

# New Hanover Stops North Brunswick In Seashell Finals

BY DOUG RUTTER

North Brunswick's surprise run in the Seashell Invitational came up a little short as New Hanover rolled to an 8-3 victory last Wednesday in the championship game of the high school baseball tournament.

Chris Moore and Fletcher Bates each had a two-run single, and Trot Nixon and Shawn Gallagher knocked in one run apiece to lift the Wildcats to a first-place finish in the eight-team Easter tournament at Wilmington's Hardee Field.

Despite the loss, Scorpion Coach Wes Coward was proud of his team's two tournament wins and its effort in the title game against a 4-A New Hanover club ranked eighth in the nation.

"I feel like we made a good showing. We're barely a 2-A school enrollment wise and we showed that we can play with the big boys. I think going into the conference it'll give us a boost."

New Hanover freshman Eric Faulk pitched into the seventh inning before being relieved by Nixon for the final two outs. Faulk yielded four hits and struck out seven.

North pitcher Demetrius Bell helped the Wildcats by issuing 10 walks. The senior left-hander was effective when he got the ball over the plate, giving up just four hits and striking out seven.

"Except for those walks I feel like

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—Scorpion Coach Wes Coward

it was a real close ball game," Coward said. "That's what hurt us tonight. We got behind early and couldn't come back."

North Brunswick took a 1-0 lead in the first inning. Jared McGee reached base on a fielder's choice, stole second, moved to third on Adrian Black's single and scored when Gallagher bobbled a grounder to second base.

New Hanover struck for three runs in the top of the second after Bell issued two walks and hit a batter to load the bases. With two outs, Bell walked in one run and Bates followed with a two-run single to left.

The Wildcats added another run in the fourth. With two outs, Bell walked the bases loaded and Gallagher scored from third on a wild pitch. Curtis Martin was tagged out at home when he tried to score on another wild pitch.

In the fourth, New Hanover scored four runs on a single by Nixon, a two-run base hit by Moore and an RBI double by Gallagher.

Trailing 8-1, North Brunswick scored two runs in the bottom of the seventh. A hit batsman, error and single by Matt Mintz loaded the bases for Jeff Clark.

Faulk walked Clark, allowing Robert Hewett to score from third. Jimmy Campbell scored the third Scorpion run on a wild pitch before Nixon was brought in to record the final two outs.

New Hanover made it to the tournament finals by beating Marion, S.C., 5-3 in the opening round and West Brunswick 13-1 in the semifinals. North beat Jacksonville 7-0 in the first round and Laney 4-1 in the semifinals.

North Brunswick was scheduled to resume Waccamaw 2-A Conference play Tuesday at South Robeson before hosting Fairmont on Friday. The Scorpions are 2-0 in the conference and 4-3 overall.

**Game Summary**

New Han.	0 3 1 4 0 0 0	—8 4 3
N. Bruns.	1 0 0 0 0 0 2	—3 4 1



STAFF PHOTOS BY DOUG RUTTER  
ADRIAN BLACK dives back to first base during North Brunswick's 4-1 win over Laney in last week's Seashell Invitational. Covering first is Chris Lewis.

## McGee Leads North Past Laney

BY DOUG RUTTER

Jared McGee struck out 14 batters and went 4-for-5 at the plate to lead North Brunswick to a 4-1, extra-inning win over Laney last Tuesday in the Seashell Invitational semifinals.

The Scorpions broke a 1-1 tie in the ninth with an RBI single by Demetrius Bell. McGee followed with a key, two-run single to give himself a comfortable lead going into the bottom of the ninth.

"I felt tired in the late innings," McGee said as North Coach Wes Coward taped an ice bag to his aching right shoulder. "I had to get that hit to get some more runs."

McGee had reason to be tired after carrying his team on the mound and at the plate. The senior fanned nine Laney batters in the first four innings and five batters the rest of the way.

The Buccaneers took a 1-0 lead in the second inning on second baseman David MacCallam's RBI single. Clay Johnson scored after reaching base on a fielder's choice.

North Brunswick tied the score in the third when third baseman Matt Mintz drew a leadoff walk and later scored on Jimmy Campbell's base hit.

The score remained knotted at 1-1 until the ninth inning, when the Scorpions scored three runs on two hits and an error.

Matt Mintz reached base on MacCallam's error and scored from third on Bell's ground single to right field. With two outs, McGee added two insurance runs with a line single to right, scoring Campbell and Bell.

Laney got two hits in the bottom of the ninth, but McGee ended the game with a pop up. Laney, which got a fine pitching performance from Tony Pigott, stranded 14 base runners.

Pigott struck out eight Scorpion batters before being relieved by Jae Lanier in the ninth. MacCallam led the Bucs' offense with three hits.

"I'm ecstatic. I really am," Coward said following his team's fourth straight win. "For these kids to come over here and compete like this is beyond my wildest dreams."

