

Brunswick County Fielding One American Legion Team

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick County will field only one American Legion baseball team this summer after having two teams for the last three years.

Officials from Brunswick County Post 68 and Brunswick Shores Post 445 agreed to merge the two baseball clubs during a meeting last Thursday in Southport.

The merger will bring together the top 15-to-18-year-old players from West Brunswick, South Brunswick and North Brunswick high schools as well as the Acme-Delco area of Columbus County.

"I think we've made a positive step and given this county a team it can support and be proud of," said Ed Lewis, who will serve as head coach of the Leland-based Post 68 team.

Post 68 Athletic Officer Elmer "Bully" Ganey said Friday that officials and coaches involved with both posts seem to be pleased with the new arrangement.

Lewis, a Wilmington resident, is entering his seventh year as head coach of Post 68. North Brunswick baseball coaches Keith Moore and Brian Stewart will be assistants, and West Brunswick's Mike Alderson will be team manager.

"We had a meeting last night and everything came out OK," Alderson said Friday. "That's the way it ought to be with a complete county team. With the talent we have in this county we should be all right."

Post 68 is the defending Area II Eastern League champion, and Post 445 also had a winning league record last season.

North Brunswick High School has been designated as the team's home field, but some games may be played elsewhere in the county.

"What we're hoping in the next year or two is that a field will be built at Brunswick Community College to centralize it," Alderson said.

Until four years ago, Post 68 was the county's only American Legion baseball team.

Post 445 started fielding a team in 1991 because some people felt baseball players from the West Brunswick and South Brunswick districts did not have the same opportunities to play as kids from North Brunswick.

"I think we'll all give it the best effort we can to make it work out," said Danny Gore, athletic officer for Post 445. "We've got one team. Now we all have to get together and make it work."

Said Ganey, "It's the best for everybody involved and for everybody in the county. It's best for the kids, which is most important."

Lewis said he thinks the merger will work.

"It's been a coaching nightmare with the equipment needs and everything, but it could very well work out to be a coaching dream if everything works out," Lewis said Monday.

West Brunswick players on the team are Eric Johnson, Mike Johnson, Wayne Branch and Cameron Jones. Brian Ricker, Brad Ricker, Lewis Vaught and Jerry Galloway are playing from South Brunswick.

"I've been very pleased with the talent that has come out of the south end of the county," Lewis said.

Top veterans returning to the team include Demetrius Bell, a former North Brunswick star who recently

"We've got one team. Now we all have to get together and make it work."

—Post 445 Athletic Officer Danny Gore

completed an outstanding freshman season at Southeastern Community College.

Players participating from the Acme-Delco area are Post 68 veterans Scott Beck, Tim Smith and Randy Coleman and rookie Paul Little.

Post 68 is waiting for seven members of North Brunswick's varsity team, which has advanced to the third round of the state playoffs. They are Casey McBride, Paul Mintz, Matt Mintz, Jeremy Child, John Sweeney, Jeremy Sullivan and Jeff Clark.

Lewis said the Legion team also is carrying several members of North's junior varsity squad who were invited to participate about a month before the merger was

worked out.

In its season-opener Saturday, Post 68 lost both ends of a doubleheader to Cary Post 67 by scores of 3-2 and 8-2. The team will not play any league games until North Brunswick finishes its season.

Lewis said Monday he wasn't concerned with results early in the season because he is trying to learn the strengths and weaknesses of each player.

"I've got very high expectations because I saw some very good things Saturday," he noted.

"I think when you unite this whole county you've got a tremendous talent pool. I think we're going to be successful, but I think it's going to take some time for everyone to learn the system."

This Week In Brunswick Sports

THURSDAY, JUNE 2

□ Brunswick County Men's Church Softball League at Waccamaw Park: Friendship Baptist vs. New Britton, 7 p.m.; Letties Grove vs. Old Shallotte, 8 p.m.; Ocean View vs. Dixon Chapel, 9 p.m.

□ Brunswick Baptist Association Coed Softball League: Brunswick Islands vs. Bolivia, 7 p.m.; Faith B vs. Southport B, 8 p.m.; Mill Creek vs. Lebanon, 9 p.m., at Smithville Park, Southport.

