



**NORTH BRUNSWICK COACH WES COWARD (left) tries to settle down pitcher Casey McBride during the Scorpion's 5-3 loss last week to West Brunswick. North has dropped five straight games.**

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

## Scorpions Lose Fifth Straight

BY DOUG RUTTER

North Brunswick's baseball team suffered its fifth straight Waccamaw 2-A Conference loss Monday night at Whiteville, falling 5-2 to the unbeaten Wolfpack.

After opening the conference season with three straight wins, Monday's loss leaves North Brunswick fifth in the league and in serious jeopardy of missing out on the state playoffs.

"A little slump like this in high school baseball can put you under in a hurry," Scorpion Coach Wes Coward said prior to Monday's loss. "I'd hate to see that happen because we started off so strong."

North Brunswick lost all three of its conference games last week. West Columbus beat the Scorpions twice, 7-5 on Wednesday and 11-9 Thursday, and West Brunswick beat North 5-3 on Tuesday.

With five straight conference losses, North Brunswick entered Tuesday night's game with South Brunswick with a 3-5 mark in the Waccamaw Conference and 5-8 overall.

Coward, a first-year coach, said the team has been making a few errors. But the real problem has been the team is falling behind early and having to battle back every game.

North Brunswick has had the tying or winning run on base or at the plate in the final inning in six of its eight losses.

"I'll bet I've had 20 people come up to me this year and tell me that the kids never give up," Coward said. "It's good that we're not quitters, but we're tired of bat-

ting and coming up short. We want to get over the edge."

Also contributing to the slump have been injuries to North's once-strong pitching staff.

The Scorpions lost the services of sophomore pitcher/first baseman Casey McBride in the West Brunswick game. McBride snapped a tendon in his pitching arm and is out indefinitely.

North Brunswick's other right-handed pitcher, Jared McGee, hurt his arm earlier this season and is still recovering. McGee and McBride are two of the team's best hitters.

"Even with all of the injuries we're still in every game we play," Coward said. "We're just making a few key mistakes here and there. We need to put it together."

After Tuesday's game with South Brunswick, the Scorpions travel to East Bladen Friday. North has just four more conference games after that, including back-to-back contests with Whiteville and West Brunswick next week.

"Now every single game is crucial," Coward said Monday. "We have to win every one from now on. If we lose one or two more we're gone."

The top three teams from the Waccamaw Conference qualify for the state playoffs. Going into Tuesday's play, Whiteville led at 7-0 and was followed by East Bladen at 6-2, West Columbus at 4-2 and West Brunswick at 4-4.

North Brunswick and Fairmont are tied for fifth. "It's a dog fight right now," Coward said.

## Diamond Cougars Drop Three

South Brunswick's woes on the baseball diamond continued last week as the Cougars dropped three games to fall deeper in the Waccamaw 2-A Conference standings.

The Cougars lost twice to conference foe East Bladen, 7-4 Friday night in Boiling Spring Lakes and 8-7 last Tuesday in Elizabethtown. South also lost a non-conference game to visiting Marion, S.C., 15-5 last Wednesday.

South opened this week 1-6 in the Waccamaw Conference and 2-13 overall. The Cougars were scheduled to play at North Brunswick Tuesday before hosting West Columbus Friday.

The 8-7 defeat last Tuesday at East Bladen was South Brunswick's sixth one-run loss of the season. The Cougars have lost four conference games by a single run.

South Brunswick Coach Jack

Brown was ejected in the East Bladen game last Tuesday—the second time this season Brown has been ejected. He also was thrown out of a game in Whiteville April 20.

Senior catcher Mike Clewis is leading the Cougars at the plate. Clewis was hitting .378 going into Friday night's game, when he picked up two hits. Jason Bracey and Lewis Vaught are hitting around .300.

## West Brunswick JV Leads Waccamaw

West Brunswick's junior varsity baseball team remained undefeated in the Waccamaw 2-A Conference with a 7-1 win Monday at Fairmont.

