

BASEBALL PREVIEW

Trojans Seek Upper-Division Finish In Strong Waccamaw Conference

BY JOHNNY CRAIG

A four-year baseball rebuilding task at West Brunswick appears ready to begin paying off this spring.

First-year head coach Mike Alderson is hoping that strengthening local feeder programs from the youth leagues to the junior varsity level and improved physical facilities will boost his Trojan diamond team to the top-half of the Waccamaw 2-A Conference and a berth in the state playoffs in late May.

"Nearly all of our 13 players on the roster have playing experience, whether it be at the varsity level or junior varsity," said Alderson. In fact, it was Alderson's Trojan JV team last spring that won a share of the WC junior circuit championship and finishing 11-5 overall. From that team, five of the 13 players will be tabbed to the varsity roster this spring.

The leading hitter from both varsity and JV teams will lead the Trojan offense this spring—Alton Johnson and Adam Johnson respectively.

Alton has already shown signs of picking up at the plate where he left off last season going 3-for-4 with five RBIs in the Trojans' first win of the season last Friday, 9-6 over Acme-Delco.

The junior third baseman hit for a team-leading .383 last year in his first varsity season while also picking up all-Brunswick County honors. Johnson went a hot 7-for-13 at the plate in the final four games of the season and drove in seven runs during the stretch to finish second on the team in RBIs (13).

Adam led the JV with a .468 batting average and will be the Trojans' no. 3 pitcher this spring while also seeing action at second base and shortstop.

Leading the West pitching staff will be senior Raymond Howard, the only returning hurler from last year's county championship team.

The right-hander was 2-1 on the mound a year ago

with a low 1.81 earned run average (ERA) while juggling a busy spring season participating on both Trojan baseball and tennis teams. Howard threw 27 innings while striking out 23 and yielding 18 hits.

Howard is one of only four returning Trojans with varsity experience—the others being Kevin Smith, Jimmy Johnson and Alton Johnson.

Jimmy Johnson has been moved to centerfield this year from his left field spot he occupied last season.

"Last Monday was Jimmy's first practice since basketball season ended," said Alderson. "He's our best defensive outfielder and a very smart player. We want to build a strong team up the middle and believe Jimmy, second baseman Kevin Smith and out pitchers and catcher to be the key."

Johnson was a .279 hitter last year leading the team in RBIs (14) and runs scored (20). In last week's win over Acme-Delco the junior went 2-for-4.

Kevin Smith returns to second base for the second straight year. The senior is a good defensive player and will also be the Trojans' no. 2 pitcher.

One of the brightest spots on the West lineup is freshman catcher Brian Flemming who has impressed college and professional scouts despite having turned 15 years old last week.

"Brian will definitely be a college prospect and possibly a pro selection before his career at West is over," said Alderson. "He has the speed, the arm and the frame to be a great player and will get stronger and better as he goes."

Flemming got his first varsity hit in the win over Acme-Delco.

"He's one of the best players I've seen in a long, long time. There were a number of college coaches asking about him at a baseball clinic we attended at Greene Central High School (Snow Hill) recently," added Alderson.

Leading off the Trojan batting order is sophomore right fielder Aldwin Lance, a versatile athlete who also plays on the football and basketball teams.

Lance also has the strongest arm of any outfielder on the team according to Alderson after a good junior varsity season last year.

"Aldwin's first day of practice was also last Monday and his hitting will come around. He gets on base and make havoc for the opposing pitcher—just what a lead-off hitter is supposed to do."

Garrett Gore, a utility player from last year, starts at first base and is hitting the ball well early.

"Garrett played a number of positions last year but will do well at first base this spring."

Blake Bradley has overcome football injuries to start in left field.

"Blake has been through a lot and is a good defensive player. He had one of our three hits in the season opener and will continue to improve at the plate," mentioned Alderson.

Adding depth to the Trojan lineup will be junior Neil Ward, sophomore Tony Caison, freshman Aaron Butler and junior Timmy Smith.

