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Ohio State baseball | Pitching great Steve Arlin dies at 70



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OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY PHOTO

Steve Arlin was Ohio State's first two-time All-American in baseball.

By Todd Jones

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189

29

256

Fifty years after Ohio State won its only national championship in baseball, that legendary team has lost its most notable player.

Steve Arlin, long considered OSU's greatest pitcher and a native of Lima, died of undisclosed causes on Wednesday at age 70, the university announced Friday.

Arlin, who lived in San Diego, led the Buckeyes to their lone national title in 1966 — the last won by a Big Ten baseball team. An illness reportedly kept him from attending a reunion of that championship team in June at the College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska.

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"It's obviously sad that we lose a guy of Steve's stature and what he meant to our program," current Ohio State coach Greg Beals said. "It's also critical to celebrate his life and his successes and what he meant to our program as well."

Arlin meant everything to the 1966 national champions, as well as the '65 team that finished national runner-up. He went 24-3 — for a .889 winning percentage that is still a school record — those two seasons to become the Buckeyes' first two-time All-American.

"He was something else," Curt Heinfeld, a pitcher on the '66 OSU team, told the Associated Press in June. "We didn't even have radar guns back then, so no one knew how hard anyone threw. We're guessing he was somewhere around the 100-mph mark. His fastball even moved all over."

Arlin, a 6-foot-3 right-hander, was at his best in the College World Series, where he was twice named to the all-tournament team, with totaling 57 strikeouts and a 0.96 ERA in 47 innings.

"The numbers that he put up are like video game numbers," Beals said.

The Philadelphia Phillies selected Arlin 13th overall in the 1966 major league draft. He pitched six seasons in the majors, nearly all for the San Diego Padres, before his career ended in 1974 after a brief stint with the Cleveland Indians.

Ohio State retired Arlin's No. 22 jersey in 2004, and four years later he was elected into the College Baseball Hall of Fame.

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