

FOUR WEST ATHLETES SELECTED

Ballard, Bryant Head All-County Basketball Teams

BY DOUG RUTTER

North's Mario Ballard and South's Erika Bryant have been selected as the 1994 Brunswick County high school male and female basketball players of the year.

Ballard, a 6-0 junior at North Brunswick, was the leading scorer for the Scorpions this season with an average of 18 points per game, which was the highest scoring average in the county.

"He is a very unselfish player," North Brunswick Coach Garry Bishop said of Ballard. "He was a scoring type player. He was very consistent and never missed a practice."

An outstanding athlete, Ballard demonstrated the ability to score from the inside and outside. He led the Scorpions to a 3-11 finish in the Three Rivers Conference and an overall record of 8-15.

For Bryant, this is her second selection as girls' player of the year. The senior center received the honor following her sophomore season in 1992 before missing much of last year with a knee injury.

Bryant also injured a knee this season, but came back strong to lead South Brunswick's girls to a 9-3 record in the Waccamaw Conference and a tie for the regular-season championship. The Lady Cougars were 17-10 overall.

Bryant averaged 14 points and nine rebounds per game. "She's got good hands and good post moves. Those are probably her strongest points," said South Brunswick Coach Mike Isenberg.

Pembroke State University has offered Bryant a basketball scholarship. Isenberg said Elon College, Fayetteville State and Kentucky State also have contacted Bryant.

The Supporting Cast

Rounding out the honorary all-county boys' basketball team are Eric Johnson and Derek Frink of West Brunswick, Jermaine Graham of North and Antoine Johnson of South.

Graham, a 5-11 senior, was the top defensive player this year for the North Brunswick boys while also averaging 15 points per contest.

ALL-BRUNSWICK COUNTY BASKETBALL TEAMS

| BOYS | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Name | School |
| Eric Johnson | West |
| Derek Frink | West |
| Mario Ballard | North |
| Jermaine Graham | North |
| Antoine Johnson | South |
| GIRLS | |
| Name | School |
| Nicole Norris | West |
| Donicia Moody | West |
| Erika Bryant | South |
| Tameka Davis | South |
| Valerie Smith | North |

"He drew the best defensive assignment every game. He really came on at the end of the year," Bishop said.

West Brunswick's most consistent player, Johnson handled point guard duties all-season for Coach Charlie Stevens' Trojans. The junior led the team in scoring with 11.1 points per game and also averaged five assists.

Johnson is an outstanding athlete who quarterbacked West's state championship football team and also is a starter on the baseball team. He scored a career-high 31 points this year against Whiteville.

In his first season as a member of West's varsity squad, Frink averaged 10 points and five rebounds per contest. Just a sophomore, he is considered a solid college prospect by many area high school coaches.

The 6-5 Frink came on strong at the end of the season, when he scored a career-high 24 points to lead West over Cape Fear in the first round of the state playoffs. He had 17 points in a second-round loss to Eastern Randolph.

West Brunswick tied for third in the Waccamaw Conference with a 5-7 record. The Trojans were 10-16 overall.

South Brunswick's boys finished 4-8 in the Waccamaw Conference and 9-15 overall. The Cougars won four of their last five games, but missed the state playoffs for the first time in five years.

Antoine Johnson, a senior point guard, was the key to the late-season



BEACON FILE PHOTOS

MARIO BALLARD of North Brunswick is the county boys' basketball player of the year after averaging 18 points per game for the Scorpions.

surge. He averaged 12 points and eight assists per game.

Johnson handled the ball about 80 percent of the time in Coach Gene Doane's four-corners offense. The scheme allowed Johnson to use his quickness to penetrate opposing defenses and score or pass off to teammates.

Joining Bryant on the all-county girls' squad are South teammate Tameka Davis, Nicole Norris and

Donicia Moody of West Brunswick and Valerie Smith of North Brunswick.

North Carolina Central is among the colleges interested in Davis, a senior guard who averaged 11.5 points per game for the Lady Cougars. Davis was one of the team's best defenders and ball-handlers.

Norris was the only senior on this year's Lady Trojan squad. The center averaged 12 points and eight rebounds per game and converted 75 percent of her free throw attempts.

With Norris graduating, West Brunswick will look to Moody to provide leadership in the years to come. The freshman guard/forward made an immediate impact in her first year at West, scoring 10 points per game.

Moody also averaged four assists and three steals per contest for a team that finished 5-17 in the Waccamaw Conference and 8-17 overall and advanced to the state playoffs for the fourth straight year.

North's Smith, a 5-8 senior, averaged nearly 10 points per game for the Lady Scorpions, who finished 0-14 in the Three Rivers Conference and 1-22 overall.

