

## Brown pleased with progress after 16-inning marathon loss

By George Cox  
Sports Editor

South Brunswick Cougar head baseball coach Jack Brown, his ballplayers and their parents ate breakfast near Cerro Gordo last Friday night.

Brown arrived home at the unbelievable hour of four o'clock Saturday morning after his team had dropped a five-hour, 40-minute, 16-inning marathon to West Columbus, 6-5.

"I've played in one longer, but I'd never coached in one as long," Brown said. "Most people left and went home. In fact, (Vikings athletic director) Emmett Lay told me that he left in the fifth inning.

"But the parents bought us breakfast after the game and I'm really appreciative of that."

Brown said it was a well-played game from start to finish with South Brunswick using three pitchers.

"Jerry Galloway went the first four," Brown said. "I then used Bret Tabor, who threw nine innings without giving up a run. I had to take him out because he had pitched

his 12 innings (the maximum allowed during a week). Brian Ricker then finished, giving up one run."

Brown's team has been snake-bitten this season, losing most of its games by just a couple of runs or less. With the majority of its players returning, that has given the Cougar coach a lot of encouragement towards the future.

"This is the best hitting club I've had since I've been at South Brunswick," Brown noted.

Players hitting over .300 include Lewis Vaught, Eric McMahan, Danny Sellers, Jason Bracey, Mike Brogan and Mike Clewis.

So, even though the Cougars aren't going to make the post-season playoffs, Brown said his program is going to make a major move toward being permanently in the upper echelon of the Waccamaw 2A Conference during the next couple years.

"I've talked to Mr. Best (county athletic director) about junior high baseball," he said. "You can't be permanently at the top without it. Players have to have a place to play

at every level. And you need a good coach there teaching fundamentals. I've had more trouble having to teach fundamentals than anything else."

Brown is extremely high on freshman pitcher Ricker, whose brother Brad is the catcher on the Cougar junior varsity team.

"Brian is the most poised young pitcher I've had here. His best pitch is his fastball. He's got a good curve and I'm going to teach him to throw a slider by the time he's a junior."

**COUGAR TIDBITS** --Brown was instrumental in helping North Brunswick coach Keith Moore get a grant to attend graduate school at Western Carolina University next year. "I know a lot of people up there and made some calls for him," the Cougar coach said.

At this writing, Whiteville, East Bladen, West Brunswick and North Brunswick are fighting for three league playoff berths. Going into Tuesday action, Whiteville had won eight games, East Bladen and North Brunswick were 7-3 and West Brunswick 6-3.



Not quite conventional form, but this vaulter clearly made his height in the championships Monday. West Columbus boys and girls finished first, Whiteville teams were second.

## UNCW will play host to basketball tourney

By George Cox  
Sports Editor

South Brunswick basketball star Preston McGriff, the newest member of coach Kevin Eastman's University of North Carolina at Wilmington basketball squad, will have added incentive to perform well as a Seahawk.

USAir, one of the nation's leading carriers, will serve as a corporate sponsor for the first annual East Coast Classic next season at UNCW's Trask Coliseum.

After UNCW athletic director Paul Miller contacted USAir officials, informing them of his intentions of organizing a tournament and luring some attractive Division I schools to Wilmington, the tournament took shape.

The airline has agreed to be the chief sponsor for a two-day tournament on Friday and Saturday, December 18-19, involving the Seahawks, Auburn, Louisiana Tech and Alabama State.

"We're delighted to have USAir as our corporate sponsor for this special tournament," Miller said. "They are interested in supporting the ideals of college athletics, so this is a fine way for them to become involved. It's just a perfect marriage of a growing university and a growing national airline."

So McGriff and his teammates will be playing out of mid-major class against at least one Division I heavy -- Auburn -- a team which is looking to be nationally ranked at the outset of next season.

Wesley Person, younger brother of NBA star Chuck Person, will lead the Tigers after averaging 19.9 points and 6.8 rebounds in 1991-92.