FRIDAY, JUNE 3

□ Brunswick County Men's Church Softball League at Waccamaw Park: Letties Grove vs. Soldier Bay, 7 p.m.; Ocean View vs. Camp Methodist, 8 p.m.; Shallotte First vs. Seaside Methodist, 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 4

□ A captain's choice golf tournament benefiting the Edgar B. Harris Field House at West Brunswick High School will be held at Brick Landing Plantation, 9 a.m. Entry fee is \$50 per player. Call the pro shop, 754-5545.

□ Brunswick Baptist Association Coed Softball League: Southport B vs. Calvary, 6 p.m.; Bethel-Oak Island-Beach Road vs. Lebanon, 7 p.m.; Shell Point vs. Supply, 8 p.m.; Southport C vs. Faith A, 9 p.m., at Lockwood Folly Park, Supply.

MONDAY, JUNE 6

□ West Brunswick High School holds its winter/spring athletic reception in the school gymnasium, 6:30 p.m.

□ Brunswick County Men's Church Softball League at Waccamaw Park: Shallotte First vs. New Britton, 7 p.m.; Friendship Baptist vs. Seaside Methodist, 8 p.m.; Supply Baptist vs. Dixon Chapel, 9 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 7

□ Brunswick County Men's Church Softball League at Waccamaw Park: Jennies Branch vs. Eastside Fellowship, 7 p.m.; Mt. Olive vs. Zion Baptist, 8 p.m.; Ocean View vs. Soldier Bay, 9 p.m.

□ Brunswick Baptist Association Coed Softball League: Supply vs. Mill Creek, 7 p.m.; Mt. Olive vs. Mt. Pisgah, 8 p.m.; Brunswick Islands vs. Gospel Center, 9 p.m., at Lockwood Folly Park, Supply. Southport A vs. Bethel-Oak Island-Beach Road, 7 p.m.; Calvary vs. Faith B, 8 p.m.; Faith A vs. Southport B, 9 p.m., at Smithville Park, Southport.

This week's listings include events reported to the *Beacon*. To list a sporting activity call 754-6890 or write to Doug Rutter, *The Brunswick Beacon*, P.O. Box 2558, Shallotte, N.C. 28459.

South Brunswick Girls Fall In Round 2 Softball Playoffs

South Brunswick's softball team won its opening-round game in the state 3A playoffs last week before being eliminated Saturday with an 18-5 loss at Southern Alamance.

The Lady Cougars, the second 3A seed out of the Waccamaw Conference, ended the season with a record of 6-17.

Southern Alamance (18-5) was

scheduled to play at Pender (18-4) in the third round Tuesday. Pender won the Waccamaw Conference championship.

In first-round playoff action last Tuesday, South Brunswick posted a shocking 5-2 victory at Rockingham County.

The Lady Cougars scored three

runs in top of the 10th inning to break a 2-2 tie. Two runs scored on Sherry Vaught's two-out double, and Amy West added an RBI single.

West, Jayda Grant and Tracy Coates had three hits apiece for South Brunswick, and Vaught had a home run. Pitcher Anna Shirkey limited the Triad Conference champions (19-4) to two hits.

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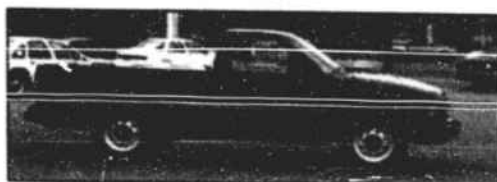
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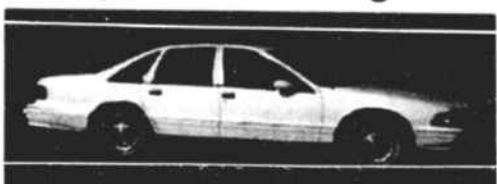
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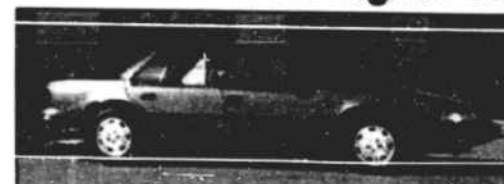
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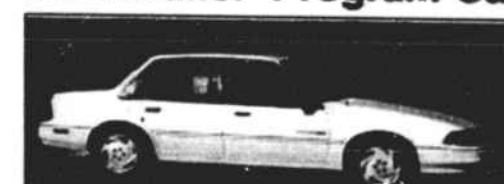
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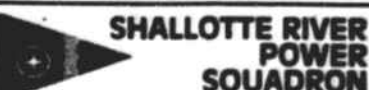
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