

# SPORTS



**George Cox**  
Sports editor

## Trojans duo paces all-county

### Fleming, Gore share player-of-year honor

By George Cox  
Sports Editor

With two of its players -- catcher Brian Fleming and pitcher-utility player Scott Gore selected as Brunswick County's co-players of the year, West Brunswick's baseball Trojans capped their excellent season by having coach Mike Alderson named county coach of the year on this season's *State Port Pilot-Brunswick Beacon* all-county prep baseball squad.

The Trojans, county champions, 17-7 overall and runner-up to Waccamaw 2A Conference foe Whiteville in both the regular season and eastern 2A playoffs, placed six players on the annual all-star squad.

Meanwhile North Brunswick, county champions the two previous seasons under coach Keith Moore, relinquished both player-of-the-year and coach-of-the-year honors they held during that span. Moore's 1992 club, a surprising 8-6 in league play and 11-12 overall, placed three players on the team.

Sporting the best hitting team in coach Jack Brown's three-year tenure, South Brunswick also placed six players on the squad -- two pitchers and four outfielders-infielders.

Fleming led the Trojans in hitting at .354 through the tough playoffs, hit five home runs and drove in 23 runs. His leadership was an asset to both the Trojans' pitching staff and the club in general.

Teammate Gore worked in a dual capacity. As a pitcher, the West Brunswick righthander established an 8-3 record with an earned run

average of 1.14, including 95 strikeouts. Gore also was a team leader and invaluable influence on the squad.

Brian Alderson, son of the West Brunswick coach, did a creditable job by also recording an 8-3 mark on the mound with a 2.25 earned run average. He hit .288.

Teammate Aldwin Lance, who used his blinding speed to swipe 21 bases, hit .322 while playing the outfield, and infielder Kene Bellamy hit .320 while leading the club in extra-base hits -- three doubles and four triples. Aaron Butler hit .308 in the Trojans outfield and was the same kind of invaluable support player that he was on the West Brunswick state 2A runner-up football team in the fall as a fullback.

South Brunswick catcher Mike Clewis hit over .330 for the Cougars as did second baseman Mike Brogan. Outfielder Jason Bracey had a brilliant season and hit .329 while shortstop Eric McMahan hit .330.

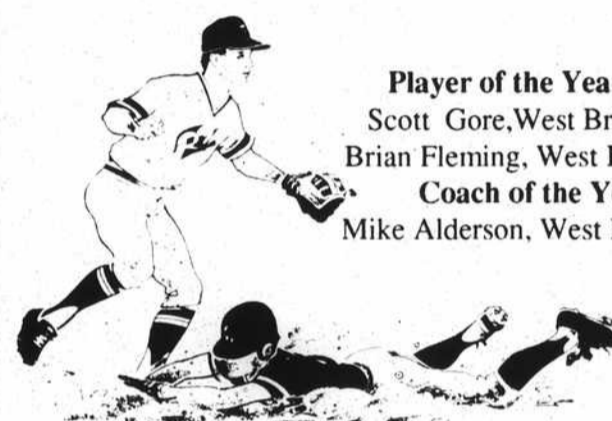
Cougar pitcher Rodney Willoughby threw an early-season no-hitter and pitcher Bret Tabor was a South Brunswick mainstay, according to Brown.

North Brunswick outfielder Demetrius Bell hit .289 with a team-leading 22 hits while teammate Jared McGee, a pitcher, hit .290 with 20 hits including three home runs.

On the mound, McGee hurled 61 2/3 innings with an earned run average of only 1.49 while recording a 4-3 mark. Scorpion outfielder Adrian Black hit .292 and was second on the team with 21 hits.