The Trojans trailed 1-0 after five innings but broke the game open with six runs in the sixth. Chris Jackson was 3-for-4, picking up the game-tying RBI and scoring game-winning run.

Neil Warren was 2-for-3. Chris Payne, Jay McRoberts, Gabe Cooper and Phillip Leonard had one hit each. Cameron Jones hit a two-run home run for West Brunswick. Leonard was the winning pitcher.

The Trojans, 7-0 in the conference and 8-1 overall, were scheduled to play at South Robeson Thursday.

In conference play last Thursday, West Brunswick defeated Whiteville 5-4. Jackson and Payne both went 2-for-3 with two RBI. Payne knocked in the game-winning run. Leonard was 3-for-3, and winning pitcher Josh Baker had two hits.

Earlier this season, West Brunswick snapped the Whiteville JV's 27-game winning streak with a 7-3 win in Whiteville.

"I don't know how long it's been since we've beaten Whiteville two times in the same year. It's been many years," said West Brunswick JV Baseball Coach David Arowood.

Two weeks ago, the Trojans won a pair of conference games in the bottom of the seventh.

West Brunswick defeated North Brunswick 5-4 on April 26. Baker pitched a five-hitter for the Trojans, while McRoberts went 3-for-3 with an RBI and Cooper was 1-for-2 with two RBI.

On April 22, the Trojan JV posted a 16-15 win over county rival South Brunswick. Joel Gupton was 2-for-5 and knocked in the game-winning run in the seventh.

Warren was 3-for-5 with two RBI, McRoberts was 2-for-4 and Jackson was the winning pitcher.

## GORE FANS 10 SCORPIONS

# West Trojans Snap Losing Skid At North

BY DOUG RUTTER

West Brunswick's Scott Gore struck out 10 batters as the Trojans

snapped a three-game losing streak with a 5-3 high school baseball win last Tuesday at North Brunswick.

Gore carried a one-hitter into the seventh inning, but the Scorpions rallied for three runs in their final at-bat before Eric Johnson came on to record the save for the Trojans.

"All the wins now are big wins," West Brunswick Coach Mike Alderson said after the game. "Scott pitched a great game. We finally put the bats on the ball and made some things happen offensively."

North Brunswick Coach Wes Coward said his team started slow at the plate but never gave up. "Our guys know until the last out we're going after it. Sometimes they have more faith in themselves than I do."

The Trojans started quickly with two runs in the top of the first inning. Wayne Branch scored from third on a ground out, and Mike

Johnson came home on Aaron Butler's two-out double to left-center field.

West Brunswick added three runs in the sixth inning, highlighted by Bryan Fleming's 375-foot solo home run to center field.

Scorpion pitcher Casey McBride had injured his arm on a 1-1 pitch to Fleming, but stayed in the game long enough for West's senior catcher drive a 3-1 fastball out of the yard.

Paul Mintz relieved McBride, a sophomore who yielded three runs on four hits and recorded seven strike outs. Butler, who had two of West's five hits, greeted Mintz with a single and later scored on an infield throwing error.

West Brunswick scored its final run one batter later when Eric Johnson purposely got into a rundown between first and second base and Keane Bellamy scooted home from third.

Coach Alderson said the "Early Bird" play is designed to induce a balk. If the pitcher doesn't balk, the runner at first base is supposed to stay in a rundown long enough to allow the runner at third to score.

Gore, a senior right-hander, took a one-hit shutout into the bottom of

the seventh, but gave up two singles and a walk to load the bases with one out. Gore fanned Matt Mintz for the second out, but uncorked a wild pitch that allowed Jeremy Child to score from third.

The Trojans could have ended the game on Timmy Campbell's grounder to first. But Gregg Mott's toss to Gore was wide of the bag and Adrian Black and Robert Hewett scored on the error.

With runners at the corners and one out, Eric Johnson relieved Gore and issued a walk to load the bases for leadoff hitter Demetrius Bell. Johnson struck out Bell to end the game.

