

WAYNE BRANCH had five hits last week as West Brunswick's baseball team extended its winning streak to five games with victories at East Columbus and West Columbus.

WBHS Sending Four To State Track Meet

West Brunswick will send four athletes to the North Carolina 3A High School Track and Field Championships this Saturday at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

All four qualified for the state meet with top-four finishes at the regional meet last weekend at Washington High School.

West Brunswick Boys Track Coach Wesley Shoemaker said the Trojans finished sixth out of 24 teams in the region and will send three athletes to the state championships.

Leading the contingent will be senior Phillip Johnson, who qualified for the state meet in both the shot put and discus.

Johnson, who placed second in the state in the discus last year, won the regional meet for the second straight year with a toss of 154 feet. He also placed third in the shot put.

"Phillip definitely has a chance in

both events," Shoemaker said Monday. "He's going to be OK."

Also representing West Brunswick at Saturday's state meet will be sophomore high jumper Derek Frink, who placed third in the region with a leap of 6 feet, 4 inches.

Coach Shoemaker said Frink cleared the same height as the first- and second-place finishers, but had more misses along the way.

West's Timmy Vaught also qualified for the state championships with a fourth-place finish in the 1600-meter run.

Vaught's time in the mile was 4:38, which was 10 seconds better than his winning time at the Waccamaw Conference championships two weeks ago.

Christy Thorpe is West Brunswick's only girl to qualify for the state meet. Thorpe, the two-time conference discus champion, finished fourth in the regional meet with a 93-foot toss.

FIFTH STRAIGHT WIN Trojans Rally Past West Columbus 10-6

BY DOUG RUTTER

West Brunswick rallied from a 4-0 deficit then scored four runs in the seventh inning for a 10-6 high school baseball win over West Columbus Friday night in Cerro Gordo.

Chris Payne drew a bases-loaded walk with two outs in the seventh to drive in the game-winning run as the Trojans notched their fifth straight win and remained unbeaten in the month of May.

Wayne Branch, Mike Johnson, Cameron Jones and Heath Inman had two hits apiece for West Brunswick, which improved to 7-4 in the Waccamaw Conference and 13-9 overall.

The Trojans fell behind 4-0 after three innings but came back to take a 6-5 lead with three runs in the sixth. The Vikings tied the score with one run in the sixth before West Brunswick plated four in its final at-bat.

"It was a great comeback," West Brunswick Coach Mike Alderson said. "They kept pecking away and pecking away. The whole team contributed tonight."

Magellan Powell, Frank Merritt and Ryan Benton had two hits each for the Vikings, who fell to 4-6 in the Waccamaw Conference and 10-9 overall.

West Columbus opened the scoring in the second inning on Greg Nobles' RBI double. The Vikings bumped their lead to 4-0 in the third when Powell ripped a two-run triple and Jason Nance followed with a sacrifice fly.

West Brunswick got on the board in the fourth when Josh Baker walked and later scored on a wild pitch.

The Trojans added two more runs in the fifth. Mike Johnson doubled and scored on a ground out by Jones, and Eric Johnson walked and came home on a passed ball.

West Columbus got an RBI single from Merritt in the bottom of the fifth to take a 5-3 lead.

But West Brunswick came right back with three runs in the sixth to take its first lead of the game, 6-5.

Catcher Gabe Cooper led off with a double to right. Courtesy runner Neil Warren moved to third on a base hit by Branch and scored on Payne's RBI single.

Nance came on to relieve West Columbus starting pitcher Merritt, and Mike Johnson promptly delivered a two-run single to left field to give the Trojans the lead.

The Vikings tied the score in the bottom of the sixth. Benton doubled down the left-field line and pinch runner Jimmy Feathers scored from second base on an infield error.

West Brunswick broke the tie with four runs in the seventh. A single, walk and hit batsman loaded the bases with two outs.

Payne drew a walk to drive in one run and a second run scored on a wild pitch. Eric Johnson and Jones followed with RBI singles to give the Trojans a 10-6 lead.

Eric Johnson (6-1) was the winning pitcher despite yielding nine hits in six innings. He struck out seven batters and issued three walks. Mike Johnson pitched the final inning for the save.

"I think this is the first time in I don't know how many years we've beaten everybody in Columbus County," Coach Alderson remarked after the game. "We split with every-

one." West Brunswick will wrap up the regular season Thursday night at home against county rival South Brunswick. The Trojans won the first meeting with the Cougars, 3-1.

Alderson said sophomore pitcher Josh Baker would probably get the start for West Brunswick so Eric Johnson and Mike Johnson can rest their arms for the upcoming playoffs.

West Brunswick has clinched the Waccamaw Conference's top seed in the state 3A playoffs. As a result, the Trojans will enjoy home-field ad-

vantage throughout the playoffs.

The Trojans will host the second-place team out of the Triad Conference—either Northeast Guilford or Northwest Guilford—in the first round of the playoffs next Tuesday.

"I think we're peaking," Alderson said Friday. "We're playing pretty sound defense and the bats are starting to heat up. We're getting good solid pitching."

Game Summary

W. Bruns. 0 0 0 1 2 3 4—10 11 2
W. Colum. 0 1 3 0 1 1 0—6 9 1

West Dumps Gators 5-4

West Brunswick rode the strong pitching of Mike Johnson to a 5-4 high school baseball win over East Columbus last Tuesday at Lake Waccamaw.

Johnson, a junior right-hander, struck out nine Gator batters and allowed just four hits in six innings as the Trojans won their fourth straight game.

Wayne Branch went 3-for-4 to lead the West Brunswick offense. Cameron Jones and Eric Johnson added two hits apiece as the Trojans improved to 6-4 in the Waccamaw

Conference and 12-9 overall.

