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By Dennis Garcia
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TRINITY - Ryan Spencer said he's known for the last few years his Trinity High School baseball team had championship potential. This year, they realized that potential.

For the first time in 36 years the Bulldogs are celebrating a conference baseball championship as THS finished the Central Carolina Conference 9-1 with an overall record of 18-6. It's the first league championship since the Bulldogs won the Piedmont Athletic Conference title in 1990 and believed to be just the second baseball championship in school history.

"We felt we had the team to do it a couple of times over the past five years," said Spencer, who is in his ninth season as head coach. "This year we have a special group who have experience and who have played in some big games. We were able to put ourselves in position to win it."

The Bulldogs started the season a mediocre 3-2 before hitting their stride. THS captured six straight victories, recording three straight shutouts and outscoring opponents during that stretch 55-8. Trinity recorded two shutout wins over East Davidson, 10-0 and 11-0, and also blanked Southern Guilford 8-0.

"We felt it before, but we started playing like it during that stretch," Spencer said of feeling like his team had a chance to win the title this year.

A loss to Morehead preceded a four-game winning streak, meaning the Bulldogs had won 10 of 11 during that one stretch this year. The only conference loss came to West Davidson on April 17, giving the Bulldogs a split of the two-game season series with the Green Dragons. A 12-2 home victory over Wheatmore on April 21 secured at least a share of the CCC championship and a 5-0 win over the Warriors Friday night secured the outright championship.

"The main thing is this group loves being together," Spencer said. "We have seven seniors and these guys have been playing together since middle school. It means a lot to them. Every time they get on the field, they want to do it for each other."

To be successful, a high school team needs pitching and the Bulldogs certainly have that covered. Senior Lincoln Coble is simply one of the best in the state.



Trinity baseball coach Ryan Spencer.



Bulldog senior Lincoln Coble.

"I have been coaching for nine years here and never had one like him," Spencer said of his senior right-hander who will be playing at NC A&T in the fall. "Lincoln Coble and Cade Hill (2023 graduate and current assistant coach) are the two best pitchers in school history."

Peyton Williams, Cameron Hill and Grayson Fauber are among those who have contributed big innings on the mound.

"Pitching has been really good," Spencer said. "Our starting pitchers have gone deep in games."

Of course, a team needs more than just great pitching to have a season like the one the Bulldogs are enjoying.

Senior catcher Brody Little has been a mainstay behind the plate ever since he took the field the first time as a freshman.

"He's caught every pitch since the day he entered high school," Spencer said of the most improbable streak. "He's without a doubt the best catcher I have ever seen. I have been fortunate to have coached in the State Games and he's the best I have ever seen. Seeing the ball well, the relationships with the guys, throwing the baseball ... He's the best."

Little said he's proud of his career and capturing the school's first title since 1990.

"It's something we go for every year and it's awesome to have it happen this year," Little said.

With seven seniors on the team, the opportunities to lead are quite evident. Each senior seems to have a different leadership quality that meshes well with the group.

"That has been a big key to our success, the leadership we've gotten from the guys and they do it in different ways," Spencer said. "Some lead by example, some step up and say what needs to be said. They have stacked so many days together and sacrificed so much together, when one steps up, the others are going to listen. This group is just special."

Little said the seniors are holding everyone accountable.

"We definitely have a lot of role models for the younger players," Little said. "If you're holding someone else accountable, they can hold you accountable."

They have held each other accountable all the way to a conference championship.



Bulldog senior Brody Little.