West Brunswick improved to 3-3 in the Waccamaw 2-A Conference and 9-5 overall. With its second straight conference loss, North Brunswick fell to 3-2 in the league and 5-5 overall.

West Brunswick's win also tightened the race for the Brunswick County baseball championship. All three teams were 1-1 against county competition going into Tuesday night's clash between South and North in Leland.

### Game Summary

W. Bruns.	20000	30	—	5	2
N. Bruns.	00000	03	—	3	4

## Trojans Post Big Win Over Visiting Vikings

Fighting to keep its state playoff hopes alive, West Brunswick's baseball team came up with a huge 6-2 win Monday night against the visiting West Columbus Vikings.

Trojan pitching ace Scott Gore struck out 11 and yielded just four hits in the complete-game victory, which West Brunswick needed to stay in the hunt for one of the three playoff berths from the Waccamaw 2-A Conference.

Aaron Butler led the West Brunswick offense, going 3-for-3 at the plate with two RBI. Bryan Fleming had two hits and drove in another run for the Trojans.

West Brunswick improved to 4-4 in the conference, while West Columbus fell to 4-2. Going into Tuesday's action, Whiteville led the Waccamaw at 7-0,

followed East Bladen at 6-2, West Columbus and West Brunswick.

The top three teams from the conference will qualify for the state playoffs. The Trojans had two more home games scheduled this week. They were expected to host Fairmont Tuesday and South Robeson Friday.

West Brunswick Coach Mike Alderson said he planned to pitch Eric Johnson against the Golden Tornadoes, and send Gore to the mound again Friday night against the Mustangs.

Next week, the Trojans travel to West Columbus Tuesday and host North Brunswick Friday. West Brunswick travels to East Bladen May 18 and wraps up the conference slate with a May 21 home game against South Brunswick.

## Whiteville Turns Back West Brunswick 8-5

BY DOUG RUTTER

West Brunswick twice came back from deficits before falling to undefeated Whiteville 8-5 last Thursday in Waccamaw 2-A Conference high school baseball.

"We played well," West Brunswick Coach Mike Alderson said. "We had a couple of errors that hurt us, but they got two hits with the bases loaded. That was the difference in the ball game."

Whiteville held a 2-0 lead after three innings, but the visiting Trojans tied the score in the top of the fourth on Bryan Fleming's two-run home run to left field.

"Fleming hit a towering shot," Alderson said. "It must have been 430 feet. It would have been out of Yankee Stadium. I've never seen a ball hit that far before in high school."

Whiteville reclaimed the lead in the bottom of the fourth with three

runs. With two outs, Mark Harritan hit a three-run double to give the Wolfpack a 5-2 lead.

But the Trojans rallied for three runs of their own in the top of the fifth to knot the score at 5-5. Mike Johnson's double was the big blow for West Brunswick.

Whiteville scored three times in the bottom of the fifth to take an 8-5 lead, and West Brunswick failed to score in its final two at-bats.

Clay Boykin pitched five innings for the Wolfpack, and Chris Conway pitched the final two. Eric Johnson went the distance for West Brunswick, yielding eight hits. The Trojans had six hits.

"We went up there and hit the ball, and we made several clutch defensive plays" Alderson said. "I was pleased with the way we hit. We hit the ball hard and made them make the plays."

Alderson said Boykin hadn't giv-

en up any earned runs this season prior to West Brunswick's visit.

Fleming's home run was his fourth of the season. The senior catcher also smashed a homer last Tuesday at North Brunswick. Mike Johnson, a sophomore, went 2-for-4 against Whiteville.

The Wolfpack, the defending Eastern North Carolina 2-A baseball champion, improved to 6-0 in the conference and 13-0 overall. West Brunswick fell to 3-4 in the conference and 9-6 overall.

"That's our four losses in the conference to us," Alderson said. "We need to go 7-0 the rest of the way."

### Game Summary

W. Bruns.	00023	0	0	—	5	6
Whiteville	01133	0	X	—	8	2

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