

LADY COUGARS ARE 26-0

South Girls Edge Whiteville For Waccamaw Tourney Crown

BY DOUG RUTTER
Enough already. The rest of the Waccamaw Conference has seen all of the evidence it needs to see supporting South Brunswick's ranking as the top 2-A girls' basketball team

in North Carolina. After terrorizing league foes during the regular season, the undefeated Lady Cougars captured their second straight conference tournament championship Friday with a 50-46

win over Whiteville. South's Tasha Sellers hit two free throws with 27 seconds remaining to break a 46-46 tie. Stacy Isenberg drained two more foul shots with 2.7 seconds left to nail down the win.

"I was real proud of them. I think they felt a lot of pressure tonight," said Lady Cougar Coach Mike Isenberg, who battled the flu Friday as his team battled for its 26th straight win of the year.

South Brunswick, which pounded league opponents by an average of 22.6 points per game en route to the regular-season conference title, wasn't so punishing in the tournament.

After thrashing North Brunswick 78-46 in the opening round, the Lady Cougars slipped past fourth-seeded Fairmont 34-27 last Wednesday to advance to the championship game at South Robeson High School.

On Friday, Whiteville had its way through most of the first half. The second-seeded Lady Wolfpack led 13-11 after one quarter and used a 7-0 run to take a 26-17 lead with 2:28 remaining in the second period.

Whiteville's Dawn Threadgill scored 10 of her team-high 14 points in the first half, when the Wolfpack's full-court press was effective at times in creating turnovers.

South Brunswick, however, scored the final six points of the half and only trailed 26-23 at intermission.

The third quarter belonged to the Lady Cougars. Sellers, who scored a game-high 16 points, tossed in two three-pointers and a pair of free throws to lead the South Brunswick charge.

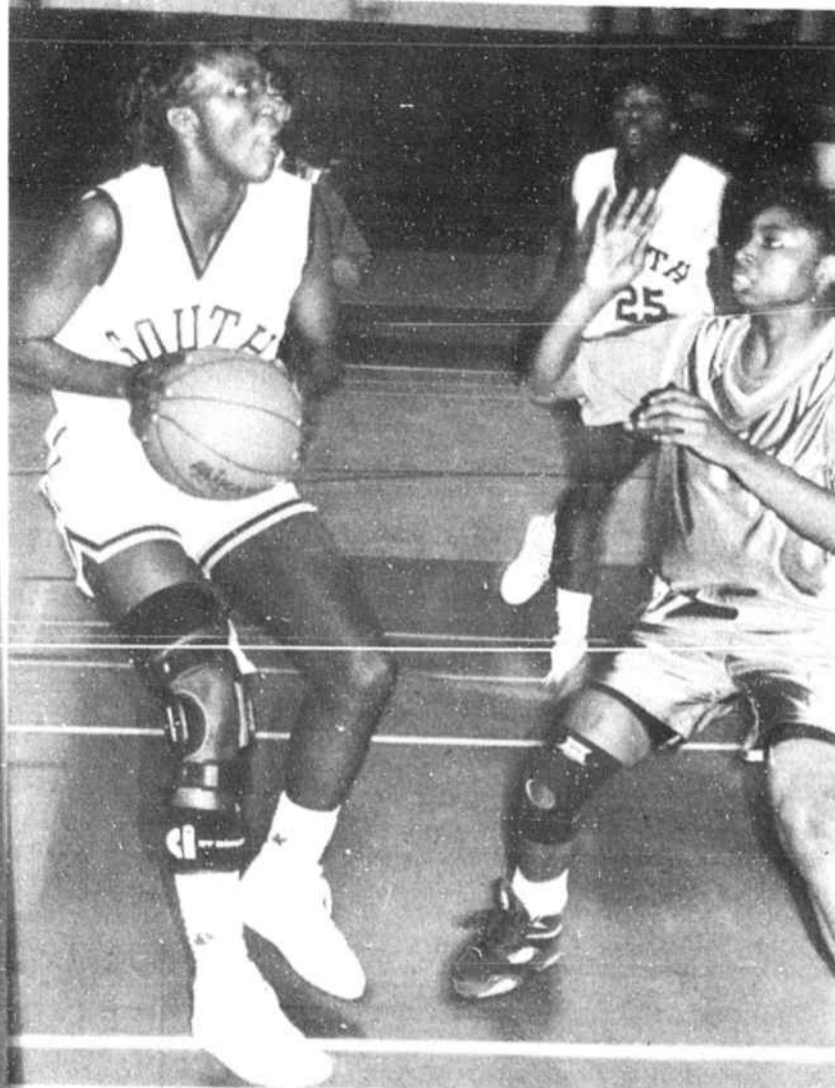
The Lady Cougars used a 15-0 run—holding Whiteville scoreless for 6 minutes, 34 seconds—to bolt out to a 41-29 lead. "At halftime they really came out ready to play and they played a great third quarter," Isenberg said.

