

Sectional Playoffs Continue; Union Pines To Host Finals

BY JOHNNY CRAIG

Union Pines High School in Carthage is where the four boys' and four girls' Waccamaw Conference basketball teams hope to be playing Saturday in the Eastern 2-A Sectional III and IV championships.

Sectional play began Monday and Tuesday in the area for six of the eight WC qualifiers, while the South Brunswick boys and Fairmont girls won't see action until tonight (Thursday) in second-round play.

Both Cougar and Lady Golden Tornado teams clinched first-round byes in the state playoffs after winning the Waccamaw Conference regular season.

The two teams also added WC tournament titles to their list of accomplishments last Friday in championship games played at North Brunswick (see stories this section).

South Brunswick and Whiteville boys' teams, along with Fairmont and West Brunswick girls' squads, are participating in the Sectional III tournament.

West Brunswick and Fairmont boys and South Brunswick and Whiteville girls are seeing action in the Sectional IV tourney.

WC Tournament Notes

Last week's Waccamaw 2-A Conference boys' and girls' basketball tournament at North Brunswick was the county's first league tourney in over a decade.

Not since the Three Rivers 3-A Conference cage tournament was held at West Brunswick in the late 1970s has a county school served as a league tourney host site.

After years of traveling to Whiteville for league's first three tournaments, to East Bladen in 1989 and Fairmont last year, it was nice for Brunswick County to host what has become the Waccamaw Conference's basketball showcase.

And North Brunswick should be commended for the great job done in hosting the finals and semifinals that included three nights of prep play.

A number of other individual and team performances during the tourney are certainly worth mention as well.

By winning the boys' tournament championship, South Brunswick ran its unbeaten streak to 17 consecutive games.

The Cougars, now 23-1, haven't lost since the United Carolina Bank Christmas Tournament held in late December at UNC-Wilmington.

Coach Gene Doane's Cougar cagers enter the sectional playoffs tonight certainly with legitimate chances of bringing a state championship to the Boiling Springs Lakes school.

The South Brunswick girls' team continues perhaps one of the biggest single-season turnarounds in eastern North Carolina after advancing to the WC tournament finals against regular-season champion Fairmont.

The Lady Cougars (16-10) played even with powerful Fairmont for over three quarters before losing the tourney title in the final three minutes.

The 16 games won by this year's South girls' team are more victories (14) than the Lady Cougars claimed in the previous three seasons combined.

South Brunswick stumbled to a 6-15 finish last year and went 4-17 and 4-16 the two seasons prior.

The Lady Cougars' 55-48 win over South Robeson in the opening round of the tournament was their first-ever victory in WC tourney play.

The play of Fairmont sophomore guard DeMorris Winningham was also certainly worth mention.

Of Winningham's team-leading 30 points in the championship game against South Brunswick last Friday, 18 came in the final quarter including a trio of three-point goals.

Winningham also led his team with 24 points in Thursday's 86-82 semifinal win over West Brunswick.

However it was James Moore (18 points) who was the three-point whiz for the Golden Tornadoes against the Trojans. Moore nailed four three-pointers in the Fairmont win including three in the third quarter that keyed the deciding Tornado rally.

Getting Focused Is The Key

Focusing on one game at a time is the key to state playoff success, according to South Brunswick veteran prep basketball coach Gene Doane.

The Cougar coach met with his team earlier this week and discussed getting the right mind-set to enter the state playoffs with.

"One bad game can do you in," said Doane. "You've got to be focused down the stretch and have your mind focused on what you are doing."

"Now is the time when we can't allow any outside interference in our players' thinking."

"If our kids play well, we've got a legitimate shot to win it all," Doane said of his Waccamaw Conference championship team. "Monroe and Clinton are supposed to be super teams that will probably go a ways in the 2-A playoffs."

Doane's goal, as with any other prep team, is to win the state championship.

"I've always thought my best teams played their best basketball down the stretch," said Doane, who is in his 30th year coaching high school basketball.

Fairmont Bounces North Boys From Waccamaw Conference Tournament

DeMorris Winningham scored 16 of his game-high 21 points in the first quarter, including a pair of three-point goals, to lead Fairmont over North Brunswick 93-57 in last Tuesday's opening round of the Waccamaw 2-A Conference boys' basketball tournament at the West Brunswick gym.

The loss ended the season for the Scorpions (6-17) after finishing the regular season tied for sixth place with South Robeson and West Columbus.

Dwayne Waddell scored 18 points to lead North Brunswick while Greg Waddell added 15 and Maduka Ballard 10.

Johnathan Grissett also scored 21 points to share the scoring lead for the Golden Tornadoes (20-6) followed by Corey Addison with 19 and James Moore 11.

Fairmont grabbed a 32-25 lead in a fast-paced first quarter before North Brunswick managed only eight second-period points and fell behind 54-33 at the half.

The Golden Tornado lead grew to 70-45 in the third quarter. Fairmont outscored the Scorpions 11-2 in the first four minutes of the final period enroute to a 23-12 scoring edge in the final period to cap the win.