## All-Brunswick Baseball

Brian Fleming	catcher	West Brunswick
Scott Gore	pitcher	West Brunswick
Brian Alderson	pitcher	West Brunswick
Aldwin Lance	outfielder	West Brunswick
Kane Bellamy	infielder	West Brunswick
Aaron Butler	outfielder	West Brunswick
Mike Clewis	catcher	South Brunswick
Mike Brogan	infielder	South Brunswick
Jason Bracey	outfielder	South Brunswick
Eric McMahan	infielder	South Brunswick
Rodney Willoughby	pitcher	South Brunswick
Bret Tabor	pitcher	South Brunswick
Jared McGee	pitcher	North Brunswick
Adrian Black	outfielder	North Brunswick
Demetrius Bell	outfielder	North Brunswick



**Player of the Year (tie):**  
Scott Gore, West Brunswick  
Brian Fleming, West Brunswick  
**Coach of the Year:**  
Mike Alderson, West Brunswick

## American Legion finer brand of ball

After a season of high school baseball for players, coaches and fans, it's refreshing to adjust to American Legion baseball. The reason? The American Legion game is played by professional baseball rules.

There's no more of this in-and-out substitution. Games are nine innings long, which means the contests are sometime much longer in length. That's why some of the scores -- like last Saturday night's 12-11 victory by Brunswick Shores Post 445 over Wilmington Post 10 -- never reach the daily newspapers. Deadlines are deadlines, and Legion games can sometimes go until midnight.

Game strategy in Legion baseball is exactly like major league baseball. Take a player out of the game and he's out for good. No re-entry. The designated hitter is allowed, but here's one fan who wishes that designated hitters would be abolished. Let the pitcher hit and, in a tight game, let the manager decide whether to send the pitcher to the plate or pinch hit.

That allows games within games. That's fundamental baseball that I grew up knowing. It makes decision-making tough sometimes on managers.

Playing nine-inning games also makes things difficult for managers and pitchers. How long does one go with a pitcher, especially with a corps of moundsmen who are going to have to take a team through six games in seven days or a playoff series that will continue everyday until a winner is declared?

Yes, playing by major league baseball rules is the only way.

The combination of players on Legion teams also lends itself to introspection. You have high schoolers from various schools playing with some first-year collegians. That makes an interesting mix.

And sometimes, you have older brother playing alongside younger brother. Now, if that doesn't take some maneuvering from a skipper, what will?

There's Chris McBride on the Post 68 team playing with younger brother Casey. Chris plays for the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. A former North Brunswick High School star, Chris pitches and plays first base. His brother, a freshman this past season at North Brunswick, was in the starting lineup Sunday against Brunswick Shores -- playing first base while his brother hurled the horsehide at opposing batters.

This kind of thing happens all the time on Legion teams. The college kids become role models for the younger players. And if a team is run properly by its manager, the players blend together.

Players and coaches pay a huge price for participating in American Legion baseball. They give up the first part of their summers in order to "play ball". It's a grind and the playoffs can be worse.

Shoot, I remember (about 12 years ago) when I was assigned to cover Legion playoffs for the Wilmington paper that I covered something like 28 games in 32 days. Boy, was I exhausted when Wilmington Post 10 finally lost out in the regionals in Hagerstown, Md., after winning the state championship.

During that time, I never could plan ahead for anything because of the possibility of the team winning and advancing to the next round. That's the way it is for players, coaches and their families.

The reason, of course, everyone pays that kind of price is because of the love of the game. There's something about baseball that is different from any other sport for the participants, including players, coaches, umpires, die-hard supporters, etc. Baseball is like a family, and it's fun to belong.

When a team is involved in playoffs and goes out of town to play a game or series, the camaraderie among everyone is special. Real special. And this is what's beginning to happen in American Legion baseball circles.

## Tournament schedule

The schedule of post-season tournaments has been announced by the Southport-Oak Island Dixie Youth League.

The minor league tournament begins Friday, July 3, in Wilmington, according to Southport-Oak Island league president Bryant Pergeron. The AAA league playoffs will begin July 11 at Carolina Beach, while the major league playoffs will start July 18 at Bolivia.

The winner of the district AAA playoffs will advance to the state tournament, scheduled to begin July 25 in Kenansville. The state major league tournament will begin August 1 at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base near Goldsboro.

