



WEST BRUNSWICK'S ZACH HICKS (right) eludes a South Brunswick player during the Trojans' 3-1 win last Thursday. STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

# Trojans Close In On County Soccer Title

BY DOUG RUTTER

West Brunswick's Trojans inched closer to their second straight county high school soccer championship last Thursday with a 3-1 win over visiting South Brunswick.

With two county matches remaining, the Trojans are 4-0-2 and can do no worse than tie for first place. North Brunswick still has an outside shot at grabbing a share of the championship.

In last Thursday's match at Shalotte Middle School, West Brunswick took a 1-0 lead on South Brunswick midway through the first half on a goal by Chris Payne.

West's Andy Russ, who assisted on the first goal, drilled a penalty shot into the lower left corner of the net late in the first half to give the Trojans a 2-0 lead at intermission.

South Brunswick kept plugging away, however, and trimmed the lead to 2-1 early in the second half on a goal by Jamie Brunner.

West Brunswick rebuilt its lead to two goals on another penalty kick. West Coach Teak Hemphill let goalkeeper Jay McRoberts take the kick, and he took full advantage of his first shot of the season.

McRoberts, who has allowed just

22 goals in 14 matches this season, blasted the ball past his counterpart, South's Tommy Bunting.

Hemphill said he let his goalie take the shot because it was his 16th birthday. "I wouldn't have done that normally. Jay's been bugging me about it, and I wanted to let him take one before the season ended."

Hemphill said he was pleased with the way his team passed the ball. "We aren't as selfish as we used to be. That's what it takes to win a match."

South Brunswick Coach Greg Bland was proud of his club's effort. "I thought we played tough and our guys were up for it. You take away the penalty kicks and it's an even game."

The Cougars were coming off a 4-2 win last Tuesday at North Brunswick. Claudio Deserti had two goals in that match, and Jimmy Lang and Adam Yount had one each for South Brunswick.

On Monday, West Brunswick edged visiting Flora McDonald Academy 4-3 to extend its unbeaten streak to eight matches. Gabe Cooper had two goals for the Trojans, and Russ and Payne scored one each.

"We had a sluggish game," Hemphill said. "The guys seemed to be a little bit off. It was frustrating because our passing wasn't the best. We were a little bit lucky to win."

The match was tied 2-2 at half-time before West Brunswick took control in the second half. Russ scored on a penalty kick for the second straight match, and Payne added his 14th goal of the season to give West a 4-2 lead.

The Trojans (10-2-2 overall) can clinch the county championship next Tuesday when they travel to North Brunswick. West will play at South Brunswick next Thursday.

West Brunswick halfback Cameron Kinlaw was lost for the season when he broke his collar bone in last week's win at Wilmington Christian Academy. "We're going to miss him," Hemphill said.

West will represent the Waccamaw Conference in the state 3A soccer playoffs and will host the first-round match against the second seed from the Triad Conference.

The match is scheduled Wednesday, Nov. 3, at 7 p.m. on the high school football field.

## Hornets' Youth Program Coming To Brunswick

BY DOUG RUTTER

Imagine how happy your children would be if they got to meet Larry Johnson or Alonzo Mourning of the NBA's Charlotte Hornets at a local basketball clinic.

If Joe Rosselli has his way, it will happen within the next few years. The Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department's new association with the Junior Hornets program could pave the way.

Rosselli, county athletic coordinator, said local boys and girls who sign up for the recreation basketball league this winter will be part of the Jr. Hornets.

Each child will receive a reversible Junior Hornets jersey, gym bag, poster, membership card and a player handbook filled with tips from the Hornets players on how to improve their game.

"I really think the kids are going to get a blast out of it," Rosselli said last week. "Most of the kids here relate to the Hornets."

Youth basketball is one of the recreation department's biggest programs, with 350 to 400 kids ages 5 to 15 participating last year. Rosselli expects the leagues in Shallotte, Leland and Southport to grow because of the Junior Hornets program.

"I just think this thing can't lose," he said. "The thing I like about it is it's not going to be a one-year program. They said they're going to try to continue it."

The cost to Brunswick County will be \$5 per child, which Rosselli says is a "steal" because each participant will receive about \$30 in merchandise. The Hornets and Coca-Cola help pay for the program.

"There is a big push on by the Charlotte Hornets to promote youth basketball and the positive aspects,"

*"I really think the kids are going to get a blast out of it. Most of the kids here relate to the Hornets."*

—Joe Rosselli, Athletic Coordinator

Rosselli said.

In future years, Rosselli said he hopes the local kids can take a trip to a Hornets' game where they will be able to meet some players at a pre-game, courtside clinic.

The Charlotte franchise started the program during its second sea-

son in the National Basketball Association (1989-90) as a marketing and community relations venture.

Rosselli said the Hornets contacted the parks and recreation department about starting the program in Brunswick County.

"They came after us," he said. "They've opened the doors to us and rolled out the red carpet."

Registration for the local youth basketball leagues will be held in late November, with play starting in December.

The Jr. Hornets program has grown from 3,000 kids in the Charlotte area during the first year to more than 10,000 boys and girls throughout North and South Carolina last year.

The Hornets were one of the most improved teams in the NBA last year when they made their first playoff appearance. They have several young stars such as Johnson and Mourning and should be among the top teams for years to come.

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