Score By Quarters

North Brunswick 25 8 12 12—57
Fairmont 32 22 16 23—93

North Brunswick scoring: D. Waddell 18, G. Waddell 15, Walker 2, Baldwin 8, Ballard 10, Toomer 2, Ellington 2.

Fairmont scoring: Page 7, Watson 2, Grissett 21, Addison 19, Winningham 21, Moore 11, Hunt 3, Taylor 4, Vaughn 3, Giese 2.

Lady Scorpions Bow In WC Tourney Opening Round

Regular-season champion host Fairmont blasted the North Brunswick Lady Scorpions 87-26 in the opening round of the Waccamaw 2-A Conference girls' basketball tournament last Monday.

The loss ended the season for North Brunswick (1-22) while Fairmont (22-1) went on to capture the tournament title (see story this section).

Rhonda Moore scored 12 points and Tosha Robbins added 10 for

North Brunswick.

Tonya Watson led Fairmont with 23 points followed by Shalonda Townsend with 18 and Jennifer Renfrow 15.

North Brunswick scoring: Moore 12, T. Robbins 10, Grady 2, Dove 2.

Fairmont scoring: Watson 23, Townsend 18, J. Renfrow 15, R. Page 2, McCormick 4, Currie 2, Fields 4, S. Page 8, Taylor 1, Butler 4, Spencer 6.

South Edges Fairmont For Waccamaw Tourney Title

BY JOHNNY CRAIG

The South Brunswick boys added a Waccamaw 2-A Conference tournament championship to their record-setting season last Friday topping third-seeded Fairmont 78-70 at North Brunswick for the league title.

Sophomore guard Josh White led four Cougars in double figures with 23 points while center Preston McGriff added 20. Greg Williams followed with 19 and points and Carl Parker 11 for South Brunswick, who extended its winning streak to 17 games after breezing through the regular season with a perfect 14-0 WC mark.

Winning the regular season title assured the Cougars of a first-round bye in this week's Eastern 2-A Sectional III tournament. South Brunswick won't see state playoff action until tonight (Thursday) when the Cougars entertain the winner of the Capital Area #3 vs. Central Tar Heel #4 opening-round contest played Tuesday.

"It's been a great year so far," said South Brunswick coach Gene Doane. "We talked at halftime about coming out in the second half and really getting after them (Fairmont). In the first half we had to put two of our big rebounders (McGriff and Parker) on the bench due to fouls. It really hurt us on the boards."

With McGriff and Parker out of the lineup, Fairmont center Johnathan Grissett responded with 14 of his 18 points in the second quarter as the South Brunswick lead dwindled to 32-31 at the half.

"We were willing to give up some points with the absence of McGriff and Parker in order to get ready for the second half," said Doane. "You never lose a game in the first half but rather spend that time to put yourself in a position to win the game in the second half."

"We were hoping to get Fairmont tired in the first half. Our biggest problem was our defense

of Grissett in the half. We simply didn't play him right," explained Doane.

"We had to make some mental and physical adjustments to keep him from scoring. Grissett doesn't like to take the ball and go to his left. We made him do that in the second half and as result, he didn't score as much."

McGriff returned the the lineup to start the second half. His two quick baskets along with a White layup gave South Brunswick a 38-31 lead with 6:54 to play in the third quarter.

Fairmont cut the gap to 38-36 minutes later but the Cougars quickly went out front by 45-36 with 3:33 left in the period. McGriff scored twice following a pair of missed shots, sank a free throw and Parker added a two more baskets for the South Brunswick bulge.

The Cougars maintained their nine-point lead, 49-40 on a lob to McGriff.

DeMorris Winningham kept Fairmont within seven, 57-50, on a jumper with seven seconds left in the period.

Parker ignited a 7-0 South Brunswick run on a short jumper for a 61-52 Cougar lead.

White added two free throws for a 63-52 advantage and moments later stole the ball and scored on a layup for a commanding 65-52 lead.

Williams' alley-oop dunk sent the South Brunswick lead to 67-52 and Fairmont never threatened in the time remaining.

Winningham scored 18 of his team-leading 30 points in the final period including three three-point goals. James Moore added 10 for the Golden Tornadoes (20-6).

"It was hard preparing for this game because we didn't know if we would play Fairmont or West Brunswick until the day before," said Doane. "It is now a new season. We break the season down into segments—the preseason, scrimmage games, nonconference and conference contests, the Christmas tournament and the post-season. We make a list of the things we

want to achieve in each segment."

"We forgot the whole regular season when we began play in this tournament. I challenged the kids to see how many games we can win. Now we've got to go 5-0 to win the state title," added Doane.

Score By Quarters

Fairmont.....11 20 15 24—70
South Brunswick.....17 15 21 25—78

Fairmont scoring: Winningham 30, Grissett 18, Page 2, Taylor 2, Addison 6, Moore 10, Watson 2.

South Brunswick scoring: White 23, Williams 19, Parker 10, McGriff 20, Stringfield 2, Fullwood 4.

South Brunswick advanced to the finals after defeating East Bladen 79-68 in the semifinal round at North Brunswick and South Robeson 73-58 in its tournament opener at the Cougar gym.

Williams scored 15 points and McGriff 14 in the Cougars win over South Robeson.