Major league regular season standings as of Friday showed the UCB Indians in first place with an 8-3 record, followed by the Astoske Electric Bluejays at 7-4 and the Bishop Realty Barons and Western Sizzlin' Longhorns each sporting 6-6 records.

## Southport host tournaments

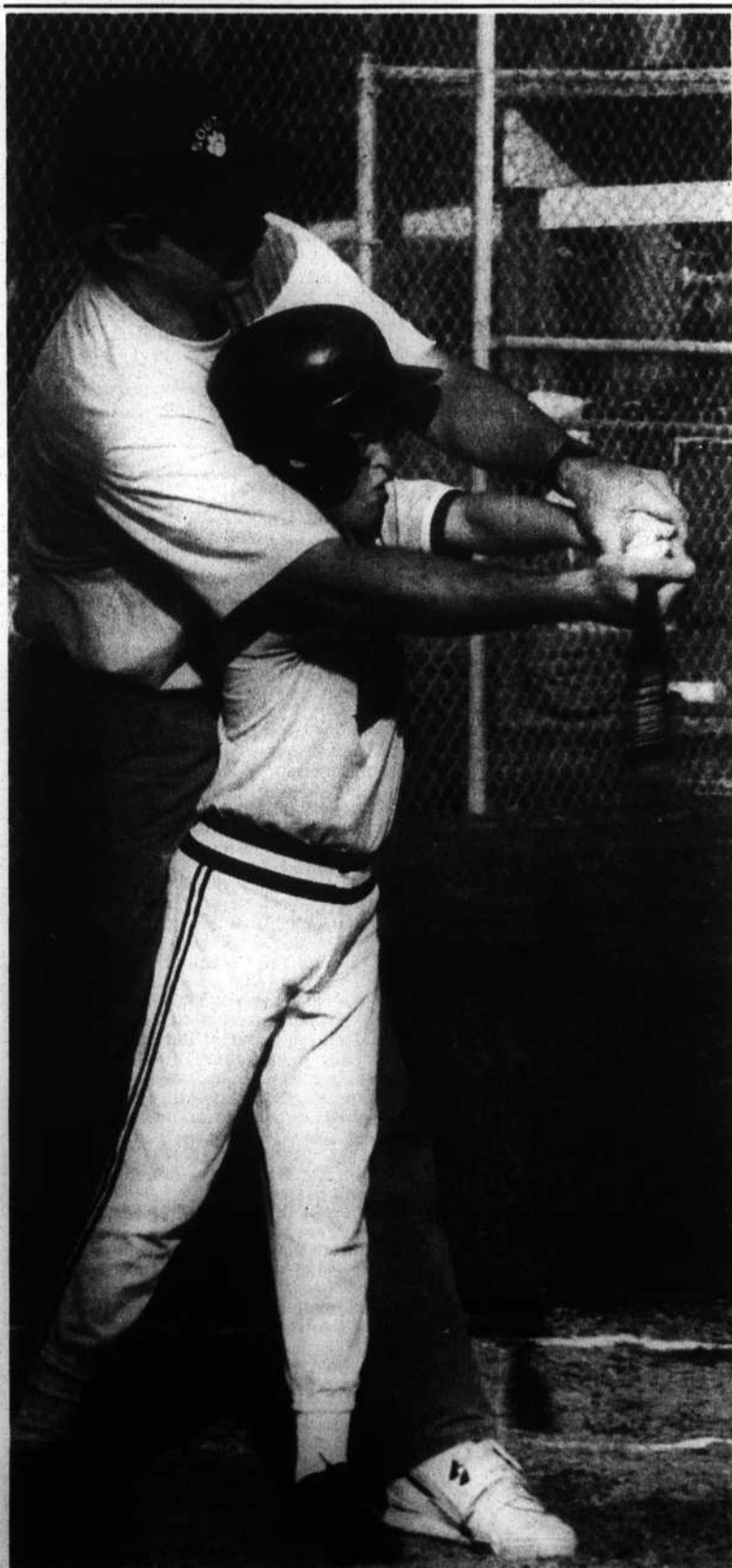
Three Dixie Boys baseball tournaments will be held at Smithville Township District Park in July.

