



## **Aviators Upend Moeller In Regional Semis**

### **Two-run single in the seventh moves Aviators into regional final.**

Jay Morrison - Staff Writer, DDN

CINCINNATI — Down to the final out after trailing Moeller all afternoon, Vandalia Butler baseball coach Trent Dues had a simple message for senior Nate Barlow:

“This is your year. Get up there and win it.”

Barlow responded with a bases-loaded, two-run single to right to lift the Aviators to a 6-5 victory Friday in the Division I regional semifinals at the University of Cincinnati’s Marge Schott Stadium.

“This feels so amazing,” Barlow said after undergoing a mobbing by his teammates. “It was a nice pitch. I guess I just kind of got lucky.”

The victory avenged an earlier 6-3 loss to Moeller (22-5), the state’s No. 1-ranked team, and moved No. 2 Butler (27-3) into today’s noon regional final against Lakota East, which beat Northmont in Friday’s other semifinal.

“Moeller has had our number in the tournament for, well, I can’t count the number of times,” Dues said. “But I had a good feeling about this one.”

The Crusaders built leads of 2-0, 4-2 and 5-3, but the Aviators were able to hang around thanks to 10 walks by Moeller pitchers.

“We put that leadoff guy on too many times,” Crusaders coach Tim Held said. “I give them credit for not chasing balls and doing what they needed to do. It was an incredible game.”

Moeller chased Aviators starter Taylore Cherry after five innings, but Austin Craine came in and pitched two innings of scoreless, one-hit relief to pick up the win.

“We just kept hanging with them,” Dues said. “I call these guys my speed bags. You just can’t knock them out. They just keep bouncing back.”

John Myers drew a bases-loaded walk in the fourth and Dan Link added a sacrifice fly in the sixth to get Butler within a run to make the score 5-4.

Then losing pitcher Zach Williams walked the bases loaded in the bottom of the seventh, setting the stage for Barlow’s two-out heroics.

“I was definitely a little nervous,” Barlow said. “But I love being in that situation.”