

# Feel the wind - Team tries for second half run get your fix

EDENTON - A true junkie loves more than just the sport itself. The true junkie loves more than just watching a game being played. A true junkie is driven by more than the sportsman-like statement; "you played a good game." The win loss column drives a junkie with a competitive jones. The junkie needs competition - the threat of the loss or the lure and temptation of the victory. The junkie looks for the next playing field as he chases his next fix.

I found my next fix. But it is not on a field at all. In fact there are no wood floors, grass, or nets involved in this battlefield. I have found a fix for my competitive jones on the water...racing sailboats.

There is something amazing about being out on the water with a team and working for one ultimate goal. Just being in the cockpit of a boat before the race, feeling the wind, and waiting to go was like holding back wild horses. When you are counting on your teammates, you are pushing your body to its physical limits, and you are taxing your navigational know how to push you to a victory. Like any team sport, sailboat racing is just flat out exhilarating.

Sailboat racing has just about everything that makes team sports great. First and foremost, competitive sailboat racing has wins and losses. There is nothing worse than a so-called sport being decided on the opinion of a judge. Its simple and exciting, the first boat to finish the racing course...wins.

The second great element of sailboat racing is teamwork. It takes a team to really sail a large sailboat. Each person on the crew is counting on every other person to do his or her job. A successful team requires

## The Sports Junkie

JAMES BELL



everyone on the boat to perform. Be it the captain or the grinder, whatever your job is on that boat, your performance can mean the difference between a win or a loss at the end of the day.

And lastly, like all great team sports, sailboat racing has speed. When you get the sails trimmed and the wind is blowing the boat, like an airplane, lifts and sails at speeds that boggle the mind if you have never been on a boat built to fly.

Recently, in the last few weeks I have begun to respect, enjoy, and jones for the sport of sailboat racing. I have had the opportunity to be part of a crew on a boat that sets it sails to win every race. I have sailed in two races on that boat. And in both races the crew of the Cape Crusader has finished in the top five.

I'm from the deserts of the southwest. I'm used to the arid land and cacti. I'm used to endless dunes and mountains that water forgot. But now I live near the water. It was only a natural progression to learn how to sail.

But for me it was more than just sailing. It was competing. Sailing is an outlet. A way to compete in a team sport.

Since I have been on the Cape Crusader, we haven't won yet. But yet is key. We will.

Sailing is another fix in my life of competitive desires. For the sports junkie, it satisfied, for now, another jones to not only compete - but to win.

BY JAMES BELL  
Sports Writer

EDENTON-The Edenton Steamers, after a first half that fizzled and sputtered, have shown signs of turning things around in the second half. They got four wins in two months during the first half of the season. But they have already surpassed that win total with five wins in only eight games into the second half.

"A lot of our guys are getting better," Steamer Manager Todd Hunter said of the apparent turn around. "Many of the players just needed some time to adjust to the game at this level and some confidence in themselves and their teammates."

The Steamers finished the first half of the season in last place of the Coastal Plain League, Northern Division. But what made it much worse was the way they did it. They tallied only four total wins while being outscored 110 runs to 41.

Individually the players also struggled. On offense the Steamers had troubles getting on base and making the big plays. The team only totaled 210 hits in the first half and through the months of May, June, and July, the Steamers only totaled 8 home runs and averaged a mere .208 batting average.

The Steamers struggled just as much in the field as they did on the plate. The defense only turned 13 double plays in 50 games.

Pitching, as a team, furthered the problems of the Steamers. The Steamer's pitching staff walked a staggering 135 batters in the first half. And with a 4.64 Earned Run Average (ERA) the Steamers often had to play from behind early in the game.

But all that has changed almost over night. Since July 4th Steamers have

compiled a record of 5-3 and have outscored their opponents 35-30.

"The team is just starting to play really well," assistant coach Rick Matsko said. "We are putting it all together right now."

Putting it all together is exactly what the Steamers have done so far in the second half.

The bats have come off the shoulders and the hitters are making big hits common place at Historic Hicks field. And the defense has started to make spectacular plays look routine.

Pitching is starting to look like a strong point on the team instead of a weakness. After a first half of high scoring losses, the Steamers have pitched a shutout and held their opponents to three runs or less in three other games.

"Our pitchers have gotten some innings and experience," Coach Matsko said about the improved performance of his pitching staff. "They are getting more and more confident every game."