The Dixie Boys district tournament for boys ages 13 and 14 is scheduled for July 11. Scheduled to compete are teams from Pleasure Island, Wilmington Inner City, Duplin County, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base and Brunswick County.

The Dixie Boys state tournament for 13-year-olds will be on Saturday, July 18, at the Smithville park. Five or six teams are expected to compete.

Approximately ten teams will be participating in the Dixie Boys state tournament beginning Saturday, July 25. As host, the Brunswick County team is automatically a tournament participant.

More information about the tournaments can be obtained by calling Joe Rosselli at 1-800-222-4790 or 253-4357.



It's never too late to teach. Manager Douglas Hiltz gives a batting lesson to Matt Souther on Monday evening before their Jaycees team defeated the Southport Lions 10-3 in Dixie Youth play. The Jaycees meet the Cutters Thursday evening to decide the league AAA championship.

## Shores Post 445 off to surprise 3-0 start

By George Cox  
Sports Editor

What a difference a season makes, especially for the Brunswick Shores Post 445 American Legion baseball team.

Coach Mike Alderson's Legion nine won its third consecutive contest of the young season at Cougar Field Saturday night by besting defending Area II Eastern League regular season champion Wilmington Post 10, 12-11.

Last season, Alderson's first-year edition won five games -- a total which indeed surprised many observers. And Saturday night, the Brunswick County post burst Post 10's early-season bubble to stay unbeaten along with Brunswick Post 68 (4-0).

Brunswick Shores took a 5-1 lead after one inning of play only to lose the lead when Post 10 scored five in the third and two in the fourth move ahead, 8-7.

Both teams scored lone runs in the

seventh frame with Wilmington scoring once in the ninth and the locals three times in the bottom of the last frame.

Scott Gore drove home Mike Clewis and Mike Sellers in the bottom of the ninth for the tying and winning runs.

Catcher Brian Fleming, recently named along with Gore as county co-player of the year, was the hitting star with five hits, including a home run. The two-run blast cleared the leftfield barrier in the seventh frame.

Gore had two hits, including a double and three RBI, while Clewis chipped in with two hits.

The winners outlit the losers, 10-6, while both teams made three errors.

Bret Tabor, who relieved Michael Turner during the final two innings, was the winning pitcher while Russell Shepard took the loss for Post 10.

Post 10 105200201--11--6--3  
Br. Shores 52000203--12--10--3  
WP: Tabor; LP: Shepard; 2B: Gore;  
HR: Fleming

## Shores, Brunswick square off Sunday

By George Cox  
Sports Editor

It was almost too much to expect anyway. When the game began, it was raining and there was not a trace of blue in the sky.

But even with it sprinkling, Brunswick Shores Post 445 and Brunswick Post 68 attempted to play their American Legion baseball contest at Cougar Field Sunday afternoon. But after two innings of play, a torrential downpour did it in.

The clubs had expected to meet a week ago in the Area II Eastern League opener, but West Brunswick's emergence and advancement in the North Carolina 2A high school playoffs forced a postponement.

The Trojans, under head coach Mike Alderson -- also the skipper of Post 445 -- made it all the way to the eastern 2A finals and lost out to Waccamaw 2A Conference foe and title-bearer Whiteville.

Meanwhile, Post 445 was looking ahead to make up a lot of games which had been postponed. Then, of course, rains across southeastern North Carolina last week made the situation even worse.

However, the locals got out of the gate in swift fashion with three straight victories -- the last over league powerhouse and favorite Wilmington Post 10 Saturday night at Cougar Field.

And Post 68 did the same with four consecutive triumphs. So the battle between the in-county rivals was all set for Sunday afternoon. And that battle was indeed more than special.

You see, Post 445's first league competition came last season when it was decided to form the new team in order to accommodate players from South Brunswick and West Brunswick high schools. That move produced a surprising five league wins and laid the foundation for this season's team.