

Crisp's, from 1C

"David picked up a little velocity and improved on the mental aspect of pitching," said Northwest Rankin coach Wally Hall. "He started thinking about his pitches more and developed a sinker pitch. That was his key pitch. At times, it was almost impossible to hit."

Crisp simply immersed himself in each outing.

"When I added the sinker to my repertoire (fastball, off-speed curveball, slider), it helped me tremendously," said Crisp. "But the most important thing was that I became tougher mentally. There was a driving force behind me. Last year, it was just throw the ball and try to get people out. Pitching wasn't an intense performance. This year, it was more of a mental game."

"As for my hitting, Coach Hall worked with me a lot in the fall. I just wanted to go out and get base hits, hit 5 homers and hit in the .300 range. I guess it's safe to say I met those goals."

Sills is recognized for carrying Callaway, 7-12 last year, to a 21-12 record and the District 6 Class 5A title. Callaway lost to eventual South Mississippi Class 5A champion South Natchez in a best-of-three series of the South playoffs, winning 3-2, losing 3-2 and losing the go-ahead game to the South Mississippi finals 7-6.

Callaway's Chargers lost the opening

game of the District 6 playoffs to Forest Hill and bounced back for 2-1 and 8-0 wins.

"We had a lot of young players last year," said Sills, also honored as Metro Coach of the Year in 1982. "We won five of our final seven games last year. We figured we would be better this year, and we were able to build on that. We didn't feel we would get as far as we did."

"We had three seniors who provided the leadership and that was the difference."

Also on the 12-man team are St. Joseph pitcher Tony Richard, St. Andrew's catcher Collier Simpson, Clinton first baseman Kyle Morris, Callaway second baseman Jerry Henderson, Jim Hill shortstop Ed Oswalt, Callaway third baseman Richard Henderson, Northwest Rankin outfielder Barry Jefcoat, Jackson Prep outfielder Brad Ball, Murrah outfielder David Washington, Jackson Academy utility player Tony Shell and Provine designated hitter Chuck Thomas.

Richard led the 24-8 Bruins to the District 6 Class 2A title. He was 13-3, with 3 saves, 0.60 ERA and 203 strikeouts in 105 innings, averaging 13.53 strikeouts per seven innings. He also hit .417, with 10 doubles, 5 triples, 2 homers, 18 RBI and 37 runs and stole 28 bases in 30 tries.

"Tony could go 3-0 to a hitter and still come back and strike him out," said St. Joseph coach Greg Wilson. "He could throw his curveball for a strike at any time."

Simpson hit .469, with 13 doubles, 2 triples, 5 homers and 51 RBI for the 27-4 and South Mississippi Class 1A runner-up Saints, but it was his willingness to work that was highlighted by St. Andrew's coach Mike Barkett.

"Collier does all he can to improve," said Barkett. "He lets me throw balls at his feet and knees, lets me beat him to death for 10 minutes in practice every day so he can be a better catcher. He made only 3 errors during the year."

Morris hit .464, with 8 doubles, 5 triples, 8 homers, 34 RBI and 30 runs.

"Kyle is just a good all-around player," said Clinton coach Doug Hutton. "He runs good and is a good fielder. His greatest improvement since his sophomore year has been his fielding. He's getting balls he used to never even go after."

Jerry Henderson, Callaway's MVP, was 8-5 as a pitcher and hit .405 with 4 homers.

"The thing about Jerry is that he played third, shortstop, second, right field and pitcher," said Sills. "He is a three-year starter. He did all he could do for us."

A Mississippi College signee, Oswalt batted .366, with 4 doubles, 8 homers, 30 RBI and 31 runs and swiped 11 bases in 12 tries. On the mound, he was 11-4, with a 1.58 ERA, 108 strikeouts and 27 walks in 93 innings.

"Ed came in after pitching just one inning last year and did a great job on the mound," said Jim Hill coach Jerry Gibson. "Ed ranks right up there with the top five to come out of Jim Hill in my 10 years here. He's up there with (Richey) Hines and the Pettits (Timmy and Danny)."

Richard Henderson, a permanent team captain, hit .413 with 11 homers and was 5-0 as a pitcher.

Jefcoat hit .458, with 17 doubles, 3 triples, 9 homers and 56 RBI. He terrorized opposing pitchers, notably with an 8-for-11 performance in the South Mississippi title series against West Jones. In the finale, Jefcoat went 4-for-4 with three doubles at MC's spacious Frier-son Field.

"It looked like Barry was playing slow-pitch softball that day," said Hall. "He can hit the ball to all fields. Three of his homers were to left-center."

Ball has Prep in the Academy Class AAA championship game against defending champion JA. Ball is batting .453, with 8 homers, 33 RBI, 21 runs and 29 stolen bases. Ball also has a 12-0

pitching record.

"The first thing that makes Brad a good player are the instincts he has developed," said Prep coach Mike Kinnison. "That's the thing I appreciate about him. He has the instinctive ability to go get balls you think are going to get in for extra-base hits. He is consistent as a hitter."

The versatile Washington hit .436, with 7 doubles, 2 triples, 3 homers and 15 RBI from his leadoff spot and played pitcher, catcher, second base and shortstop.

"David probably could play any position on the field," said Murrah coach Doug Clanton. "I think catcher would be his best position in college or pro ball."

Shell, the All-Metro quarterback and Mississippi State football signee, is hitting .408, with 6 doubles, 4 homers and 21 RBI despite starting late because of an ankle injury. He also is 9-0, with 88 strikeouts and 33 walks.

Thomas, also a quarterback who signed with Jackson State, hit .504, with 7 doubles, 2 triples and 5 homers.

"I, Chuck and the other baseball coaches around here believe baseball is Chuck's best sport," said Provine coach Shirley Harris. "Hitting is his strong point. He can hit for average and hit the long ball."