

VANCE, RATHBUN SIGN TO CONTINUE BASEBALL CAREERS AT BETHEL UNIVERSITY

By Ron Barry

Two Crockett County seniors have signed athletic grants-in-aid to continue their baseball careers at Bethel University in McKenzie.

Bryson Vance and Tyler Rathbun gave their commitments Friday afternoon in a joint ceremony at the CCHS Little Theater hosted by Cavalier athletic director Duke Kail and featuring comments from assistant baseball coach Jacob Clark.

Vance is an outfielder/pitcher for the Cavaliers, but said he will likely focus on pitching for the Wildcats. Rathbun, who was also a member of Crockett's golf team this fall, also said he will be a pitcher at Bethel, with a probable emphasis on relief work. Both are currently in the midst of the District 13 Tournament at Newbern, which has been rescheduled because of the Friday thunderstorms. Barring another adjustment, Crockett will play Obion County at 2 p.m. Saturday in a losers bracket contest.

Vance is currently hitting .250 for the Cavs with 15 hits in 60 official trips to the plate. He has a homer, a triple, and three doubles as a batter, and has three stolen bases. As a pitcher, he has appeared in nine games - primarily in relief - and has recorded 22 strikeouts in 15 innings of work. Vance has allowed one or fewer earned runs in six of his nine appearances.

Rathbun has made 10 pitching appearances and has compiled a sparkling 2.33 earned run average, with 22 strikeouts in 30 innings. His top performance came in a 4-2 win over Carlisle County, Kentucky when he threw six innings of two-hit ball. He also finished off the final frame of a combined no-hitter with junior teammate Brady Fronabarger.

Vance has had three outings in which he struck out four in two innings. His top game as a hitter was in a victory over Dresden, in which he went 3-for-3 and knocked in four runs with a triple and homer.

Clark touted Vance's work ethic and attitude as his strongest assets, recalling an off-season workout in which a Vance-captained team won an intra-squad competition that produced a "punishment" workout for the losers. When Clark observed the ensuing workout, he saw Vance doing the same "punishment," because "he told me we're all one team."

Clark praised the six-inning performance against Carlisle County as his fondest memory of Rathbun, because it occurred in a tournament at Union City in a game in which the staff wasn't sure who would pitch. When approached, Rathbun said, "Give me the ball," according to Clark. "That's the kind of mentality he has."

Bethel University is in the NAIA and competes in the Mid-South Conference. This season's team, coached by Rusty Thompson, is currently 22-18 on the season.



Left: Tyler Rathbun. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Bryson Vance. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below Left: Bryson Vance signs his athletic grant-in-aid with Bethel University. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below Right: Tyler Rathbun signs his athletic grant-in-aid with Bethel University. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Bryson Vance with his Cavalier teammates. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Tyler Rathbun with his Cavalier teammates. (Photo by Ron Barry)