The bottom line for the Steamers is putting all elements of the game together each and every night. Too often, the Steamers were hitting well but not fielding well, or pitching great but having trouble with their bats.

"We can keep winning if we put all aspects of baseball together every time we take the field," Matsko said. "We can make a run for the second half Championship."

The Steamers are 6-3 now and are only a half game out of first place. With their rosters set and guys starting to really step up a second half championship is not out of the question.

"Yeah I think we have a real chance at winning the second half," Head Coach Steve Hay said. "We (the coaches) haven't given up

and neither have the players."

For the Steamers to make the playoffs they most likely will have to win the second half championship. At-large teams that make the playoffs who didn't win either the first or second

half championships get in based on their overall season record. The Steamer's poor win/loss record in the first half will prevent them from earning a playoff birth if they do not win the second half.

## Doubleheader mixed blessing

The Edenton Steamers scored seven runs in the second inning and prevailed 8-3 Saturday night over the Peninsula Pilots in the first game of a Coastal Plain League doubleheader.

Nick Shimer, Bray LaDow and Kyle Pope each had two hits in the opener. Shimer and LaDow each drove in two runs as Edenton improved its second-half record to 5-2.

Former Perquimans standout Weston Curles pitched the final two innings, allowing two hits and striking out one.

Then, despite allowing only three hits, the Steamers fell 7-2 to the Peninsula Pilots in the second game of Saturday night's doubleheader.

The loss dropped Edenton to 5-3 in the second half of

the Coastal Plain League season.

Peninsula scored four times in the fifth to break a 1-1 tie in the nightcap. The Pilots did so with only one hit, two errors, three walks and a hit batsman.

Edenton's Nick Shimer collected two hits in the game, just as he did in the opener.

Todd Nicholas pitched the first 4 1/3 innings, allowing only two hits. But he walked eight Peninsula batters.

Brandon Manuel pitched the remainder of the seven-inning game, surrendering one hit and one walk.

The Steamers game at the Outer Banks was rained out Monday night. The game will be made up as part of a doubleheader there on July 26, beginning at 6:05 p.m.

## Watch Them Play!

### HOME SCHEDULE (HICKS FIELD)

Date	Visiting Team	Game Time	W/L
May 31	- Petersburg Generals	7:00	Rain Out
June 2	- Wilmington Sharks	7:00	L (13-3)
June 3	- Florence RedWolves	7:00	L (6-2)
June 6	- Outer Banks Daredevils	7:00	L (15-5)
June 11	- Petersburg Generals	7:00	L (11-3)
June 13	- Peninsula Pilots	7:00	W (3-1)
June 19	- Outer Banks Daredevils	7:00	L (4-1)
June 21	- Peninsula Pilots	7:00	L (8-4)
June 23	- Petersburg Generals	7:00	W (2-1)
June 24	- Gastonia Grizzlies	7:00	W (7-6)
June 26	- Peninsula Pilots	7:00	L (7-3)
June 29	- Durham Americans	5:00	L (4-0)
July 1	- Outer Banks Daredevils	7:00	Rain Out
July 4	- Petersburg Generals	3:00	W (6-5)
July 5	- Outer Banks Daredevils	7:00	W (5-3)
July 9	- Fayetteville SwampDogs	7:00	N/A
July 10	- Wilson Tobs	7:00	W (3-0)
July 12	- Peninsula Pilots	7:00	W (8-3)
July 12	- Peninsula Pilots	Db/Hdr	L (2-7)
July 16	- Spartanburg Stingers	7:00	
July 18	- Outer Banks Daredevils	7:00	
July 25	- Petersburg Generals	7:00	
July 28	- Thomasville Hi-Toms	7:00	
July 31	- Petersburg Generals	7:00	
August 1	- Peninsula Pilots	7:00	
August 6	- Outer Banks Daredevils	7:00	

\*Overall Record (9-23) \*Second Half (7-3)  
\*includes both home and away games played

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- Walk 10 Minutes a day  
Determine what time of day you feel the best and go outside for a brisk walk on level surface with good shoes.
- Drink 8-10 glasses of water a day  
Staying hydrated helps your body do it's job and repair tissue. Drinking plenty of water also is great for your spine, discs, joints and nerves.
- Address any recent or past injuries  
On-the-job repetitive stress, and auto, work or sports injuries often lead to abnormal motion in the neck and lower back as well as chronic pain and arthritis. Appropriate chiropractic care that includes supervised stretching and strengthening can reduce swelling, years of stiffness and pain.

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