Ward will be a reserve third baseman and catcher while also being the no. 4 pitcher. The junior player on a summer league team coached by Alderson last year.

Caison will see action at first base and as a spot pitcher. The 6-foot-1, 265-pounder hits the ball well according to Alderson and will also prove valuable as a designated hitter.

Butler will be the Trojans' fourth outfielder but can play any position on the field.

"Aaron's bat will come around. He has great speed and will be used a lot as a pinch runner."

Timmy Smith will add depth at first base and the outfield.

"We've got two first basemen who can hit, four out-

fielders that work solely on their respective positions and versatile players on the corners, up the middle and behind the plate," said Alderson. "This will enable us to have a lot of different lineups and give other teams much to look at."

"We're going to have to rely on our defense because we've got a group of 'throwers' for pitchers."

In addition, there are 17 players on what Alderson terms "a good quality junior varsity team" coached by Scott Floyd.

"There are four or five sophomores still on the junior varsity team that we could call up to the varsity at anytime."

Alderson sees defending state 2-A champion Whiteville as the team to beat in the Waccamaw Conference. North Brunswick and East Bladen will both be "tough" and West Columbus "much improved".

"South Brunswick is already 2-0 so they will be a much improved team as well. It's certainly going to be a real dogfight to finish in the top-half of the league."

"Our goal this spring is to go to the state playoffs and win at least 15 games," said Alderson. "The top four teams in the conference go to the playoffs and we hope to be among those included."

In addition to WC opponents North and South Brunswick, Whiteville, West Columbus, East Bladen, South Robeson and Fairmont, the Trojans will face Tabor City and Wallace-Rose Hill in nonconference play.

All WC games begin at 7 p.m. with the seven league home games being broadcasted by Shallotte radio station WPGO-FM.

The Trojans batted a team .288 last year up from a .260 average in 1988. West finished 6-8 in the WC in 1989 but went 10-10 overall for its first non-losing season in four years.

SPORTING SCENE

Gunfight Possible At Diamond Corral

BY JOHNNY CRAIG

"Parity" seems to be the word in the sports world today. The current NCAA basketball tournament, the recent ACC cage season and professional football are just a few samples of the balance in sports.

Look for parity in living color this spring in the Waccamaw 2-A Conference baseball season. League teams began nonconference play last week tuning up for what looks to be a real gunfight or dogfight, depending upon your favorite slang.

Among those teams hoping for an upper-division finish and berth in the state playoffs are the West Brunswick Trojans.

Under first-year head coach Mike Alderson, the Trojans appear to have the offense and defense to make a run to the playoffs. However, the West pitching staff returns just senior Raymond Howard, the only player with any varsity experience who split time with the tennis team a year ago.

Howard, the Trojans' number one pitcher this spring, will need the help of newcomers Kevin Smith (a veteran second baseman), Adam Johnson (sophomore) and Neil Ward (junior) in order for West to make a challenge to the upper level of the WC.

Defending state 2-A champion Whiteville is everyone's team to beat this spring while both North Brunswick, under second-year head coach Keith Moore, is vastly improved.

And South Brunswick is off to a 2-1 start winning its first two games over Swansboro which makes for a competitive diamond season in the county alone.

West Columbus will also be much improved from a year ago and East Bladen is always strong.

That leaves only Fairmont and South Robeson, one of four former state champions from the 1980s that comprise the current WC membership.

In addition to both Whiteville and South Robeson, both South Brunswick (WC) and East Bladen (Three Rivers 3-A Conference) claimed state titles during the previous decade.

In Waccamaw Conference baseball action in last week's openers, West Columbus dropped to 1-1 overall with a 5-2 home loss to Wallace-Rose Hill. Losing pitcher Bradley Wilson struck out seven to lead the Vikings.

Whiteville (2-0) remained undefeated with a 9-2 win over 4-A Scotland County. Wolfpack pitcher Richie Blackwell tossed a five-hitter and struck out 13 to key the win. Calvin Freeman rapped two doubles and a single and drove home three runs to power the Wolfpack at the plate.

