

SECTION **B**

Sports

WEDNESDAY • APRIL 26, 2017

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Fourth and Long



David Friedman

LeBron special

As we usually do when we hang out, I was talking sports with my best friend this weekend when LeBron James' name came up. He said something that stuck with me.

"You don't have to think that LeBron James is the best player in the league, but if you are talking about the best players then LeBron James should be part of the conversation," he said.

While I agree with him, I am prepared to take it even further. You do not have to think that LeBron James is the greatest player of all time, but if you are having a conversation about the greatest players then his name should come up.

Don't get me wrong, I am not calling LeBron James the greatest player to ever live. I am old enough to have watched Michael Jordan's entire career, and I doubt anyone will take his place in my mind as the G.O.A.T.

I never saw Wilt Chamberlain or Oscar Robertson play, but I know enough about basketball that those are other names that should come up during any "greatest of all time" conversations. Having watched LeBron's career from high school to the pros, I think he has earned the right to be in the conversation as well.

It is hard to believe that James has been in the NBA for 14 years now. He was so hyped up coming out of high school that it seemed impossible for him to meet, nevertheless exceed, expectations. Somehow he managed to do just that.

It took him four short years in the NBA to lead his hometown Cleveland Cavaliers to the NBA Finals against the San Antonio Spurs. While he caught some flak for not winning that series, it should

See **FOURTH**, B6

2017 TARBORO EASTER CLASSIC

Lawrence boys repeat as tournament champs

Perfect record intact

From Staff Reports

TARBORO - The run is complete, and the perfect record still intact.

Lawrence Academy's baseball team finished 3-0 and repeated as champions of the Tarboro Easter Classic by defeating the host team 17-7 in six innings Saturday night.

In three games, the Warriors (17-0 overall) outscored their opponents 26-12. They edged SouthWest Edgecombe 3-1 Thursday and Bertie 6-5 Friday to reach the championship game.

Slade Cowan was named the tourney's Most Valuable Player with his second straight three-hit game. He homered, also scored twice and drove in three runs.

Cowan wasn't the only offensive star for the Warriors.

DaQuan Wilson went 2-for-2, drove in four runs and scored three runs, while Miller Trowell added two hits, a run scored and five RBIs.

Charles Atkins collected a pair of hits for Lawrence, while Austin Wynne added a hit, drove in three runs and scored once.

Cowan's home run got Lawrence on the board in the top of the first inning.

Wilson's RBI double was part of a four-run second inning, which gave the Warriors a 6-0 lead.

Tarboro cut the deficit to one (6-5) with a five-run bottom of the third stanza, but Lawrence answered in a big way, scoring seven runs in the top of the fifth frame on two walks, an error and a double from Miller Trowell, and then added four more in the sixth.

The Vikings added their final two runs in the bottom of the sixth, but still fell due to mercy rule.

Jarrett Harrell earned the win on the mound,

See **WARRIORS**, B6



ANDRE ALFRED / 2nd Chance Productions

Lawrence Academy catcher Jarrett Harrell tags Bertie's Scoop Hoggard out at the plate to seal the 6-5 triumph by the Warriors in the semifinals of the Tarboro Easter Classic Friday.

Warriors survive rally by Bertie in semifinals

From Staff Reports

TARBORO - The final sequence of the game was a microcosm of the season for the two Bertie County high schools.

On one hand, there was undefeated Lawrence Academy, desperately trying to hold on against a scrappy Bertie baseball team in the second round of the Tarboro Easter Classic.

On the other side were the Falcons who, with just three wins to their credit, haven't seemed to catch many breaks this spring.

But in the words of Warriors head coach Jason Wynne, "In tense situations like this, you have to find a way to win."

Lawrence did just that - retiring the potential tying run at the plate for the final out - and securing a 6-5 triumph over Bertie.

Just like that, the Warriors improved to 16-0 and then went on to repeat as tourney champions the next night.

Bertie, which fell to 3-15 overall, wondered what could have been - a common theme for the Falcons this year - after making the Class 2A state playoffs last year.



ANDRE ALFRED / 2nd Chance Productions

Warrior first baseman Slade Cowan was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

"We didn't pitch well enough to win," said Bertie head coach Bobby Harmon. "Walks killed us." The Warriors seem-

See **SURVIVE**, B5

Victory eludes Falcons

From Staff Reports

TARBORO - Bertie was on the verge of recording a win in the Tarboro Easter Classic Saturday.

The Falcons led SouthWest Edgecombe 6-2 with just two innings left to play.

But as was the case in many of its losses this season, Bertie wasn't able to hold it.

The Cougars rallied with four runs in the top of the sixth inning, then added their final three runs in the seventh to pull out a 9-6 victory.

Bertie, which lost three games by a combined total of eight runs (20-12), dropped to 3-16 overall.

The culprit this time for the Falcons? Walks.

The Cougars took advantage of six walks in the sixth frame and two walks - combined with a hit and an error in the seventh - completed SouthWest's rally.

"I thought we hit well enough to win," Bertie head coach Bobby Harmon said. "We just didn't finish. We didn't pitch well enough - the walks killed us."

Bertie took a 3-0 lead in the bottom of the third inning. Alden Cottle walked and Trenton White reached on a fielder's choice. Scoop Hoggard walked, and Brandon Roberson singled in Cottle and White. Hoggard scored on Damo's groundout.

SouthWest scored twice in the top of the fourth inning, but the Falcons matched that with two of their own.

With one out, Cottle singled, followed by walks to White and Hoggard.

Following a pitching change, Cottle scored on a walk to Brandon Roberson, and White crossed the plate on Damo's sacrifice fly to right field.

The Falcons tacked

See **FALCONS**, B6

Duck Thru Food Stores congratulates this week's Athlete of the Week.

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Athlete of the week
LA
Slade Cowan
Baseball

