a slump," Miesle said. "To only have one round in the 80s is pretty darn good."

And having even just one round of 65, as Andrew did at the Bellevue Invitational, is pretty amazing.

"That tournament came down to a playoff, and if he shoots a 66 we don't win, we're in third," Miesle said. "There was a three-team playoff and the first tiebreaker was the fifth score. To rely on somebody

State tournament teams

Qualifying teams for the two-day Division I state tournament at The Ohio State's Scarlet Course on Friday and Saturday. Teams ranked according to last week's district tournament scores.

Upper Arlington	298
Columbus Bishop Watterson	301
Hudson	301
Cincinnati St. Xavier	302
New Philadelphia	304
Strongsville	306
Mentor	310
Lakewood St. Edward	313
Fremont Ross	316
Hamilton	317
Cincinnati Archbishop Moeller	319
Sylvania Northview	320

shooting a 65 at an event like that is phenomenal. That was a tremendous score. His round at Red Hawk last week (in districts), in that wind, on that difficult golf course, was also tremendous."

Aseltine is unquestionably the Little Giants' ace, but that by no means indicates he had to carry the team at all times.

Spencer Schabel (78.73), Grant Hilty (80.61), who had Ross's low score the two occasions Aseltine didn't, Kevin Vassar (80.75) and Scott King (80.91) each averaged better than 81 strokes.

Those four golfers, plus Aseltine, comprised the winning Little Giant faction at district and will play at state, which starts on Friday on The Ohio State University Scarlet Course in Columbus.

Austin Young (82.07) and Justin Pol-

lock (82.12), whose score broke the Bellevue tie, would both have a comfortable position on most high school teams but will have to watch this weekend.

Ross's depth would have caused dissension on many teams, but the Little Giants invariably remained a tight-knit lot.

And Miesle feels good about his team's prospects this weekend at Ohio State, especially with a player of Aseltine's caliber in the mix.

"The kids have practiced better the last few days than they have all year," Miesle said. "We have a chance to do very well in Columbus. I am very proud of this group for being a team. It's not about 'me,' it's about 'us.'"

"It takes four scores to get to where we are, but the guys know Andrew is going to come in with a good round practically every time," Miesle continued.

"That's an insurance policy this team has that is rare. If the other kids hold up their end, we'll have a good chance of winning any event we're in."

Nobody echoes the sentiments concerning the team concept more strongly than Aseltine, who suggested the experience of traveling to state would not have been the same without his buddies. Aseltine said his in-season focus rarely strays far from golf, but his teammates often afford him an escape of sorts.

"As a group, we feel pretty good," Aseltine said. "We've practiced well this whole week. We've practiced every day in ugly conditions. We hope conditions are good, but we're prepared for the worst."

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Junior star Aseltine leads Little Giants to Columbus

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"It's great having these guys with me," he continued. "We wanted this from the beginning of the year. Going down there will be one of the best times of our lives. I'm glad we got it. It would have been a little disappointed if we didn't. This is the greatest scenario possible, and I couldn't be happier."

Buck Baumann, Scott Young, Rob Hall, Jim Decker and Bob Moll made up the last Ross team to advance to state.

They won the event in 1973 and were inducted into the Ross Sports Hall of Fame in 1992.

Aseltine and his teammates have even received advice from the venerable Little Giants.

"Enjoy the time on the course with the guys you're playing with," Aseltine recounted from their conversation.

"You're only in high school once — enjoy it while you can."

Aseltine, who is only a junior, seems to have no problems doing just that.

"He is unflappable. He doesn't get nervous. He doesn't get upset. He keeps a level head,"

Miesle said. "Some kids like attention, but he just says, 'Leave me alone and let me take care of my stuff. I've got my end covered.' Mentally, he's mature beyond his years. He doesn't waste any shots because he made a mental mistake."

Miesle said Aseltine could play Division I golf in college and there are no glaring weaknesses in his game skill-wise either.

Aseltine said he spends more time on his short game than any other aspect because "that's where all the strokes are saved."

"He's the type of young man that if something isn't as good as it should be, he'll work on it," Miesle said. "Kids often want to practice what they're good at, but he has the maturity to work on what he's not quite as good at as he'd like to be."