Whiteville had another strong pitching effort in its 8-0 opening win over another 4-A foe, Lumberton. Winning pitcher Randy Best faced just 21 Pirate batters and allowed one base runner in going the distance.

This Week In Brunswick Sports

THURSDAY, MARCH 22

- ☐ North Brunswick at Lejeune, boys' and girls track, 4 p.m.
- ☐ North Brunswick at South Brunswick, JV baseball, 4 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 23

- ☐ West Brunswick at Fairmont, baseball, 7 p.m.
- ☐ South Brunswick at North Brunswick, baseball, 7 p.m.
- ☐ North Brunswick at South Brunswick, softball, 4 p.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 26

- ☐ East Bladen at North Brunswick, JV baseball, 4 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 27

- ☐ West Brunswick at South Robeson, baseball, 7 p.m.
- ☐ North Brunswick at East Bladen, baseball, 7 p.m.
- ☐ West Columbus at South Brunswick, baseball, 7 p.m.
- ☐ East Bladen at North Brunswick, softball, 4 p.m.
- ☐ East Duplin at North Brunswick, boys' and girls' track, 4 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28

- ☐ West Brunswick at Wallace-Rose Hill, baseball, 4 p.m.

This week's listings include events reported to the *Beacon*. To list your sporting contest call or write the *Beacon* with schedules and details.

Former Cougar Reports To Spring Training Camp

Former South Brunswick Cougar and N.C. prep baseball player of the year Wynn Beck began his second professional season with the Oakland Athletics recently.

Beck was one of 40 players invited to the special camp two weeks ago in Scottsdale, Az., site of Oakland's spring training camp.

As a senior, Beck led the Cougars to a perfect 29-0 record and the 1988 state 2-A championship. Shortly after helping his team to the title, Beck became the highest-selected county player ever in the major league baseball amateur draft when the A's made him the 31st overall selection.

Beck hit an amazing .505 in his senior season at South with 48 RBIs.



South Sweeps Swansboro, Falls To A-D In Openers

South Brunswick opened the prep baseball season in winning fashion last week taking a pair of non-league games from Swansboro before losing a 7-6 decision to Acme-Delco.

The Cougars edged the visiting Pirates 3-2 last Thursday, romped to a 10-5 road win Friday and fell to Acme-Delco Saturday.

Scott Phillips had two hits and an RBI for South (2-1) in the loss to Acme-Delco.

The host Trojans scored the winning run in the sixth inning when Chuck Justice came home on Scott Williams' RBI-single.

Kendall Kelly went the distance on the mound for Acme-Delco in getting the win while allowing six Cougar hits.

Lonnie Parker also had a two-run double for Acme-Delco (2-1).

Brantley Barfield's two-run homer in the first inning helped set the stage for the Cougars' opening win

Thursday, Ernie Warren scored the third South run on catcher Mike Clewis' RBI-single in the second inning.

Swansboro scored all its runs in the third inning.

Sean Swain (1-0) was the winning pitcher in going the distance.

Barfield and Corey Brown both doubled in powering the Cougars' 11-hit attack in Friday's romp.

South rallied from a 2-0 first-inning deficit to tie the game in the third with a pair of runs.

The Cougars then took a 3-2 lead in the fourth inning and scored three more times in the fifth and two in the sixth.

Swansboro managed to stay with in 8-5 with a three-run sixth inning.

Thursday's Line-Score
Swansboro 002 000 0—2-9-3
S. Brunswick 210 000 X—3-7-2

Friday's Line-Score
S. Brunswick 002 132 2—10-11-4
Swansboro 200 003 0—5-9-4

High Bowlers Listed By Lanes

Local high scores for the week of March 12 have been announced by Little River Lanes at Little River, S.C.

Included are games of 220 or better and 500-plus series.

Calabash: Rhonda Sabiston, 571, 554; Marie Brown, 512, 516, 504; Adele Schneider, 582.