Coward was ejected from the game in the eighth inning after arguing a controversial call. The Scorpions had the bases loaded with two outs and Paul Mintz at the plate.

Mintz swung at an 0-1 pitch in the



JARED MCGEE struck out 14 batters and had four hits in North Brunswick's semifinal victory over Laney.

dirt that got away from Laney catcher Clay Johnson. McGee scooted home for the apparent go-ahead run, but the home plate umpire said Mintz had tipped the ball foul.

Coward argued that his left fielder hadn't made contact with the pitch. However, the runners were sent back to their bases and Mintz later struck out.

"I lost my composure as well I think I should have," Coward said.

**Game Summary**

N. Bruns.	0 0 1 0 0 0 0 3	—4 1 0
Laney	0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0	—1 1 0 2

### SPORTING SCENE

## Country Boys Play Big In Seashell Tournament

Brunswick County's three high school baseball teams proved last week that country boys can play ball just as well as city boys.

Brunswick County schools were 5-4 in last week's Seashell Invitational tournament in Wilmington. New Hanover County schools also were 5-4.

While the New Hanover Wildcats captured the tournament championship, North Brunswick finished second and West Brunswick was third. As they say in Wilmington, "Not a bad showing for them country folk."

The Scorpions' run to the championship game surprised a lot of on-lookers. It shouldn't have. North Brunswick has a solid club with three good starting pitchers, a luxury for most schools the size of North.

After missing out on the state playoffs last year, North Brunswick is in a position to make a run at the Waccamaw Conference title this season. The Scorpions believe they can do it, and rightfully so.

Of course, they'll have to contend with West Brunswick, among others. The Trojans showed some guts last week, winning two games in extra innings and rebounding from a humiliating 13-1 loss to New Hanover to place third.

There was a lot of good baseball played during the tournament. And I do mean A LOT of baseball. Four of the 11 games went into extra innings, including a 14-inning thriller in which Marion, S.C., defeated Hoggard 4-3.

The Seashell definitely had its tense moments. Not the least of which was North Coach Wes Coward and West Coach Mike Alderson both getting ejected in their games against Laney.

Coward was shown the exit in the eighth inning with the Scorpions and Buccaneers tied at 1-1. North Brunswick went on to win the game 4-1 in nine innings.

Alderson was tossed in the sixth inning with West trailing 3-2. With the coach looking on from the Hardee Field parking lot, the Trojans tied the game in the seventh and won it in the 10th.

What are the odds of that happening? Two Brunswick County coaches get ejected in extra-inning games against the same team on consecutive nights and the local teams win both games.

Maybe the strangest thing I saw at the Seashell was West Brunswick right fielder Wayne Branch getting beamed in three consecutive trips to the plate against Laney.

Branch was hit in the third, fifth and seventh innings. He wasn't hurt. He just shook off the beanballs and scored twice, including the game-tying run in the seventh inning.

Of course, Branch's beanballs weren't any stranger than Bryan Fleming's fair ball that was changed to a foul ball after an umpires' conference in West Brunswick's opening game against Hoggard.

Then there was West Brunswick's activity bus that didn't quite make it to Wilmington for the Laney game. The bus broke down in front of Aaron Butler's house, so the players piled in a van and kept on trucking.

On the way, they passed a car that had caught fire on Highway 17 and then got held up at the bridge going into Wilmington.

Just another lazy day at the ballpark.



Doug Rutter  
Sports Editor

## Cougars Get First Win Of Season

South Brunswick's baseball team picked up its first win of the season last Tuesday in a 4-0 shutout of Jacksonville in the Seashell Invitational tournament in Wilmington.

Brian Ricker was the winning pitcher for the Cougars, scattering six hits and striking out eight Cardinal batters. South had lost its first eight games of the season.

Mike Clewis had two singles and an RBI for South Brunswick and Jason Bracey added a double. "We played solid defense and had decent pitching," Cougar Coach Jack Brown said.

In tournament action last Wednesday, Hoggard scored five runs in the first inning and cruised to a 7-1 win over South Brunswick.

Vikings Drew McIntosh and Duane Ross singled in the bottom of the first and scored on Alan Cox's base hit. Will Taylor also had a two-run single for Hoggard in the first.

The Cougars scored their only run in the first when Eric McMahan singled and scored on a passed ball. McMahan also had a double and a triple against Hoggard.

South Brunswick loaded the bases in the fourth inning, but Hoggard pitcher Brian Amra ended the threat with a double play.

Lewis Vaught had a triple for South Brunswick. Byron Batson pitched four innings for the Cougars, and Rodney Willoughby pitched in relief.

South Brunswick is 0-3 in the Waccamaw 2-A Conference and 1-9 overall. The Cougars were scheduled to play at Whiteville Tuesday before hosting West Brunswick Friday.

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