

McGavock, Lipscomb win baseball crowns

Mustangs gallop past Unicoi Co. to take AA title

CAROL STUART

Sports Writer

Senior ace Raymond Harvey threw just 18 pitches to assure David Lipscomb High the Class AA baseball championship in a two-game sweep over Unicoi County here yesterday, 3-2 and 5-3.

The injured Harvey, who earned saves in both games, then joined teammate Brian Crowder and the rest of his class for graduation ceremonies — scheduled 27 minutes after freshman center fielder Donald Spencer caught the last out.

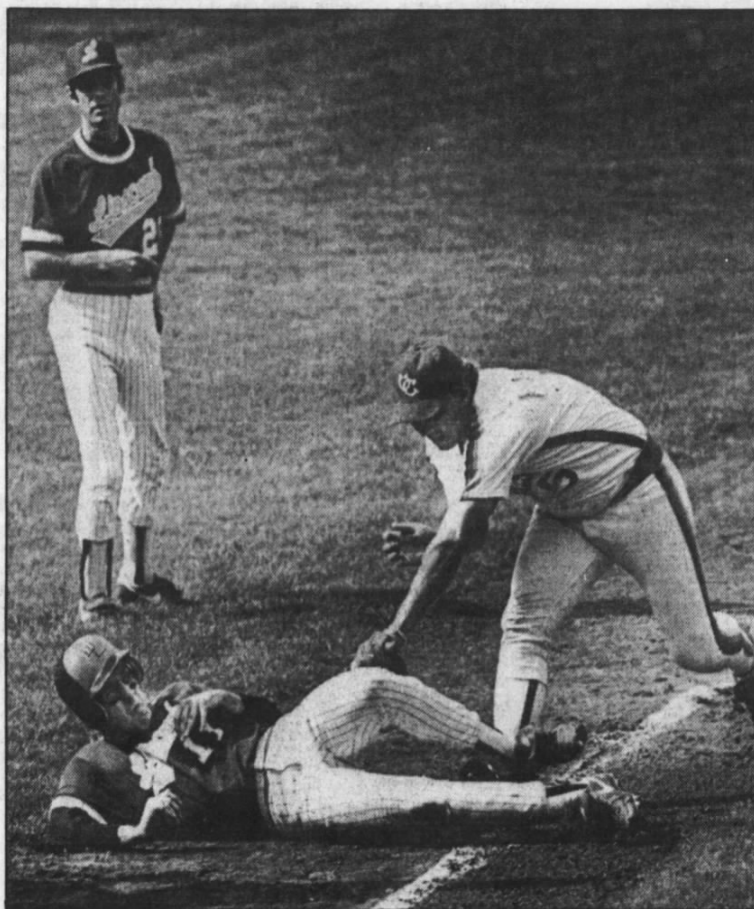
"If anyone had told me 2½ weeks ago that we'd been here without him in the rotation, I wouldn't have believed it," Coach Ernie Smith said about Harvey, who had not pitched since the region finals.

The double-header win over the Blue Devils from Erwin, Tenn., who finished 38-4, gave the Mustangs and Smith their third state baseball title and first since moving up from Class A three years ago. Smith, whose 1985-86 girls basketball team also won the state championship, is believed to be the first coach to capture two TSSAA crowns in two unrelated sports in the same year.

"We wanted to win for ourselves, but we wanted to win for Coach Smith, too," said Harvey, who was unbeaten in 10 decisions this year.

"I guess going to graduation was the last thing on my mind.

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Bill Wilson

Lipscomb High coach Ernie Smith has a bird's-eye view as Raymond Harvey is tagged out by Unicoi County third baseman Patrick Ollis (5) in a rundown. Despite the unsuccessful squeeze bunt try, the Mustangs won the second game 5-3 to sweep the Class AA championship series.

Raiders use solid pitching for third title

LARRY TAFT

Sports Writer

A pair of masterful four-hitlers by senior right-handers Larry Leaver and Jeff Abner fired the McGavock Raiders to the school's third Class AAA baseball state championship yesterday.

The Raiders defeated Tullahoma 2-0 and 5-0 in the abbreviated best-of-three series at the McGavock field.

In the opener, it was Leaver and Wildcat junior Rob Norman who were locked in an intense pitchers' duel.

The nightcap, which lacked the fielding finesse of the opener, was equally exciting until the sixth inning when McGavock erupted for four runs to take a 5-0 lead that gave the Raiders a school record 39th win against three losses.

