

Cougars Stop Golden Tornadoes In Waccamaw Tournament Finals

BY DOUG RUTTER

South Brunswick ended Fairmont's two-year stranglehold on the Waccamaw 2-A Conference Friday with a shocking 81-70 win in the championship game of the boys' league basketball tournament.

Josh White scored 35 points to lead South back from a 19-point, first-quarter deficit and played big down the stretch as the Cougars handed the Golden Tornadoes their first loss of the year.

Although South Robeson hosted the game, the crowd was packed with fans from nearby Fairmont. Those who filled the Mustang gym witnessed one of the most intense high school basketball games of the year in Waccamaw country.

Using its superior quickness and size, Fairmont exploded for 28 points in the first seven minutes before South Brunswick started taking control of the game in the second quarter.

White, who scored 16 points to lead a second-quarter comeback and 11 more points in the last 2:33 of the game, was mobbed following the contest but kept a tight grip on the championship trophy.

"I think they kind of counted us out," the senior point guard said. "It's a great win, but we can't win this game and get complacent. We've got to keep playing."

Cougar Coach Gene Doane said it took a great team effort to upset the Golden Tornadoes, but he acknowledged that it was White who took over the game in crunch time.

"Whenever you have a horse you have to ride him, and if you don't you're a stupid coach," Doane said of White, who averaged 28 points per game in the tournament.

Doane had predicted before the game that the Cougars would defeat Fairmont, the top-ranked 2-A team in the state. His game plan was to get the lead and spread the floor to slow down Fairmont's furious, fast-break offense.

"If we could get a lead and get into that offense I thought we had them because that would eliminate their defense and rebounding," Doane said after the game.

"It took their running game away and that's what I wanted to do," the veteran coach added. "They're used to shooting so quick, and I think they got frustrated."

The spread offense allowed South to conserve energy, create easy baskets and get to the free throw line, where the Cougars were deadly accurate when it counted the most.

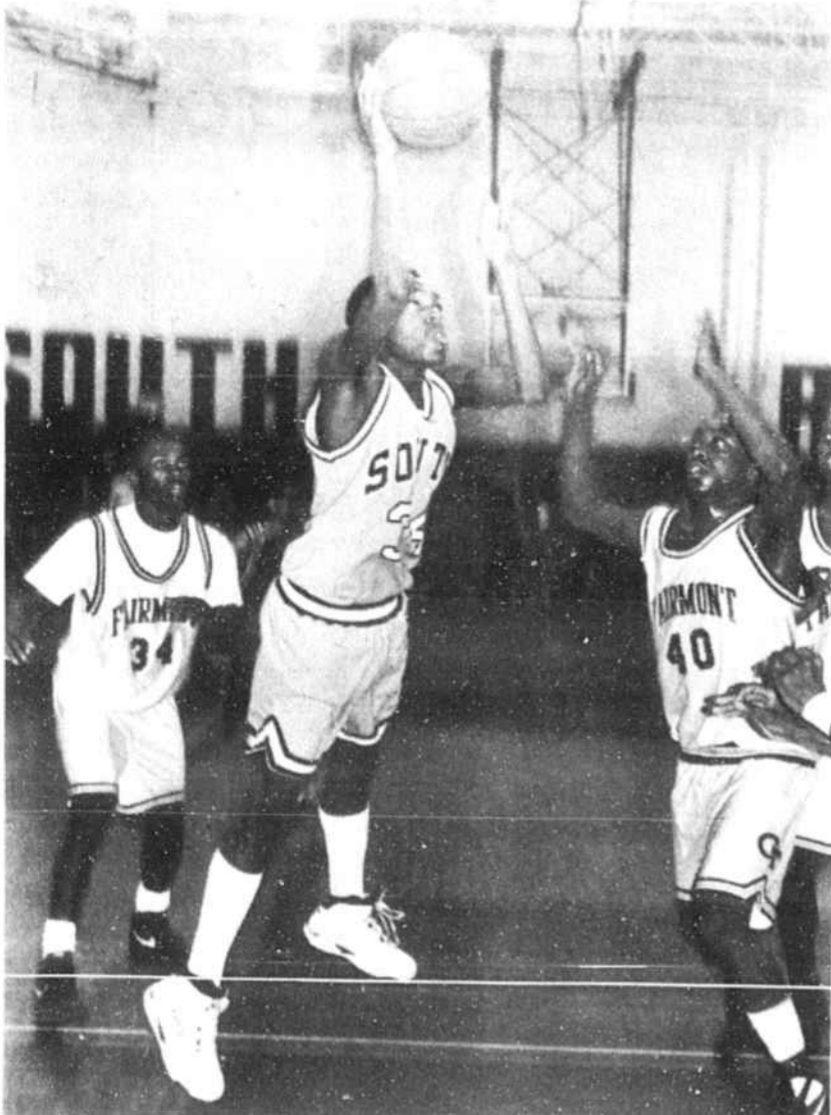
South Brunswick converted 19 of 25 free throw attempts in the game (76 percent), including 13 of 16 in the fourth quarter and 10 of 10 over the final five minutes.

