

SPORTS



George Cox
Sports editor

Post 68 defeats Shores

By George Cox
Sports Editor

LELAND -- Brunswick County Post 68's sizzling start in the Area II Eastern League season continued here Thursday night as coach Ed Lewis' league-leading club won the first "Battle of Brunswick" with a victory over cross-county rival Brunswick Shores Post 445, 13-3.

The winners jumped out front with a five-run first inning en route to their eighth victory in nine games overall and 6-0 in league action. Meanwhile, Brunswick Shores' record dipped to 1-3 overall and in league play.

Winning pitcher Mike Hewett went six innings, yielding three hits and two walks while collecting six strikeouts. The Post 68 righthander also contributed to his own cause with four RBI.

Tim Smith relieved Hewett in the seventh and Scott Beck came on in the ninth to preserve the triumph.

Righthander Scott Gore started for Post 445 and went five innings, giving up nine runs on six hits, walking four and fanning four. South Brunswick's Brian Ricker relieved Gore and finished the contest, yielding four hits and four runs.

The game was sloppily played with Brunswick Shores committing six errors and Post 68 four.

Brunswick Shores notched one run in the fourth and two in the eighth while Post 68 scored two in the second, one in the fourth, fifth and sixth frames and three in the seventh.

Post 68's Adrian Black drilled three doubles while Jared McGee, Brunswick County's prep player of the year, laced two singles.

Post 68 played Whiteville on Monday night and hosted Burgaw on Tuesday. Lewis' team plays Wilmington Post 10 at Hardee Field on Friday night before returning to play Warsaw at home on Saturday. Post 68 also hosts Jacksonville on Monday and Wilmington Winter Park on Tuesday.

Brunswick Shores played at Warsaw Monday night before hosting Whiteville on Tuesday. Coach Jack Brown's team plays at Burgaw on Friday and will host Wilmington Post 10 at South Brunswick on Monday night.

The locals play Winter Park a week from tonight at Hardee Field in Wilmington.

Brunswick Shores 000 100 020 3 3 6
Brunswick Post 68 520 111 30X 13 10 4
Gore, Ricker (7) and Fleming; M. Hewett, Smith (7), Beck (9) and R. Hewett; WP: M. Hewett; LP: Gore; 2B: Black (3).



Five years ago this week the South Brunswick Cougars won the state 2A baseball championship, thrilling the entire community. It was the first state title -- in golf -- this year.

'Camelot' revisited

State Port Pilot publisher James Harper, keeper of the newspaper's "Time and Tide" column, said there's been an aura of excitement every week this spring as he seeks out what happened at each point five years ago.

"As I read the papers each week, I wonder if they are going to win next week," he chuckled in the office Monday night as we discussed that Cougar team which went 29-0, won the Seashell and state 2A championships, finishing fifth in the nation in the USA Today prep baseball poll.

This was the week the Cougars won in all, at home in a doubleheader victory over Charlotte Catholic, 10-4 and 8-6, before 2,000 exuberant fans on the Saturday prior to that edition. The Southport-Oak Island and Bolivia areas were in a state of awe.

Yes, Camelot seemed like only yesterday. Coach Paul Faulk, one of the most successful young coaches in the game, had left Garner to take the South Brunswick job two years before and during his first season had guided the Cougars to a 19-5 overall mark.

Still, with little fanfare, Faulk's powerful ball club opened his second season in '88 pounding and smashing the baseball and ended it that way when Scott Gales drilled a home run over the leftfield barrier to win the game and cast a magical spell on the community.

Powell labels Faulk's team best ever

Wilmington sports writer R. J. Powell, who covered the Leon Brogden and Buck Hardee years at New Hanover High, said the 1988 Cougar team was the most powerful prep baseball club he'd ever seen. "They would bat around at least one time in most every game and had no pitcher who you could label a 'stopper'," he told Wilmington Star-News prep editor Neil Amato at supper last week.

Ironically, five years later, Amato covered a 4A New Hanover team which won 26 straight games after an opening day loss to Garner, finishing off Alexander Central last Saturday night for the state championship and a number-one national ranking in the USA Today poll.

Faulk's 1988 champions won 22 games during regular season play, sweeping their second consecutive Waccamaw 2A Conference title over veteran coach Linwood Hedgepeth's nationally prominent Whiteville Wolfpack.

Leaving 4A Garner High, where his teams had captured five Capital Eight Conference championships and he had posted an outstanding career record, including six league coach-of-the-year honors, Faulk came to South Brunswick looking for a new challenge. He didn't waste any time turning Cougar baseball fortunes into gold.

