

West Brunswick Hoping To Contend For WC Basketball Title

BY DOUG RUTTER

West Brunswick Boys' Basketball Coach Billy Mims hopes the Trojans will contend for the Waccamaw 2-A Conference basketball crown this year, despite the loss of superstar Ricky Daniels.

"I expect us to be pretty good," Mims said. "I expect us to be right back up there with Fairmont and South Brunswick fighting for the conference title."

Daniels, a two-time Brunswick County player of the year who averaged nearly 29 points a game last year for the Trojans, is playing his freshman year at Anderson College.

Although his absence will be noticed at West Brunswick, Mims said life must go on without Ricky Daniels. The 6-6 guard led the Trojans to a 21-6 record last year, their best season on the hardwood in 13 years.

"If we haven't won a game by the end of December, we'll miss him a whole lot," Mims joked.

The coach said this year's team has eight players capable of scoring in double figures, and the team's success will depend on everyone doing their part. "If we

"When our fans come to see us play we're gonna play hard and get after people. That I can guarantee."

—Billy Mims
Boys' basketball coach

don't have that, we're going to be in trouble."

So far, the Trojans have been practicing without some of their top players, who are still playing football.

Lonnie Mitchell, Jerry Reeves and Shaun Bowen—three likely starters on the basketball team—are contributing to West Brunswick's fine season on the gridiron.

But Mims isn't using the extended football season as

an excuse, and he hopes the Trojan gridders go all the way to the state championship. "Like I tell our guys, rain, sleet or snow, the Trojans got to go."

Mims said the biggest surprise so far in practice has been junior Wesley Elon King. "Not that he's spectacular, but he's solid," the coach said.

Other players expected to have an impact this year include Adam Johnson, Jimmy Grissett, Jerome Marlowe, Patrick Hughes and freshman Timmy Daniels, who is Ricky's brother.

Mims said he's not sure how many games the Trojans will win this season, but he promises the fans a good show. "When our fans come to see us play we're gonna play hard and get after people. That I can guarantee."

The Trojans open the season Nov. 26 at home against Wallace-Rose Hill, and Mims said the club faces a tough schedule which will prepare it for the start of conference play in January.

West Brunswick will play two 4-A schools—New Hanover and Dillon, S.C.—twice each before getting in-

to the conference schedule.

"I just think competition makes us better," Mims said. "If we play good competition early, that will make the team ready for conference play."

For the first time in school history, the Trojans will travel to Gainesville, Fla., to compete in the Gatortown Shootout Classic Dec. 19-21.

Mims said West Brunswick is scheduled to open the tournament against Ribault High School, which has won the equivalent of the 3-A championship the last two years and is picked to win it again.

"Our kids will remember that trip the rest of their lives," he said. "They'll remember those things more than wins and losses."

West Brunswick planned to scrimmage Tarheel on Wednesday and play in a pre-season jamboree tournament Saturday in Fayetteville.

"That'll give us a pretty good idea where we're gonna stack up," said Mims, who thinks Fairmont and South Brunswick will be the teams to beat this year in the Waccamaw Conference.

Lady Trojans To Rebuild

West Brunswick Girls' Basketball Coach Brenda Council said the Lady Trojans will be hard pressed to improve on last year's performance.

The girls finished almost as strong as the boys last year—winning the county championship, tying for second in the conference and advancing to the sectional semifinals of the state playoffs.

The Lady Trojans were 17-8 overall and posted a conference mark of 9-5. But Ms. Council said the team lost several key players from last year's squad to graduation.

"I think this will be my rebuilding year," said the third-year coach. "Things are shaping up at a slow, slow pace."

Among the players who graduated were center Becky Buffkin and guard Christy King.

Both were named to the all-conference and all-county teams last year, as Buffkin scored 16.3 points per game and King averaged 11.7.

West Brunswick returns two starters from last year's team, forwards Pam Detrie and Monica King.

Ms. Council said Cathryn Bell and Stacey Hill will likely start at the guard spots this year, and Nicole Norris and Tikila Morgan will play center.