Whiteville trailed 41-33 after three periods, but rallied in the

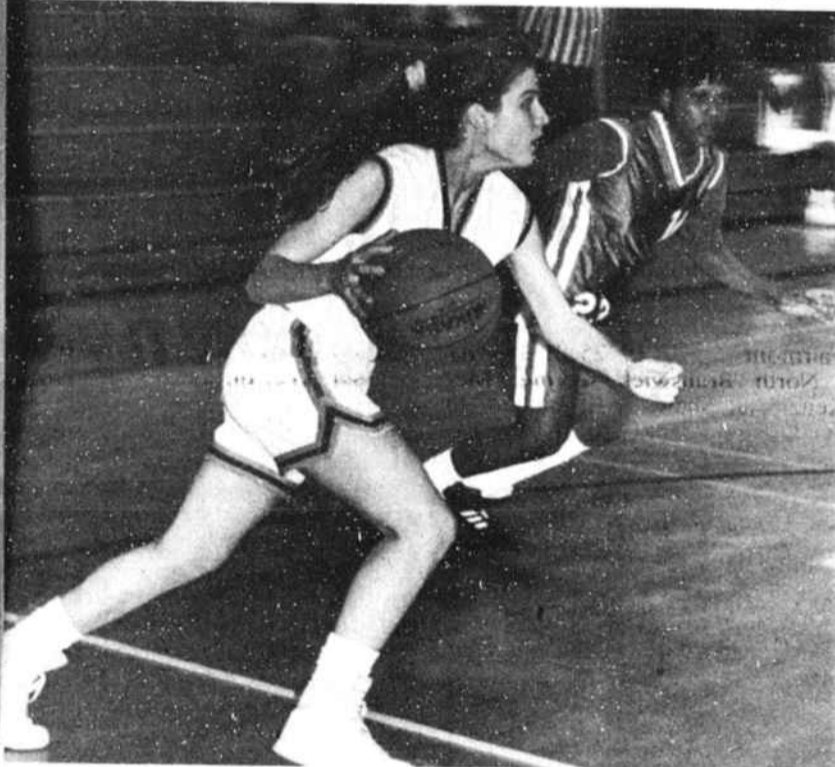


STAFF PHOTOS BY DOUG RUTTER

SOUTH'S LADY COUGARS celebrate their 50-46 win over Whiteville Friday in the Waccamaw Conference Basketball Tournament championship game.



ERIKA BRYANT drives for two points during the tournament championship game. Defending for Whiteville is Dawn Threadgill.



TASHA SELLERS (with ball) led South Brunswick with 16 points and scored the winning points in Friday's win over Whiteville.

fourth quarter and pulled to within 46-42 on Tonya Jones' three-pointer with 1:36 remaining.

South's girls came up empty on three straight one-and-one opportunities, and the Lady Wolfpack tied the score at 46-46 on Threadgill's layup with 37 seconds to play.

Ten seconds later, Sellers converted both ends of a one-and-one to give South Brunswick a 48-46 lead.

Stacy Isenberg sealed the deal with two more foul shots down the stretch.

Whiteville, which made 15 of 21 free throw attempts in the game, missed two crucial one-and-one chances in the final 13 seconds. The Lady Wolfpack's record fell to 20-6.

"Whiteville always makes a good run at us," Coach Isenberg said. "We always get up by about 10 points and they make a run at us."

In this case, Whiteville's run started when the Lady Cougars went into their "four-corners" offense with about 3 1/2 minutes left in the game. South held a 44-37 lead at the time, but it quickly disappeared.

Isenberg said he wouldn't have gone into the delay game so early if his team hadn't been in foul trouble. Starters Tameka Davis and Jenny Fullwood fouled out in the fourth

quarter. Whiteville's girls had advanced to the tournament final with a first-round win over East Bladen and a 62-50 victory over West Brunswick's Lady Trojans in the semifinals.

South Brunswick, which has won 46 of 52 games over the last two seasons, also defeated Whiteville in last year's Waccamaw Conference tournament final, 47-43.

Score By Quarters

Whiteville 13 13 7 13—46
South Brunswick 11 12 18 9—50
Whiteville scoring: Threadgill, 14; Register, 10; Garcia, 9; Jones, 8; Toon, 5.
South Brunswick scoring: Sellers, 16; Brown, 12; Fullwood, 7; Isenberg, 6; Bryant, 4; Davis, 4; Hankins, 1.

Lady Cougars Edge Fairmont

South Brunswick's girls advanced to the Waccamaw Conference Basketball Tournament championship game with a 34-27 win over Fairmont in the semifinals last Wednesday.

The Lady Cougars, who beat North Brunswick in the tournament's opening round, raced out to an 11-0 first-quarter lead against Fairmont and held on for their 25th win of the year.

Senior Tasha Sellers tossed in four three-pointers and led the Lady Cougars with 14 points. Jodie

Brown chipped in eight points and Stacy Isenberg added seven.

Tyra Taylor led the Golden Tornadoes with 10 points. Fairmont's girls trailed 17-9 at halftime, but they cut the South Brunswick lead to 26-20 after three quarters.

Score By Quarters

Fairmont 0 9 11 7—27
South Brunswick 11 6 9 8—34
Fairmont scoring: Taylor, 10; Barber, 6; Nealy, 6; T. Scott, 2; Fields, 2; Butler, 1.
South Brunswick scoring: Sellers, 14; Brown, 8; Isenberg, 7; Bryant, 4; Fullwood, 1.

South To Host Playoffs

The South Brunswick boys' and girls' basketball teams were scheduled to host state 2-A playoff games this week after receiving first-round byes for their performance during the regular season.

The undefeated Lady Cougars, champions of the Waccamaw Conference in the regular season and tournament, were expected to open the playoffs Wednesday with a 7 p.m. home game.

South Brunswick's girls received a first-round bye in the playoffs and were expected to play the winner of Monday night's Graham/Fuquay-Varina game. South is ranked first in the state 2-A class and enters the playoffs 26-0.

"We're going to be nervous and

whoever we play is going to have a game under their belt," South Coach Mike Isenberg said Friday. "But I'd rather play at home and let somebody else drive two or three hours."

If the Lady Cougars win Wednesday night, they will host the sectional finals Saturday at 7 p.m.

South Brunswick's boys, who won the Waccamaw Conference tournament after finishing second to Fairmont during the regular season, also received an opening-round bye in the playoffs.

The Cougars open the playoffs at home Thursday at 7 p.m. South will host the winner of a first-round game between Whiteville and Northwood that was scheduled Tuesday night.

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