The groundwork of a solid program had already been laid by Greg Clewis, who moved back to Charlotte to take the Mustangs' 4A head job. Clewis had reconstructed South Brunswick baseball and turned it from a losing program into a winning one before his departure.

Cougs win two Waccamaw titles

Faulk's first-year Cougars won the Waccamaw title with an overall record of 19-5, setting up the '88 dream season. However, after the 1988 title, he resigned the South Brunswick job and returned to coach baseball near his hometown of Laurinburg.

It was a difficult decision, but Faulk left in a blaze of glory and he and his players participated in that summer's Fourth of July parade in downtown Southport. The area didn't want Camelot to end, but it did with that parade -- after this newspaper gave the team a victory banquet when the championship dust had settled.

Heading back to Laurinburg, Faulk's overall career record had soared to 193-56 in high school coaching along with a 129-60 American Legion record. He didn't get to work on the Legion mark during his two years here and sat out the summers.

Included in his list of accomplishments as he left was the fact that 69 of his former pupils had received either partial or full baseball scholarships. Three of his former stars became professionals and 20 were all-state players. He had a 15-6 playoff record and one player, Wynn Beck of South Brunswick, who signed with Oakland for triple figures, was named North Carolina's prep player of the year.

After coaching at Laurinburg for one season Faulk left the prep coaching ranks and became a pro scout for the Cincinnati Reds. Today, he works out of Raligh in the same organization. Who knows, someday he may manage professionally.

Cougars set three state records

Faulk knew how to put the nuts and bolts together in a baseball program. As we stated in 1988, "Faulk turned high school baseball from an obscure sport to the best ticket in town, from 15 or so fans in attendance per game to over 2,000. Not only did he turn a solid baseball program built by former coach Greg Clewis into a great one, he also promoted the grand ol' game like nobody else ever dared in these parts.

"Besides the basics of redesigning the playing surface, dugouts and uniforms, he made sure the stadium had a press box equipped with a public address system, scoreboard and flagpole. The mentor left nothing to chance and realized that all of the little things contribute to the success of the team on the field."

The 1988 Cougars didn't have a big star like this season's New Hanover Wildcats (Trot Nixon) and they didn't have a pitcher who could be counted on to stop the opposition at the plate. But what they did have was talent to hit, a will to win, and an ability to play together.

The '88 champion Cougars set three North Carolina High School Athletic Association records at the time: base hits (296), runs scored (285) and home runs (23). South Brunswick's average margin of victory was over eight runs per game and the only one-run game of the season occurred in the Seashell tourney against Wilmington New Hanover, 3-2.

Faulk's club drew the largest home crowds in history and the community was united in a common cause. Who would have dared guess the '88 team would go unbeaten in the tough Waccamaw 2A Conference -- much less throughout the entire season?

Baseball Cougars went 29-0

Dream season of '88 will live on for years

By George Cox
Sports Editor

(Editor's note: Having earned the distinction over the years as Southport's "Mr. Baseball", James F. (Foxy) Howard remembers the 1988 dream baseball season of South Brunswick High. The official scorer and public address announcer that season at Cougar home games, Howard reflected early this week on that 29-0 state title season.)

The telephone rang in Foxy Howard's accounting office Monday afternoon. He responded to the question, "What do you remember about what happened five years ago?"

"That amazing season came to an end when Scott Gales hit that home run over the leftfield fence. I guess it is still in orbit."

Actually, that game between South Brunswick and Charlotte Catholic didn't end with Gales' blast in the top of the seventh inning -- which put the Cougars ahead, 8-6 -- the final score. Charlotte, the designated home team, had to bat in the bottom of the inning.

For that little oversight, Foxy, you're forgiven. Five years can dent even the best of minds, especially when it comes to the details of a 29-0 season. But Foxy really didn't mean that the game "technically" ended after Gales' home run. He meant it ended for all practical purposes.

After finishing the regular season at 22-0, the Cougars later beat Greene Central for the eastern 2A