Shallotte: Scott Decker, 259, 248, 626, 567; Gene Wayland, 528; Karen Moshoures, 244, 235, 573, 587; Rupert Bellamy, 639, 582; Bill Shoemaker, 621, 623; Janet Burgher, 517; Chris Chappell, 617; Bob Krause, 579, 512; Lynn Frink, 551; Ron Decker, 590, 557; Jim Love, 561; Scott Davis, 637; Gene Jones, 562; Bill Breeding, 605, and Jeanette Sabiston, 510.

Little River: Ernie Schubeck, 502; Mike Allsbrook, 227, 559, 590; Johnny Johnson, 531, 584, 223; Frankie Prince, 507; Robbie Robinson, 511, 529, 532; Alan Freeman, 610, 548; Buddy Stone, 577, 541; Ed Scher, 641; Pat Thomas, 612, 535; Jim Wilson, 507; Cecil Suggs, 523; Mal Evans, 245, 665, 605, 609; Randy Vereen, 535, Bobby Brown, 564, Gary Gurganus, 514, Anne Barnhill, 657, 254; Lee Dreyfous, 572; Ken Beasley, 552; Bill Hogan, 608; Pete Thomas, 538; Jimmy Sharp, 598, 516; Edwina Harrelson, 590; Dawn Baldwin,

500; Ken Freeman, 542; Matt Malena, 588; Bob Peterson, 577; Jim Hedrick, 531; Hank Beuke, 550; Steve Reed, 563; Bob Miller, 592; Jim Smith, 573; David Haddock, 500; Joe Mayo, 500; Larry Abrams, 565; Jody Prince, 612; Carolyn Buck, 525; David Koch, 508; Lendsey Adams, 516; Charlie Price, 538; Arty Karlson, 518, 513; Jimmy Hankins, 503; Jerry Ocello, 560; Tim Stewart, 520; Gene Jones, 525; Eunice Voivedich, 526; Sharon Simpson, 515; Patsy Turner, 517; Barry Tucker, 508; Gerald Weber, 525; Ced Brogden, 517; Lee Carlson, 502; Robert Correll, 506; George Wendel, 558.

Sunset Beach: Marty Nelson, 554, 559; Helen Nelson, 512; Doug Mehne, 546.

NEW ENTRANCE
on access road at the beginning of the Hwy. 17 bypass

4 for \$5 Pampas Grass
MON-SAT 9-5:30. CLOSED SUN.

LEAH'S NURSERY
HWY. 17, JUST NORTH OF SHALLOTTE, PHONE 754-6994

Westgolf Wins WC Opening Match

David Bland shot a nine-hole 41 Monday to lead West Brunswick to a first-place finish in the opening Waccamaw 2-A Conference golf match of the season at Oak Island Golf Course.

The Trojans combined for a team-total 170 to finish seven strokes ahead of second-place East Bladen (177).

Whiteville finished third with a 179 while host South Brunswick took fourth with a 185.

East Bladen's Jamie Gause and Andy Tart each shot a 40 to share medalist honors.

LITTLE RIVER LANES

Bowling in the 90's

...Join a **Summer League and Open Bowl for 90¢**

Sign Up Now!

1-803-249-0055
At
300 Bowling Lane
Hwy. 17 N.
Little River, S.C.



NORTH MYRTLE BEACH MARINA

DRY RACK STORAGE—SPACE AVAILABLE
FUEL—SUPPLIES—ICE—MARINE STORE

803-249-1000

PRE-SEASON VALUES ON NEW & PREVIOUSLY OWNED BOATS

- ★1989 CHAPARRAL 178XL, great ski & cruise. Won't last long at **\$4,995**
- ★1989 WAHOO 16.2 STRIPER, center console, power options to 75 HP. Unsinkable! Great for family fun. Hurry, only 2 left. **\$6,900**
- ★1986 27 FT. HARBORCRAFT Cutty with twin 1.6 OMC Seadrives. Meticulously maintained and loaded with extras. **\$22,900**

NEXT TO RIVERBOAT RESTAURANT • 400 YDS. N. OF LITTLE RIVER HIGH BRIDGE