Doane was forced to wait until the second half to implement his game plan because the Cougars fell behind so quickly. The Tornadoes used a 21-3 run to take a 28-9 lead with 43 seconds left in the opening quarter.



STAFF PHOTOS BY DOUG RUTTER

SOUTH'S JOSH WHITE dribbles past Fairmont's Damion Page (34) during the Waccamaw Conference Basketball Tournament championship game Friday night. White had 35 points to lead the Cougars to an 81-70 win.



SCOOTER MOORE (34) drives for two of his 15 points in Friday night's win over Fairmont. Also pictured are Fairmont's Damion Page (34) and Wesley Hinson.



KEVIN SMITH (25) had a hard time grabbing this rebound for the Cougars, but managed to keep the ball out of the hands of Fairmont's Jimmy Stephens.

South Brunswick battled back in the second quarter, putting together runs of 9-0 and 7-0 to cut the Fairmont lead to 45-44 at halftime.

"I kept telling them if we'll just calm down, get ourself together and stop trying to score as fast as they do we'll be alright," Doane said of the early deficit.

"I knew it was early and we couldn't quit," added White. "We went four quarters, not one."

South Brunswick held the Golden Tornadoes to a paltry seven points in the third quarter to take a 58-52 lead going into the final period.

The Cougars built their lead to eight points early in the fourth quarter, but Fairmont rallied and took a 66-65 lead on Corry Addison's layup with 3:01 remaining.

With White leading the way, South Brunswick scored 16 of the next 18 points to pull away. White scored the first seven points of the run and had 11 of the 16.

In addition to White's 35 points, South Brunswick got 15 each from Kevin Smith and Scooter Moore. Smith scored eight points in the third quarter when the Cougars

WACCAMAW CONFERENCE FINAL POST-TOURNAMENT BASKETBALL STANDINGS BOYS

Team	League	Overall
Fairmont	16-1	23-1
South Brunswick	13-4	18-8
Whiteville	10-6	15-7
West Columbia	9-7	13-7
West Brunswick	7-8	8-16
South Robeson	6-9	12-12
East Bladen	2-13	5-16
North Brunswick	0-15	3-16

GIRLS

Team	League	Overall
South Brunswick	17-0	26-0
Whiteville	12-5	20-6
West Brunswick	11-5	13-11
Fairmont	9-7	10-11
West Columbia	6-9	10-9
South Robeson	6-9	6-15
North Brunswick	1-14	2-17
East Bladen	1-14	3-20

point play with 45 seconds remaining that gave the Cougars a 75-68 lead and two free throws nine seconds later that extended the lead to nine points.

Wesley Hinson scored 11 first-quarter points and led Fairmont with 23. Addison added 16, Damion Page had 14 and Montrell McNair chipped in 11 for the Tornadoes.

South Brunswick ended a string of five consecutive losses to Fairmont and improved its season record to 18-8. The Tornadoes lost just their second game in the last 52 and fell to 23-1 on the season.

Fairmont had advanced to the tournament finals with an 83-52 win over North Brunswick in the first round and a 91-70 victory over fourth-seeded West Columbia in the semifinals.