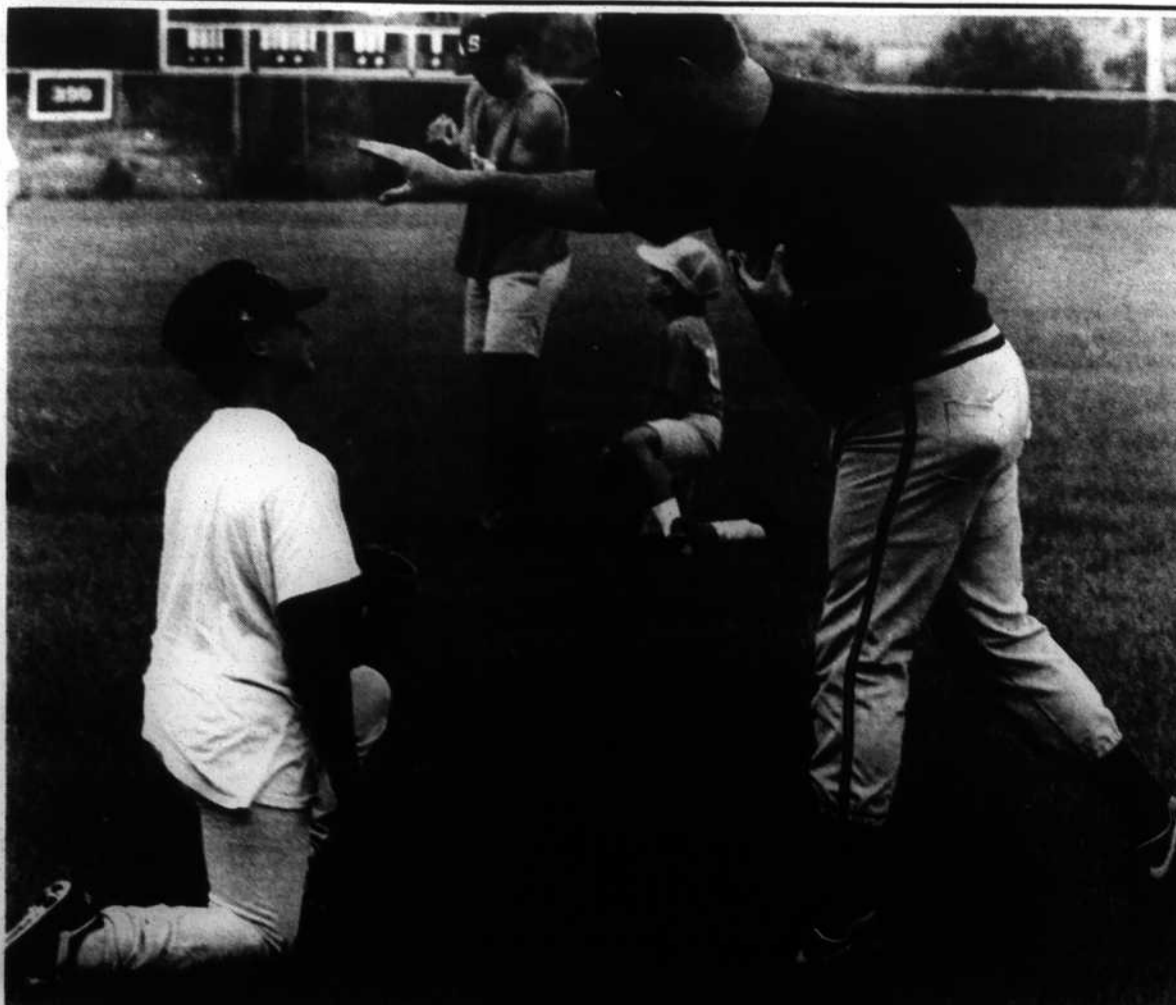
"The thing I remembered about that team is that they didn't go out on the town and raise the devil after they won the thing. They took their sleeping bags and went down to the city pier and spent the night there together. That was a real special group."

Foxy Howard

title before taking Charlotte Catholic 10-4 and 8-6 for the state crown.

"The thing I remembered about that team is that they didn't go out on the town and raise the devil after they won the thing," Foxy continued. "They took their sleeping bags and went down to the city pier and spent the night there together. That was a real special group."

"The thing that really sticks in my mind is that none
See Dream season, next page



South Brunswick baseball coach Jack Brown introduced youngsters to principles of the sport as his annual baseball school got underway Monday with Cougar coaches and players assisting.

Brunswick Baptist Association Coed Softball League

Scores and standings through Saturday, June 12, 1993

Division I
Games played June 12, Supply
Shell Point 20, Soldier Bay 3
Supply 18, Gospel Cntr.-Br. Isles 8
Calvary 9, Jennies Branch 8

Division II
Games played June 12, Smithville Park
Town Creek 17, Faith 14
Mt. Olive 14, Southport "B" 1
Oak Island-Bethel 10, Southport "A" 9

Division I	W-L
Calvary	7-2
Gospel Center-Br. Isles	6-3
Shell Point	5-4
Supply	5-4
Jennies Branch	3-6
Soldier Bay	1-8

Division II	W-L
Mt. Olive	9-0
Town Creek	6-3
Faith	5-4
Oak Island-Bethel	4-5
Southport "A"	2-7
Southport "B"	1-8