Eric Johnson struck out two batters in the bottom of the seventh inning to record the save.

John Junious went 2-for-3 for East Columbus, which dropped to 6-3 in the Waccamaw Conference and 10-8 overall.

The loss was damaging for the Gators, who are battling Whiteville and South Columbus for the conference's lone state 2A playoff slot.

Game Summary

W. Bruns. 1 0 0 3 1 0 0—5 9 4
E. Colum. 2 0 0 0 0 2 0—4 4 2

Hardy, Wooten Reach State Tennis Tourney

West Brunswick tennis players Lamarr Hardy and Kelley Wooten will compete in the state 3A high school tennis tournament this Friday and Saturday in Winston-Salem.

Both singles players qualified by reaching the semifinal round of the Mid-east Regional Tournament last weekend at N.C. State University in Raleigh. The state tournament will be held at Wake Forest University.

Hardy (14-2) was seeded second in the region and received a first-round bye. The West Brunswick senior defeated Brock Matthews of Cape Fear, 6-1, 6-0, and Sam Martin of Pender, 6-0, 6-0, to reach the semifinals.

Wooten (13-3), a junior who was seeded fourth in the Mid-east Region, also received a first-round bye. He beat Brian Phelps of Southern Durham, 6-2, 6-4, and edged Jeremy Brown of Fuquay-Varina, 6-2, 1-6, 6-3, in the quarterfinals.

In the regional semifinals, Mark Woodruff of Wake Forest High defeated Hardy, 6-2, 6-2, while top-seeded Chris Sander of Wake Forest knocked off Wooten 6-1, 6-1.

West Brunswick's two doubles teams advanced to the second round of the regional tournament before being eliminated.

Jon Thomas and John Coble won their opening match against Vance Grissom and Phillip Hughes of Southern Vance, 6-2, 6-1. Wake Forest's Greg Hughes and Brian Whyte defeated Thomas and Coble 6-0, 6-0, in the second round.

After receiving a first-round bye, West Brunswick's duo of Jon Trull and Jeremie Varnam lost their second-round match to Mark Sander and David Mills of Wake Forest, 6-0, 6-0.

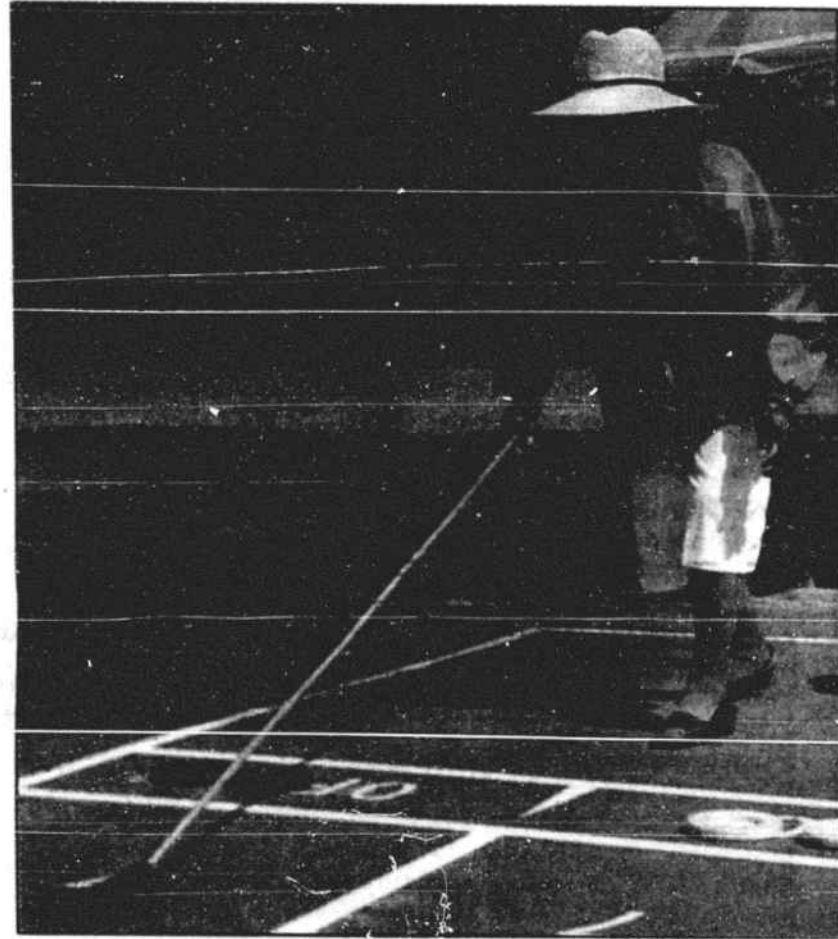
West Brunswick, which finished second in the Waccamaw Conference, was eliminated from the state dual team playoffs last Tuesday in Charlotte.

D.H. Conley High School of Greenville defeated the Trojans 6-0 in the first round. No doubles matches were played after the Vikings swept the singles competition.

Coach Rahn Adams' Trojans finished the season with a 9-4 record.

Playoff Results

Singles: Putnam (C) def. Hardy, 6-2, 6-0; Mavignier (C) def. Wooten, 6-3, 6-3; Gibbs (C) def. Trull, 6-1, 6-0; Fagundus (C) def. Varnam, 6-1, 6-0; Prasad (C) def. Thomas, 6-4, 6-1; Hooker (C) def. Coble, 6-0, 6-0.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Senior Games

Annie Toomer of Leland participates in the shuffleboard competition during last week's Brunswick County Senior Games at Town Creek Park. Toomer placed second in the 85-89 age group. Complete results are inside this section.

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