McGriff, a 6-foot-11, 235-pound freshman who led the Cougars to three consecutive 20-win seasons, is Eastman's latest delight. And the Seahawk coach said last week he's looking forward to his progress in the Colonial Athletic Association.

UNCW is building a strong program under Eastman, in his third year at the Seahawk helm. Last season, UNCW surprised most observers with a fifth-place finish and was voted the most improved team in the Colonial Athletic Association.

"Really, the tournament was Paul Miller's idea," Eastman said at a news conference. "It is very difficult for a mid-major school to get high-profile teams to come to their place."

"We're obviously excited to be a part of the tournament," said Mike Buckley, USAir's director of business sales. "When we learned of this

opportunity, we jumped at the chance. We feel like it will benefit both the university and our compa-

### Rams Club chapter to meet

The Brunswick County chapter of the Educational Foundation at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will meet Thursday, May 21, at St. James Plantation.

Among the guest speakers will be basketball assistant coach Dave Hanners, assistant football coaches Donnie Thompson and Gerald Carr and soccer player Louellen Poore of UNC's national championship team.

During the afternoon a "Superball" golf tournament will be played on St. James' Gauntlet course. The UNC coaches and Educational Foundation president Moyer Smith will participate in the tournament, for which tee times will be assigned starting at 12:15 p.m. The cost is \$35 for greens fee and cart, payable at the course. Members of the Gauntlet will have to pay the cart fee only.

The 6:30 p.m. meeting will feature door prizes such as autographed basketballs and footballs. For any new members who join prior to the night of the meeting there will be drawings for complimentary tickets to University of North Carolina basketball and football games.

There will be a cash bar available at the meeting. Heavy hors d'oeuvres will be available starting at 7:15, with the program to follow. The cost is \$10 a person.

The deadline for reservations is Monday, May 18. Tickets will be held at the door.

Further information is available from Mike Isenberg, 457-9506.

## Ballard invited to Keebler's prestigious international meet

By George Cox  
Sports Editor

**LELAND** -- Maduka Ballard, North Brunswick's outstanding high jumper, has been invited to yet another prestigious event after he graduates.

Last month Ballard, who earlier in the spring set an unofficial North Carolina prep high school record with a leap of 7'2", was invited to Sacramento, Calif., to participate in one of the country's most prominent track meets with the top eight preppers in the United States scheduled to compete.

Now comes an invitation to the nation's premier international meet -- the Keebler International in Elmhurst, Ill.

"This event is probably the best in international circles," said Ballard's coach, Bob Grimes. "We are excited about going and Maduka is looking forward to the challenge."

In a letter to Ballard, Neal Robinson, Keebler International's invitations director, said, "Due to your outstanding achievements in track and field, you have been invited to compete in the 21st Annual Keebler International Prep Track and Field Invitational, the most prestigious prep track meet in the world."

The meet will run on June 20 at York High School in Elmhurst, a suburb of Chicago.

"Virtually every great American track athlete over the past 19 years has competed in this meet, including such notables as Carl Lewis, Renaldo Nehemiah, Dwight Stones, Harvey Glance and Billy Olson," Robinson continued.

Ballard's expenses will be paid entirely by Keebler. That includes

airfare, hotel accommodations and meals.

Grimes' expenses and part of Ballard's expenses to the Sacramento event, a week earlier, are being footed by the Brunswick County Board of Education.

Ballard and Grimes will spend four days in California and three days in Illinois. The educational spinoffs will also be beneficial to Ballard.

However, prior to that competition

Ballard will be competing in regional and state 2A meet in North Carolina. Grimes is hoping that he can continue to raise his consistency.

Ballard consistently has been clearing 6'8". Grimes has urged Ballard to be more concerned with winning than breaking records, feeling that records will take care of themselves if the athlete is in the proper frame of mind.

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