Tracy Jacobs led South Robeson (6-18) with 21 points.

The Cougars opened an 18-11 lead in the first quarter before extending their margin to 17 points, 40-23 at the half.

South Brunswick led 52-34 in the third quarter and the Mustangs managed to outscore the Cougars 24-21 in the final period.

Score By Quarters

South Robeson.....11 12 11 24—58
South Brunswick.....18 22 12 21—73

South Robeson scoring: Jacobs 21, Graham 7, Locklear 5, Taylor 5, Pierce 5, Davis 5, Odom 6, Alford 4.

South Brunswick scoring: McGriff 14, Williams 15, K. Smith 10, Hankins 2, White 5, Brown 2, Fullwood 4, Johnson 4, Parker 4, Cole 2, Stringfield 2, M. Smith 5, Moore 2, McLaughlin 2.

Fairmont Girls Race Past S. Brunswick To Capture Title

The South Brunswick Lady Cougars had regular-season champion Fairmont on the ropes after three quarters in last Friday's Waccamaw 2-A Conference tournament championship game.

However, the once-beaten Fairmont team was good for one more quarter and South Brunswick ran out of gas as the Lady Golden Tornadoes took a 56-47 win and the WC tournament championship at North Brunswick.

Fairmont broke from a 38-38 tie after three quarters to outscore the Lady Cougars 19-8 in the final period to clinch the win.

"I thought the girls played really hard," said South Brunswick coach Mike Isenberg. "With three minutes to go we felt like we were in position to win the game. We just got some bad breaks in the final min-

utes and just fell out of the running for the championship."

Fairmont was whistled for only eight fouls in the game compared to South Brunswick's 23 and the Lady Golden Tornadoes used the advantage to outscore the South girls at the free throw line.

Tony Watson scored 22 points to lead Fairmont (22-1) and Jenny Renfrow added 20.

Tessa Lee led South Brunswick (16-10) with 12 points followed by Erika Bryant with 10.

"Both Tessa and Erika did a good job on the boards until midway in the fourth quarter when they both got in foul trouble. From that point on, Fairmont started to control the rebounding and was getting two and three shots at the basket each time down the court," said Isenberg.

The two teams battled to a 12-12

first-quarter deadlock before South Brunswick managed to go ahead 24-23 at the half.

Score By Quarters

South Brunswick 12 12 14 9—47
Fairmont 12 11 15 18—56

South Brunswick scoring: Cumbee 6, Hankins 6, Lee 12, Sellers 6, Fullwood 7, Bryant 10.

Fairmont scoring: Townsend 7, Renfrow 20, Page 3, Taylor 4, Watson 22.

South Brunswick advanced to the tourney finals by edging Whiteville 42-39 in the semifinals and nipping South Robeson 55-48 in the opening round.

Lee scored 18 points and Allison Cumbee 15 to lead the Lady Cougars in the opening win over South Robeson.

South Brunswick rallied with a

big 20-9 scoring edge in the final quarter to gain the win.

South Robeson led 6-4 in the first quarter and South Brunswick pulled even 25-25 at halftime.

The Lady Mustangs retook the lead 41-35 in the third quarter before the Lady Cougars took control of the final period.

Chastity Oxendine scored 24 points to lead South Robeson (8-13) while Tonetta Killens and Mary McKoy added 10 each.

Score By Quarters

South Robeson 6 19 14 9—48
South Brunswick 4 21 10 20—55

South Robeson scoring: McLean 4, Killens 10, McKoy 10, Oxendine 24.

South Brunswick scoring: Cumbee 15, Hankins 2, Sellers 5, Isenberg 6, Brown 5, Bryant 4, Lee 18.

South Brunswick Girls Win Sectional Opener

The South Brunswick Lady Cougars opened play in the Eastern 2-A Sectional IV basketball tournament Monday with a 48-40 win over visiting Northwood (Pittsboro).

Tessa Lee scored 13 points and Tasha Sellers added 11 to lead the South girls in their first state playoff game ever.

South Brunswick trailed 13-8 in the first quarter and 27-24 at halftime but used a 17-6 scoring edge in the decisive third period to go ahead for good, 41-33. Both teams scored seven points each in a slow-paced fourth quarter.

Jan Baker scored 17 points to lead Northwood, the fourth-place team of the Capital Area Conference.

The Lady Cougars (17-10) were to have visited Central Tar Heel Conference runnerup Clayton on

Wednesday in a sectional semifinal game.

In other girls' sectional playoff action Monday, Warren County eliminated Whiteville 60-51.

The Lady Wolfpack (15-10), the Waccamaw Conference's second seeded team, trailed 37-21 at halftime and could get no closer to the Eagles than nine points in the second half.

Beverly McCray scored 13 of her team-leading 15 points in the second half to pace Whiteville.

Score By Quarters

Northwood 13 14 6 7—40
South Brunswick 8 16 17 7—48

Northwood scoring: Baker 17, Stone 2, Poe 4, Crump 7, Harrington 4, Taylus 6.

South Brunswick scoring: Cumbee 9, Lee 13, Davis 2, Sellers 11, Isenberg 6, Fullwood 1, Bryant 6.



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