

Spartans Win Eighth Title In Nine Years

Written by Staff Reports
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Nick Horning scattered seven hits over seven innings as the South Caldwell High baseball team captured its eighth Northwestern 3A/4A Conference Tournament title in the last nine years. The Spartans (14-9), the No.2 seed, knocked off Alexander Central 5-2 Saturday afternoon at M.S. Deal Stadium in Granite Falls, N.C. And for the effort, head coach Jeff Parham handed the Most Valuable Player Award to his entire team.

"I am so proud of this team for what they have accomplished this year," said South Caldwell head coach Jeff Parham. "This was a good win against a very, very good Alexander Central team. Horning did a great job of keeping them off balance."

Alexander Central (20-5) was making its first appearance making its first championship appearance since 2005. The Cougars and the Spartans split their four meetings this season. And Saturday's win was sweet revenge for the Spartans, who lost the regular-season championship with a loss at Alexander Central in the season finale. Alexander Central hasn't won the tournament championship since 2004.

Austin Miller had a two-run homer to pace the Spartans offensively. Trevor Cook and Garrett Dupuis led the Cougars with two hits apiece. Tad Ratliff, who suffered the loss, issued eight walks, hit a batter, and had a wild pitch with four strikeouts. Ratliff, who left the game in the fifth inning, allowed four runs off one hit in four official innings. Ratliff faced three batters in the fifth without recording an out before being lifted.

The Spartans and the Cougars have earned automatic berths to the Class 4A state playoffs, which begin next Friday, May 10.