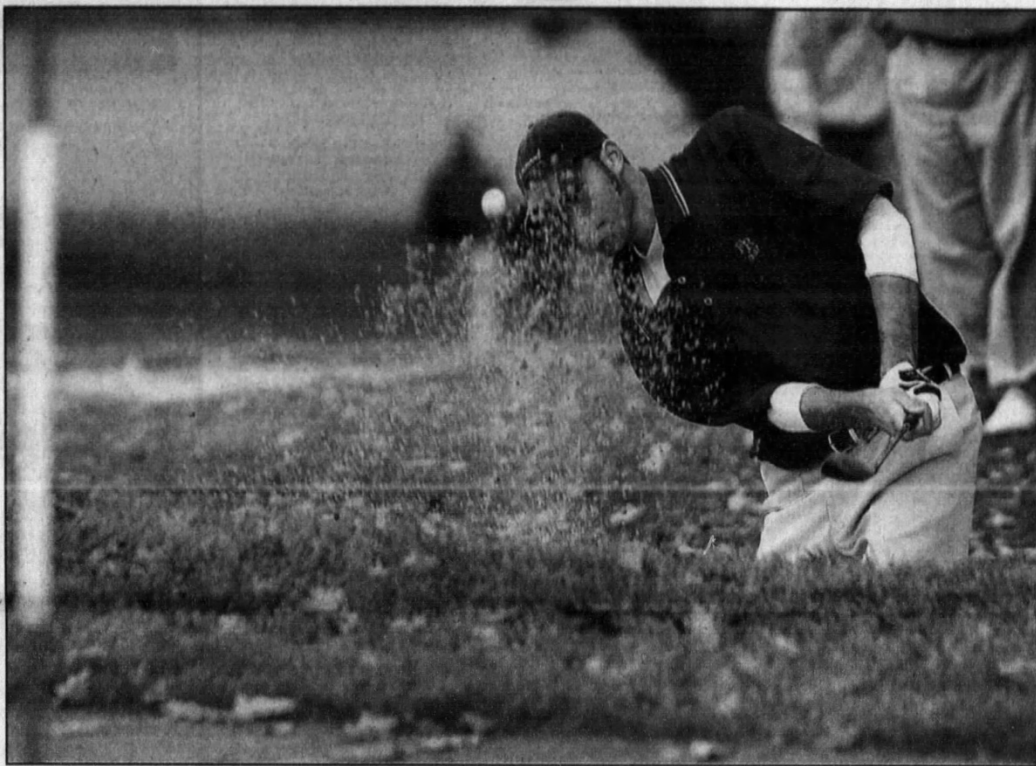
Nobody is perfect.

But Aseltine has come close this season with one event to go.

"I haven't seen a more consistent player this year that we've come across," Miesle said. "Who do I take with the No. 1 pick? Andrew."

DIVISION I STATE GOLF

Building block



Associated Press photos

ABOVE, FREMONT ROSS junior Spencer Schabel blasts out of the sand during the second round of the Division I state golf tournament in Columbus. Andrew Aseltine, below, shot a two-round score of 159 to lead the Little Giants to an 11th place finish.

Aseltine, Ross hope to be back

By MATTHEW HORN
Sports Writer

COLUMBUS — It took the Fremont Ross boys golf team 31 years to return to the state tournament.

Junior Andrew Aseltine certainly hopes the gap is considerably shorter the next time around.

And he has 10 reasons why that just might be the case.

The Little Giants finished one of the best campaigns in school history with an 11th-place finish at the Division I state tournament on Saturday on Ohio State's Scarlet Course.

Columbus Bishop Watterson won the title with a 629, while Ross carded a 672.

"I definitely could have shot 10 strokes better," said Aseltine, who finished 19th individually after firing a two-round score of 159 — 13 shots behind winner Kyle Hodges of Hamilton.

Aseltine's second-round 81 actually represented his worst score of the entire year and he believes he is capable of shooting a round of 71 on the difficult Scarlet Course.

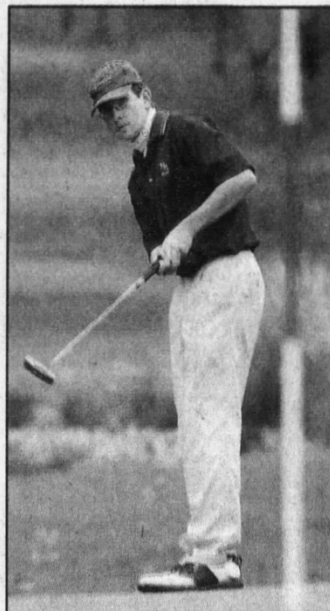
"This was our goal from the beginning of the season, and we reached our goal."

— Ross senior Grant Hilty

Aseltine said a return trip to state will be hindered by the departure of seniors Grant Hilty, Kevin Vassar, Justin Pollock and Austin Young.

And they may be missed more off the course than on as first-year coach Mark Miesle will always remember the unity of the group.

"They are truly all friends," he said. "They supported one another at all times and showed they are pretty tight. They made me laugh. They are brilliant in how well they poke fun at each other. They teased each other in a good way and kept things light."



See ASELTINE, B2

Aseltine 19th, Ross 11th at state tourney

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That task was made more difficult by an environment and daunting course the players were unaccustomed to at state.

"The course was very long. You hit a driver, and it's still a long iron or wood to the green," said Vassar, who parred hole Nos. 4-10 on Saturday. "Just being down here was great with the atmosphere of state and everybody following you. There were 50 people around the green on No. 18 (on Friday)."

Spencer Schabel shot a 168, Scott King a 171, Vassar a 174 and Hilty a 178.

Hilty said he enjoyed every minute spent with his teammates and coaches.

"We always have fun no matter what," he said. "This is an awesome group. Practice was always fun. But we worked hard, don't get me wrong."

Hilty said the Little Giants didn't play to their potential in Columbus but he was still proud.

"This was our goal from the beginning of the season, and we reached our goal," he said. "We played awesome the whole year. It was an honor to play this course. We made it to the biggest tournament of the year."

Miesle said that an appearance at state is a potential first step in making the golf squad "the team to be on at Fremont Ross." And Aseltine is intent on continuing to play his part in the cause.

"I'll be back (in Columbus) next year," he said.

And his teammates could very well join him.