

South Brunswick Cagers Earn Trip To Eastern Regionals

BY DOUG RUTTER

South Brunswick's Cougars earned a trip to the eastern regionals of the state 2-A high school basketball playoffs Monday with a 61-60 victory over West Montgomery in the sectional finals.

Senior point guard Josh White scored 27 points and Scooter Moore chipped in 12 to lead the Cougars, who have won five straight games to push their overall season record to 20-8.

T.C. French scored 18 points, Jackie Baldwin had 15 and Vernon Legrande added 11 to lead host West Montgomery. The Warriors ended their season at 17-9 after winning the Central Tar Heel Conference.

West Montgomery led 19-13 after one quarter, but South Brunswick scored 22 second-quarter points to tie the score at 35-35 at halftime. The Cougars led by four after three periods and held on for the win.

Coach Gene Doane's Cougars were scheduled to meet the Farmville Central Jaguars Wednesday night in the regional semifinals in Greenville. In the other eastern semifinal, Fairmont will play East Carteret.

The winners meet Saturday at 2 p.m. in Minges Coliseum for the eastern championship and the right to play for the state title March 27 in Chapel Hill.

Score By Quarters

South Brunswick 13 22 13 13—61
West Montgomery 19 16 9 16—60

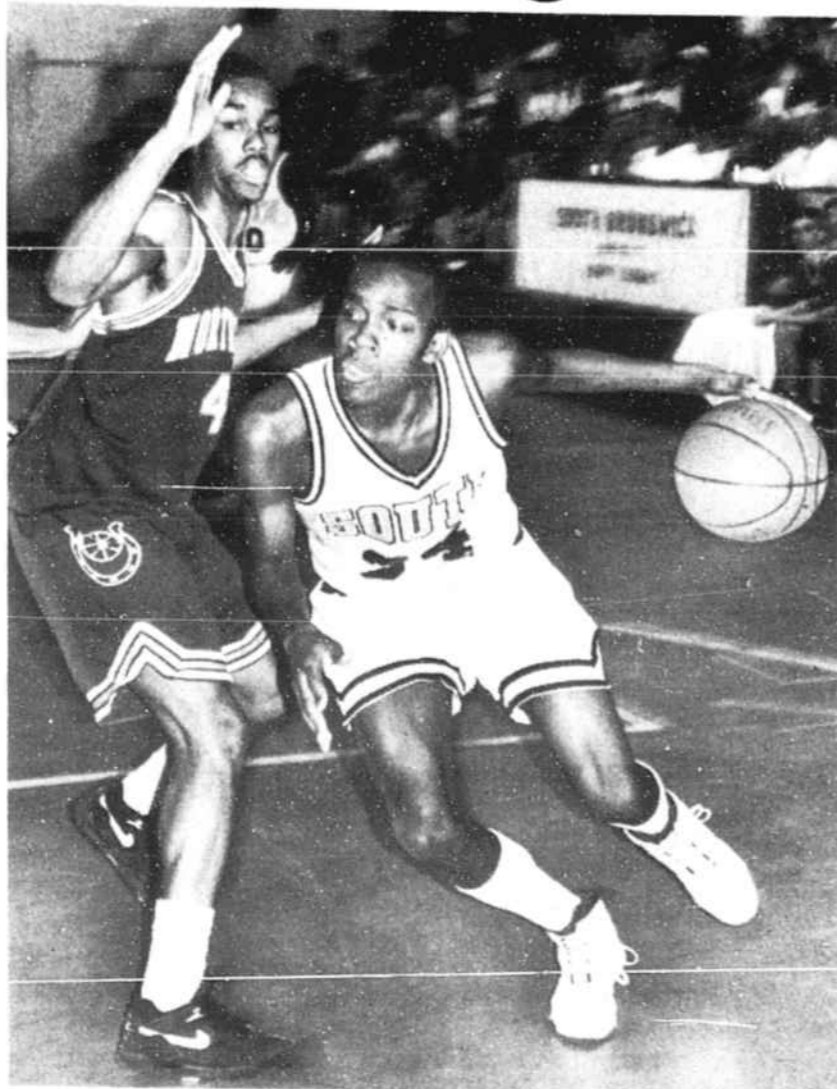
South Brunswick scoring: White, 27; Moore, 12; Smith, 7; Johnson, 6; Hewett, 5; Parker, 4.

West Montgomery scoring: French, 18; Baldwin, 15; Legrande, 11; Dunn, 10; Horne, 6; Leake, 2.

Cougars Stop Chargers

In second-round playoff action last Thursday, South Brunswick played lethargic at times but led from start to finish in their 72-59 win over visiting Northwood.

