

SPORTING SCENE

Sorry, Tar Heel Lovers, Kentucky Is Number One

At the risk of being tarred and feathered, I can't sit back and let the plethora of University of North Carolina basketball fans go into this weekend thinking their Tar Heels are somehow going to win the national championship.

Sorry folks, it just ain't gonna happen. I know this is Tobacco Road. I know this is ACC country. But I've learned one thing over the years, it's that you never bet with your heart.

Brunswick County boasts quite a few UNC alumni, one of whom occupies the desk just 15 feet from mine. UNC has had many good teams in recent years, but this group of Heels isn't national championship caliber.

Quite frankly, North Carolina is fortunate to have made the Final Four. Unless Dean Smith can talk Michael Jordan into coming back to school, the Heels don't have a prayer in New Orleans.

So which team will win the title if the Tar Heels don't? Michigan's Fab Five has put too much pressure on themselves, and Kansas just looks like a good bridesmaid.

Personally, I think Kentucky is unstoppable. The Wildcats are shooting lights out, doing everything right and blowing out everyone they face. They are the hottest team on the planet right now.

Kentucky may not be the most talented team at the Final Four, but they are the hottest team and that has to scare the other three. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

Doug Rutter
Sports Editor



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

CALEB STEEDLEY returns a shot during West Brunswick's tennis match last week against visiting South Columbus. Steedley won his match 2-6, 6-1, 6-4, as the Trojans rolled to a 9-0 win.

Opening Day Is Monday

The Major League Baseball season opens Monday after a spring training marred by the tragic deaths of Cleveland Indian pitchers Tim Crews and Steve Olin, who were killed in a boating accident.

As horrible as those deaths were, they were no more tragic than any other boating-related fatalities. If a shoe salesman or barber had been killed in a similar fashion, it would have been just as horrendous.

The tragedy isn't that these men were pro baseball players, but that they were human beings with families. The tragedy is that these men were cut down in their prime, leaving their wives and children behind.

On a lighter note, the Atlanta Braves have to be the favorite to win their third straight National League pennant. With the addition of Cy Young Award winner Greg Maddux, the Braves pitching staff is more loaded than ever.

I hope my Phillies can make some noise in the National League East this season. If they can stay healthy, I think they can make a run for the division title, or at least not finish last.

What Might Have Been

Farmville Central, the team that knocked South Brunswick's boys from the state high school basketball playoffs, won the 2-A championship Saturday in Chapel Hill.

The Jaguars defeated western champ Monroe 67-53 at the Dean Dome to wrap up the fifth straight 2-A basketball title for the Eastern Plains Conference.

If you recall, South Brunswick nearly beat Farmville Central two weeks ago in the eastern regional semifinals.

The Jags won 63-61, but if a controversial call at the end of that game had gone the other way there's no telling what could have happened.

For one thing, you might be reading about South Brunswick's first trip to the Dean Dome instead of what might have been.

Win Prizes For Logging Miles Run, Walked, Biked

To celebrate National Physical Fitness Month, the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department is asking exercisers to keep a daily log of the number of miles walked, run or bicycled.

At the end of April and May, prizes will be awarded to those who have the top mileage in each category for each month. Everyone who participates will receive a certificate.

Official contest logs may be obtained from the department. Completed logs must be returned to the department no later than May 7 for April and June 4 for May. Winners will be notified by mail.

Also during April and May, people who sign up for the department's aerobics classes will get two months of classes for the price of one. The monthly participation fee is \$15, or \$3 for drop-ins.

Classes are held at the following places and times:

- North Brunswick High School multi-purpose room, Mondays and

Wednesdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m.;

■Waccamaw Community Building, Mondays and Wednesdays, 7:30-8:30 p.m.;

■Town Creek Community Building, Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30;

■County Government Complex Public Assembly Building, Bolivia, Mondays and Wednesdays, Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:15-6:15 p.m.;

■Southport Primary School gym, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-4:30 p.m.;

■Lockwood Folly Community Building, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-7 p.m.; and

■Leland Community Building, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

For more information or to receive an official log, call Emma T. McGraw at the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department, 253-4357 or 1-800-222-4790.

Harpster Leads Bowling League

Dennis Harpster had a 261 high game and 633 scratch series to lead the men in the Nutty Buddies League last Tuesday at Brunswick County Bowling Center in Shallotte.

Cindy Williams rolled a 202 high game and 548 scratch series to lead the women. Other high finishers among the men were Lee Harris with a 244 game and 607 scratch series.

Also rolling high games were Marcus Thompson, 243; Jim Hagler, 226; Mike Loughery, 221; Jimmy Robinson, 215; and Delwood Johnson, 201.

IN BOYS TENNIS

Cougars Win Third Straight

The South Brunswick boys' tennis team won its third consecutive match Monday, defeating host Fairmont 9-0 to improve to 3-1 in the Waccamaw 2-A Conference.

In league action last Wednesday, South Brunswick posted a 7-2 win over visiting South Robeson.

