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HOLLY SPRINGS - There are a number of ways in which a player can help his high school baseball team. There's, of course, offense, which leads to runs which leads to wins. And there is defense, making not only the routine plays, but making difficult plays look routine.



Uwharrie Charter Academy junior outfielder Carter Brown did both this weekend in helping the Eagles capture the state 1-A championship with 2-1 and 8-1 wins over North Moore at Ting Stadium.

Carter not only provided the Eagles a big boost at the plate in both games, but his ability to cover an incredible amount of real estate in right field of a very spacious Ting Stadium saved the Eagles at least a few runs in Game 1's one-run victory.

For his efforts, Carter was named the most valuable player of the state 1-A championships.

"I couldn't believe it, to be honest with you," said Brown about being named MVP. "It's surreal."

Carter finished 4-for-7 with two runs scored, a stolen base and a number of solid defensive plays in right field, sprinting toward the foul line to take extra-base hits away from the Mustangs or quickly moving toward right-center to hold hitters to singles when it first looked like a definite extra-base hit.

None of it surprised UCA coach Rob Shore.

"Carter is amazing," said Shore, a veteran high school coach who spent last year as



an assistant coach for the Eagles. "He will run down anything in the outfield. There are so many plays he made throughout the year and he bats in the seventh hole and there is a reason he bats in the seventh hole. He gives us a boost at the bottom of the lineup and that's what we need to set up the top of our lineup."

Brown started the season battling lower in the order, but in the seventh position, he sees plenty of fastballs. And Brown knows what to do with fastballs.

"I don't really care where I hit in the lineup," Brown said. "It doesn't mean anything to me. I just go up there and try to get on for my team"

In Game 1 Friday, Brown had a single in his first plate appearance, but was stranded. Defensively, he made a couple of strong defensive plays to help keep the Mustangs at bay.

In Game 2, the Eagles trailed 1-0 in the top of the third when his leadoff triple started a four-run inning. The Eagles were never threatened after that. He added a single, stolen base and run in the fourth and after reaching on an error in the fifth, he had an infield single when he beat out a routine bouncer to third in the seventh.

"From where we came from at the beginning of the season, our losing record, to where we are now, it's unbelievable," said Brown, whose team won 16 of their final 17 games after a 5-9 start. "It was after our big loss to Central Davidson, 15-0, and we came back and beat Ledford a week or two later, a top 10 team, that we knew we had it in us. We knew we could win. We had that mindset that we could win this."

And they proved that against the Mustangs.