The Cougars jumped out to a 15-5 lead in the first four minutes of the game and never relinquished their lead to the Chargers. South's White



SOUTH'S SCOOTER MOORE drives by Northwood's Sherrod Murray during the Cougars' 72-59 second-round playoff win

led the way with 26 points, and Kevin Smith added 18.

Led by Lamont McClinton's 21 points and Sherrod Murray's 20, Northwood pulled to within one point of South in the second quarter but never got closer than three in the second half.

"We were lethargic," Coach Doane said following the game. "We played in spurts. When we had to do something defensively we did it."

After taking a quick 15-5 lead, the

Cougars scored just two more points in the last 4:10 of the first period and only led 17-12 going into the second quarter.

Doane said taking the early lead was the worst thing his team could have done because the players let up and missed several easy layups. "We got out of the blocks too quick. We were our own worst enemy."

With the Cougars struggling, Northwood trimmed South's lead to 27-26 on a McClinton basket with

3:34 remaining in the half.

The Cougars came alive late in the second quarter and scored 12 of the last 14 points in the half. White made a layup with 15 seconds left and then nailed a three-pointer at the buzzer to give South a 39-28 half-time lead.

The pesky Chargers wouldn't go away. In the third quarter, Northwood put together a 14-4 run to climb back into the game. Murray's basket with 1:03 left in the quarter cut South's lead to 47-44.

Northwood trailed 51-44 going into the fourth quarter and kept the game close until the final minute. South led 61-56 before White made two free throws with 1:20 remaining to start an 11-3 run to close out the game.

South's Moore scored 13 points and twice brought the home crowd to its feet with breakaway slam dunks. Antoine Johnson scored all 11 of his points in the first half to help lead the Cougars to their 19th win of the year.

Doane blamed his team's uninspired play on the recent Waccamaw Conference tournament. On consecutive nights, South defeated Whiteville in overtime and upset previously-unbeaten Fairmont to win the tournament title.

"We put out so much emotion last Thursday and Friday. I didn't think we had the emotion tonight," Doane said.

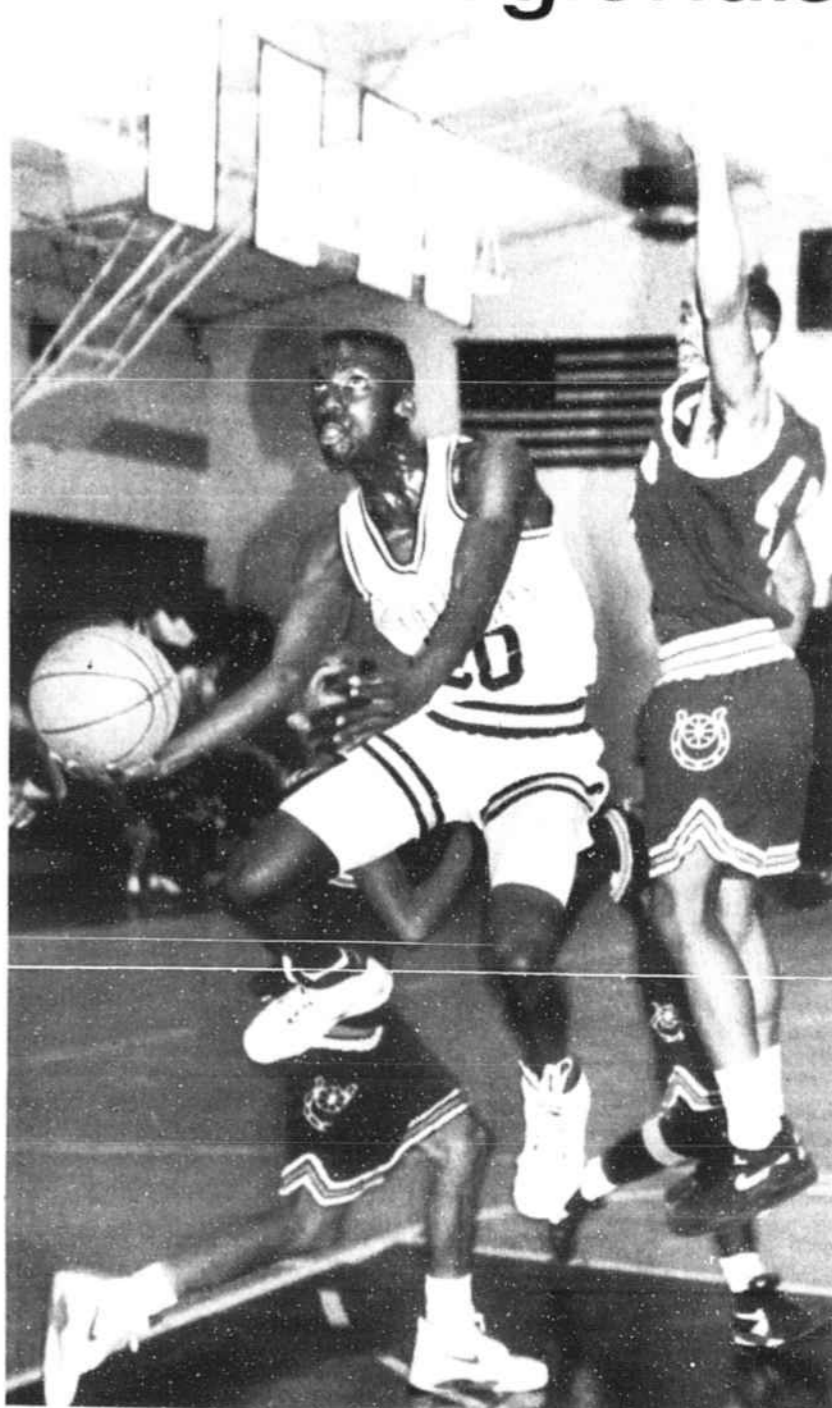
The Cougars received a bye in the first round of the playoffs. Northwood, which finished the year 16-8, had advanced to the second round with a 77-74 overtime win over Whiteville in the first round last Tuesday.