The Cougars were slated to play at Whiteville Wednesday. South Brunswick isn't scheduled to return to action until April 21 when the Cougars host West Columbus.

Fairmont Results

Singles: Yount (SB) won by default; Williams (SB) def. Jones, 8-4; Folding (SB) def. Boss, 8-0; Essey (SB) def. Locklear, 8-1; McLaughlin

(SB) def. McDowell, 7-2; Mullis (SB) def. Fulmore, 8-1.

Doubles: Williams-Folding (SB) won by default; Yount-McLaughlin (SB) def. Jones-Boss, 9-7; Whitesides-Poulik (SB) def. McDowell-Fulmore, 9-8.

South Robeson Results

Singles: Ranson (SR) def. Yount, 8-3; Williams (SB) def. Jacobs, 8-4; Folding (SB) def. Green, 8-0; Essey (SB) def. Mitchell, 8-1; McLaughlin (SB) def. Ford, 8-2; Mullis (SB) def. Hunt, 8-5.

Doubles: Ranson-Mitchell (SR) def. Williams-Folding, 8-4; Yount-McLaughlin (SB) def. Jacobs-Green, 8-1; Essey-Mullis (SB) def. Ford-Hunt, 8-1.

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West's Tennis Team Remains Unbeaten

BY DOUG RUTTER

The West Brunswick boys' tennis improved to 4-0 last week with a pair of victories over Columbus County teams.

The Trojans defeated visiting West Columbus 9-0 last Wednesday to improve to 3-0 in the Waccamaw 2-A Conference. West knocked off South Columbus last Tuesday by an identical 9-0 score in non-league action.

Lamar Hardy, a junior, is the team's top player for the second straight year, but he is being challenged for the top spot by sophomore Caleb Steedley.

"Caleb Steedley has really helped Lamar. He is the first player in two years to push him in practice," West Brunswick Coach Marti Gillis said.

Rounding out the top six for the Trojans are senior Michael Sellars, sophomore Kelly Wooten, senior Michael Simmons and senior Scott Lewis.

"Those four are very competitive, allowing us to play a lot more in practice making us match tough," Gillis said. "Any one of the four can beat the other on any given day."

Other team members are senior Chris Carter, who is recovering from an eye injury, senior Al Villa, senior Kris Stanley and freshman Jon Trull. Villa is an exchange student from Colombia.

Gillis said the squad is working hard to defend the Waccamaw Conference title it shared last season

with Whiteville. "They don't want any more ties," the coach said.

Despite the 9-0 score against South Columbus, Gillis said the match was closer than the score indicated. She said the Stallions are a strong team and will be a good addition to the Waccamaw Conference next year.

West Brunswick was scheduled to play at St. Pauls Tuesday and host East Bladen Wednesday. After the Easter break, the Trojans resume action April 7 at Whiteville.

West Columbus Results

Singles: Hardy (WB) def. Ellis, 6-1, 6-0; Steedley (WB) def. Jenkins, 6-0, 6-0; Sellars (WB) def. Eason, 6-0, 6-0; Wooten (WB) def. Shelley, 6-0, 6-0; Simmons (WB) won by forfeit; Lewis (WB) won by forfeit.

Doubles: Wooten-Sellars (WB) def. Ellis-Jenkins, 8-0; Lewis-Simmons (WB) def. Eason-Shelley, 8-1; Hardy-Steedley (WB) won by forfeit.

South Columbus Results

Singles: Hardy (WB) def. Prout, 6-2, 7-5; Steedley (WB) def. Foley, 2-6, 6-1, 6-4; Sellars (WB) def. Green, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2; Wooten (WB) def. Fowler, 6-2, 6-0; Simmons (WB) def. Jones, 6-2, 6-1; Lewis (WB) def. Inman, 6-1, 6-0.

Doubles: Hardy-Steedley (WB) def. Prout-Foley, 8-5; Wooten-Sellars (WB) def. Green-Fowler, 8-2; Villa-Carter (WB) def. Jones-Inman, 8-3.

IN CHURCH TOURNEY

Shallotte First Nips Calvary

Ray Suggs' basket with one second left in overtime lifted Shallotte First Baptist to a 52-51 win over Calvary Baptist in the Brunswick County Men's Church Basketball League tournament championship game Friday.

Shallotte First, the tournament's second seed, advanced to the title game with a 61-31 win over Ocean View and 51-39 victory over Camp Methodist in the semifinals. Shallotte finished with a 14-2 record.

Top-seeded Calvary Baptist, the regular-season champion, finished the season 15-1. Calvary advanced

to the championship game with a 59-49 win over Jennies Branch and 77-60 win over Letties Grove in the semifinals.

Letties Grove won the consolation game, defeating Camp Methodist 30-18. Letties Grove was the tournament's seventh seed and finished with an 11-6 record. Ninth-seeded Camp finished 8-9.

In tournament action last Tuesday at Waccamaw Elementary School, Camp Methodist defeated Shallotte Presbyterian 39-38, and Letties Grove was a 46-41 winner over Zion Baptist.

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