"I don't think there is any question that their experience was the difference," said Tullahoma coach Jerry Mathis, whose youthful Wildcats finished 29-9.

"Experience in games like this means everything. We were in this same situation with a young team in 1973. We came back to win the state in 1974. We could do that again but we play in such a strong district that getting out of it will be our biggest concern next year."

Tullahoma returns its entire infield and its pitching staff of four sophomores and a junior next season. Heading the returnees is Norman, a 6-2½, 195-pound left-hander who limited the hard-hitting Raiders to five hits in the opener.

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Raiders use pitching

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That game was scoreless until the bottom of the sixth when Brian Bogle opened with an infield single and Mike Woodward followed with a one-out infield single, scoring Bogle from second. Kyle Coker ripped a two-out double to score Woodward and complete the scoring in the game.

"I lost my concentration," said the hard-throwing Norman, who had 11 strikeouts. "I let the infield hits bother me and I shouldn't have."

"I wasn't tired, but the humidity was really bad. It wore on me as the game went on."

Leaver agreed that the steamy conditions didn't help the pitchers.

"It was so bad my legs got weak," Leaver said, "but I was prepared to keep going if I'd had too. One thing you can say about Coach Brown's teams is that they're in shape. I wouldn't be surprised if we have to run when everything is over to-night."

Leaver scattered the four Wildcat hits, giving up one in the second, third, fourth and seventh. Only in the second inning did Tullahoma have as many as two baserunners on board at the same time.

"Norman's a good pitcher. Next year it could be him in this situation," said Leaver, who struck out seven Tullahoma batters. "I'd been there. I knew what to do. Next year he'll know. You've got to bounce a few curveballs up there sometimes."

The second game started far differently from the first. Losing pitcher Kurt Titus managed to get out of the inning unscathed, even after McGavock had runners reach first and second with none out.

Two fly balls to left provided the first two outs. On the second Tullahoma appealed to third that leadoff hitter Darryl Staggs had left too soon on an apparent sacrifice fly. Staggs was ruled as having left too soon and Titus was out of the jam.

The first Raider run came in the fourth when Jeff Abner singled to right. The throw to the infield got past both the second baseman and shortstop and rolled into shallow left where Terry Williams retrieved it. He threw to second, trying to get Abner.

That throw missed its mark and the ball went into foul territory down the first base line. Abner headed for third and then home before Tullahoma could come up with the ball.

Tullahoma had its best opportunity of the day in the bottom of the fifth. David Meyers walked and was

replaced by courtesy runner Brent Allen. Allen stole second and Bobby Cole bunted for a single to put runners at the corners. Following a strikeout and fly to shallow left, Bo Winton walked to lead the bases with Norman, the No. 3 hitter at the plate.

The left-handed hitting Norman ripped an Abner curveball out of the park down the right-field line, but the ball was foul by 15 feet. Abner came back with a fastball and then pulled the string on a changeup to strike out Norman and end the threat.

"I'd seen in the first game that he didn't like to walk. After he missed that fastball, I knew that I got a change-up close, he'd go for it. He did and I got out of the inning," Abner said.

Abner struck out 10 and gave up hits to Tullahoma in the second, third, fifth and sixth.

"There pitchers are good, but we were more nervous than anything," said Tullahoma sophomore third baseman Maurice Shaw, the Wildcats leading hitter who went 0-for-3. "We've seen good pitchers before. I know I can hit better than I did today."

McGavock adds the 1986 championship to those it won in 1976 and 1984. Last year the Raiders went to the state finals but forfeited the final game when Leaver pitched more than the allowed number of innings.

"It was never mentioned, but this championship is for all the McGavock baseball alumni, especially the seniors from 1985" said Brown. "We can't make up for what they missed, but yes, this helps." ■

Lady Rebels ink Columbia's Blue

Belmont signed Dedra Blue, Columbia Central High School's leading scorer and rebounder, yesterday to a letter of intent to play basketball.

Averaging 14.8 points a game and 10.7 rebounds, the 5-9 Blue was a three-year starter for Columbia Central. She led the Lions girls to its first sub-state appearance this past season.

Blue, who made the All-Class AAA first-team, was recruited by Memphis State, Western Kentucky, Alabama, and David Lipscomb, before signing with the Lady Rebels.

●Hillwood's Dana McDavid signed a track scholarship to Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. yesterday. ■