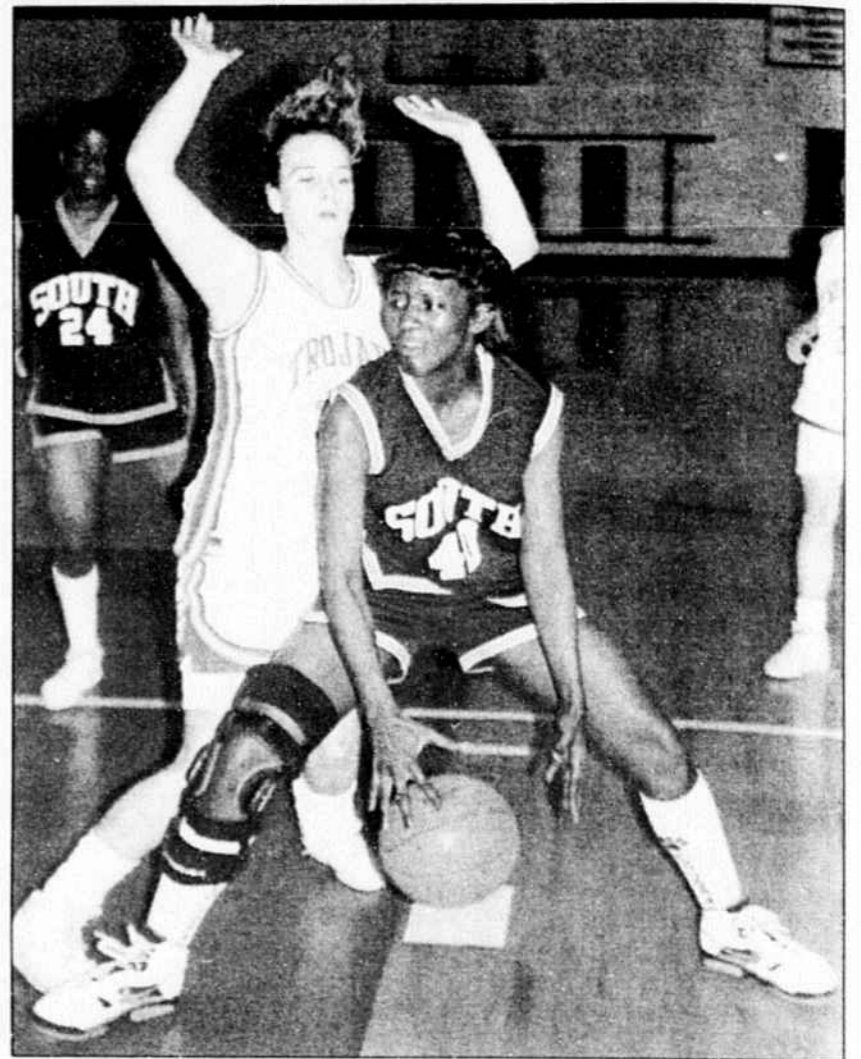
North Brunswick's lone win was a 49-37 decision at Topsail. Smith, a standout on North's track and field team, scored a career-high 26 points in that game.

Coaches Of The Year

South Brunswick made a clean sweep in the county coach of the year honors. Doane was selected as the top boys' coach, and Isenberg was named on the girls' side.

After four years as a conference front-runner, South Brunswick's boys had a tough year marked by adversity. Doane installed the four-corners offense late in the campaign, and nearly earned his team a playoff berth.

Isenberg also did a fine job with the South girls after losing four starters from a team that finished 26-



SOUTH BRUNSWICK'S ERIKA BRYANT was the driving force behind the Lady Cougars this season and is the county girls' player of the year.

1 in 1993. With only two experienced players returning, Isenberg guided the

Lady Cougars to another winning season and a fourth straight trip to the conference tournament finals.

Shalotte Wins Baseball Opener

Shalotte Middle School's baseball team opened the season with a 14-9 victory over Whiteville last Wednesday at Shalotte Township Park.

pitcher for Shalotte, and David Batten went 2 for 4 at the plate.

Coach Richard Hubbard's Pirates were scheduled to play Wednesday at Leland Middle School and Thursday at Whiteville.

Anthony Hewett was the winning

RECREATION BRIEFS

'Art In The Park' Festival Set

Associated Artists of Southport and the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department will sponsor the Art in the Park Festival Saturday, April 16, in Franklin Square Park, Southport.

Activities, scheduled to take place between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., will include family entertainment and art projects. Rain Date is Sunday, April 17, from 1-5 p.m.

Performers will include Kathy Bass, Oak Island School of Dance; Dave Perry, ventriloquist; Long Beach Karate Group; Southport Sea Coast Cloggers; Steve Myott, still walker; and Category 5. Other activities will include a bake sale, pottery sale, face painting and petting zoo. Concessions will be provided by the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

In conjunction with Art in the Park, the first "Walk for Earth Day" celebration, sponsored by the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department, will also be held at Franklin Square Park. The walk will take place from 9 until 10 a.m. Participants will walk around Franklin Square Park as many times as they would like at their own pace, and will receive certificates. Parents must accompany their children.

Coloring Winners

Jordan Astoske of Southport Elementary was chosen countywide winner of the McGruff "Crack Down on Drugs" coloring contest.

Winners from individual schools are Jazmen Chavez, Lincoln Primary; John Gilbert, Bolivia Ele-

mentary; Brandon Frink, Union Elementary; Matthew Cooker, Waccamaw Elementary; and Amanda Noble, Supply Elementary.

Deadline Nears

May 16 is the deadline for the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department's amateur photography contest whose theme is "Coastal North Carolina Rivers, Streams, Lakes and Intra-coastal Waterways."

Photos should be submitted to the department no earlier than May 2.

Entries must have been photographed between August 1993 and

May 1994 in North Carolina's coastal region. Photos may be in color or black and white and must be 5 X 7, 8 X 10 or 11 X 14, and framed.

The contest is open to all amateur photographers in coastal North Carolina. Prizes will be awarded to winners.

The photos will be on display during June at Franklin Square Art Gallery in Southport.

For more information about any of these programs, call Emma T. McGraw, special events coordinator at the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department, 1-800-222-4790.

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