Score By Quarters

Northwood 12 16 16 15—59
South Brunswick 17 22 11 21—72

Northwood scoring: McClinton, 21; Murray, 20; Clemmons, 8; Gunter, 7; Bolejack, 2; Hackney, 1.

South Brunswick scoring: White, 26; Smith, 18; Moore, 13; Johnson, 11; Morris, 2; Vaughn, 2.



COUGAR PHENOM JOSH WHITE floats through the Northwood defense for two of his 26 points in South Brunswick's state playoff opener last Thursday.

STAFF PHOTOS BY DOUG RUTTER

SPORTING SCENE

South Girls Cage Season Won't Soon Be Forgotten

The South Brunswick Lady Cougar basketball team's dream season came to a sudden, painful conclusion last week in the gym it has called home since practice started last November.

The close-knit basketball bunch that nobody could solve during 26 regular-season and conference tournament games finally lost. End of season. End of dream.

Elimination from the playoffs is always tough. But when your first loss of the season comes in the playoffs, it's especially hard to swallow. So it was with the Lady Cougars.

Their 26-0 record and the top ranking in North Carolina wasn't enough to intimidate a solid club from Graham High that traveled four hours to Boiling Spring Lakes and ended South's super season last Wednesday.

With nothing to lose and everything to gain, the Lady Red Devils handed South a 47-43 defeat. The loss was bitter for the Lady Cougars, who dominated almost every other opponent this season.

As time expired on their season, there were shocked looks and tears on the Lady Cougars' faces. They seemed to share a general feeling of disbelief that their season was really over.

It is over, but it won't soon be forgotten.

Once a perennial cellar-dweller in the Waccamaw Conference, the Lady Cougars have been the class of the league the last two years. Six seniors who suited up for the last time in last week's playoff were a big reason why.

Stacy Isenberg, Tasha Sellers, Jodie Brown, Jenny Fullwood, LaTonya Hankins and Jamila Eagles will graduate this spring. But they can take with them the knowledge that they were part of the greatest girls' sports team South Brunswick High School has ever known.

The Lady Cougars were 46-7 over the last two years. They were the first girls' sports team to accomplish anything noteworthy at South Brunswick since the school opened 20 years ago.

No other South Brunswick High athletic team, boys or girls, can match what the Lady Cougar basketballers have done over the last two seasons.

They have every reason to be proud of their accomplishments. They can wipe the tears away and admire work that went into their back-to-back Waccamaw Conference championships.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this year's 26-1 squad was that it accomplished everything without a true superstar. South didn't have one player you could point to as the star of the team.

Maybe that's why they enjoyed so much success. Teams with superstars often lose when the star has a bad night. Teams with stars don't often play as teams.

The Lady Cougars may have come up short in their quest for a state championship, but they played as a team to the very end. It's been said the word "TEAM" can be translated as "Together Everyone Achieves More."

South's Lady Cougars epitomized what it is to be a team. They played hard, they played together and they achieved plenty.

Doug Rutter
Sports Editor



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