Score By Quarters
South Brunswick 13 11 14 23—81
Fairmont 28 17 7 18—70

South Brunswick scoring: White, 35; Moore, 15; Smith, 15; Simon, 9; Vaught, 5; Hewett, 2.

Fairmont scoring: Hinson, 23; Addison, 16; Page, 14; McNair, 11; Floyd, 2; Bobian, 2; Stephens, 2.

overcame a 45-44 halftime deficit and took a 58-52 lead.

Moore had seven points in the fourth quarter, including a three-

South Nips Wolfpack In Semifinals

BY DOUG RUTTER

The third time proved to be the charm for South Brunswick's Cougars as they avenged two regular-season losses to Whiteville with an 83-78 overtime win last Thursday in the Waccamaw Conference Basketball Tournament semifinals.

South's Josh White sent the game into overtime with a long jumper in the closing seconds that knotted the score at 74-74. In the extra period, the Cougars earned the win by outscoring the Wolfpack 9-4.

South Brunswick Coach Gene Doane said the game shouldn't have gone into overtime because White's game-tying basket was actually a three-pointer that should have been a game-winning shot.

The Cougars thought they had won the game 75-74 in regulation. Doane said the team was in the locker room celebrating the win when word came that an overtime period would be played.

The game official who originally signaled that White's jumper was a three-pointer was later overruled by two other officials. Doane said the game film clearly showed that

White took off from behind the three-point arc.

Despite the controversial ruling, the Cougars won in overtime and advanced to the tournament championship game where they upset top-ranked Fairmont 81-70.

Doane said the Cougars beat Whiteville despite a poor shooting night. South missed its first 12 three-point shots and several layups. "We played with more zip than we had before against Whiteville."

The Wolfpack had beaten the Cougars 66-64 in Whiteville and 76-63 at Boiling Spring Lakes during the regular season. On South Robeson's neutral court, it was the Cougars who came out on top.

Doane said South Brunswick should have defeated Whiteville both times during the regular season. He blamed the losses in part on the conference schedule.

The Whiteville games were sandwiched between emotional contests with Fairmont and West Brunswick. "You can't play three emotional games in a row," Doane said.

In the tourney semifinal, Whiteville, led 54-50 after three quarters

but South Brunswick rallied in the fourth quarter to tie the score.

White led the Cougars with 34 points. Kevin Smith, Scooter Moore and Lewis Vaught added 10 points apiece. Damien Hall led Whiteville with 17 points and Quinnzell McMillian added 16.

Whiteville had advanced to the semifinals with a 74-48 win over South Robeson in the tournament's opening round last Tuesday at Boiling Spring Lakes.

Score By Quarters
Whiteville 19 15 20 20—81
South Bruns. 17 14 19 24—83
Whiteville scoring: Hall, 17; McMillian, 16; Moore, 15; Barfield, 10; McCray, 8; Southern, 6; Flowers, 6.

South Brunswick scoring: White, 34; Smith, 10; Moore, 10; Vaught, 10; Johnson, 7; Hewett, 6; Simon, 4; Roberts, 2.

Cougars Win Opener
In other first-round action last Tuesday at the South Brunswick gym, the host Cougars overcame a

sluggish start to post a 91-66 over visiting East Bladen.

Seventh-seeded East Bladen jumped out to an 18-7 lead after one quarter, but South Brunswick scored 31 points in the second period to take a 38-31 halftime lead.

South's Cougars outscored East Bladen's Cougars 36-16 in the third quarter and cruised through the final period for an easy win.

Moore led South with 26 points and White added 15. Monterro Graham had 16 to pace East Bladen, which ended the season 2-13 in conference games and 4-15 overall.

Score By Quarters
East Bladen 18 13 16 19—66
South Brunswick 7 31 36 17—91

East Bladen scoring: Graham, 16; Cromartie, 12; Jones, 9; Munn, 7; Moore, 6; Priest, 5; Hammonds, 5; Johnson, 4; Durant, 2.

South Brunswick scoring: Moore, 26; White, 15; Smith, 8; Roberts, 8; Simon, 6; Johnson, 6; Kennedy, 6; Parker, 5; DeJesus, 3; Hewett, 2; Clemmons, 2; Clark, 2; Vaught, 2.

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