

# Pitcher winds up Butler career on top of game

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VANDALIA — Closing his career in the esteemed company of all-time Vandalia Butler High School pitching great Cory Vance gave Josh Cornwell something to cherish.

The fact that Cornwell's final 0.57 ERA was nearly identical to Vance's mark of 0.56 adds further proof of the young right-hander's achievements.

Even his final record of 7-2 was deceptive because he lost both games on unearned runs.

Added to his mound resume were 47 strikeouts against 16 walks.

Winding up as one of the area's premier pitchers — if not THE area's best — the side-arming Cornwell pitched and batted his 19-11 Aviators to an 11th straight conference championship before losing in the district final to Kings.

It was no surprise when the 5-foot-11, 180-pounder with "only" three money pitches was tagged at the Butler baseball banquet as the team's MVP.

A three-sport athlete, Cornwell, who'll play his summer ball for the Greenville American Legion club, has been heavily scouted by Muskingum and Wittenberg universities, and is definitely pointing to baseball as his college sport.

Also a football and basketball letter winner, Cornwell began playing Little League in Englewood as a 7-year-old.

"I've played every position except catcher, but in high school I turned to pitching. The area I had to improve on most was my hitting."

And he accomplished that this past spring, batting .390 with a team-best 19 RBIs.

"Josh developed into the complete ballplayer this season," veteran Aviator coach Trent Dues said. "He was player of the year in the Greater Western Ohio Conference West — and with good reason.

"His whole game came together this year — it was a maturing year for him. He pitched OK last season but hit only .280."

Although Cornwell finished 6-0 a year ago, his final ERA was 2.10.

And when it comes to reflecting on season highlights, Cornwell doesn't need more than a second to talk about "the big one" — a fivehit 2-1 stopper against Wayne that checked the Warriors' 17-game winning streak.

He fanned nine and walked only three.

"That was a big win for the team and me, because they were ranked seventh in the state," said Cornwell, who also recorded saves over Springfield North and Northmont.

Wayne coach Tony Ferraro said: "Cornwell kept our hitters off balance and beat us basically on three pitches, his curve, change-up and sneaky fastball."

Cornwell's two losses were inflicted by Northmont, 2-1, and Kings (tourney), 2-0, and all four runs were unearned.

He later worked one inning for a save when Butler avenged an earlier setback to beat Northmont (14-9) in the sectional final.

Cornwell attributed his hitting improvement to assistant coach Scott Thompson.

"He taught me to stay back and be more patient," Cornwell said.