The Lady Trojans have a lot of young and inexperienced players on the 12-person roster.

Coach Council says it will take a lot of hard work and determination to return to the state playoffs.

"I'm hoping we can make it," she said. "It's going to take a whole lot of effort."

Whiteville, which has all of its players back from last year, and West Columbus, should be the top teams in the conference this year, Ms. Council said.

South Cougars To Defend League Basketball Title

BY DOUG RUTTER

South Brunswick High School Boys' Basketball Coach Gene Doane doesn't think his team has any chance of duplicating the season it enjoyed last year.

The Cougars compiled a 14-0 conference record to win the regular season and league tournament titles, and finished the year at 25-4 overall.

Doane doesn't expect to go undefeated in the Waccamaw 2-A Conference this year. In fact, he thinks his team will finish somewhere in the middle.

"That was the first time it ever happened in the history of the conference," he said of the perfect season. "I don't expect lightning to strike twice in the same place."

Despite the return of 6-foot-11-inch center Preston McGriff and point guard Josh White, Doane said the Cougars are still looking for other players to step forward.

"That's the only two starters we've got back. Other than that

we're green as grass," Doane said last week. "Two players don't win a championship. It takes a whole team."

McGriff, who scored 18.8 points per game last year as a junior, and White, who averaged 14.1 points per game as a sophomore, were named to the All-Brunswick County team last year.

"We're gonna be a factor and we're gonna be one of the teams picked because we are the defending champs," Doane said. "But we haven't had what I call a good practice, so I'm a little disappointed right now."

The coach expects to find out what the Cougars are made of this week, when they are to scrimmage with New Hanover and Hallsboro.

South opens the regular season Nov. 26 at home against Acme-Delco.

McGriff, one of the top basketball recruits in eastern North Carolina, has to play defense, score and re-

bound well this year for the Cougars to win, said Doane.

"He's just got to be the leader and the force to hold the team together while the younger players develop," Doane said. "I think he's capable of having a great season."

Without McGriff in the lineup, Doane said the team has below-average size. The Cougars don't have anyone else more than 6 feet 3 inches tall.

So if South Brunswick won't repeat as conference champs, who will be this year's winner?

Doane likes Fairmont, which returns all of its starters from last year, and East Bladen, which still has seven of its top nine players from a year ago.

Information wasn't available on the South Brunswick girls' basketball team. The Lady Cougars are coming off a 17-11 season last year, when they made it to the state playoffs for the first time in school history.

1991-92 WEST BRUNSWICK BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Nov. 26	Wallace-Rose Hill	Home
Nov. 29	New Hanover	Home
Dec. 3	New Hanover	Away
Dec. 6	Wallace-Rose Hill	Away
Dec. 10	Dillon, S.C.	Away
Dec. 17	Dillon, S.C.	Home
Dec. 19	Gatortown Shootout	
20, 21	Gainesville, Fla.	Away
Jan. 10	Whiteville	Away
Jan. 14	Fairmont	Away
Jan. 17	South Robeson	Home
Jan. 21	West Columbus	Away
Jan. 24	North Brunswick	Home
Jan. 28	East Bladen	Away
Jan. 31	South Brunswick	Home
Feb. 4	(OPEN DATE)	
Feb. 7	Whiteville	Home
Feb. 11	Fairmont	Home
Feb. 14	South Robeson	Away
Feb. 18	West Columbus	Home
Feb. 21	North Brunswick	Away
Feb. 25	East Bladen	Home
Feb. 28	South Brunswick	Away

Junior varsity games start at 5 p.m., followed by girls' games at 6:30 p.m. and boys' varsity at 8 p.m.

Small Game Hunters Must Wear Orange This Season

Many rabbit and quail hunters across the state will take something new to the woods when the season opens Saturday—blaze orange.

State lawmakers extended the orange garment requirement to small game hunters this year as requested by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission.

Mandatory orange for big game hunters has been credited with saving lives since it went into effect in 1987, according to a state news release.

Since that law was passed, wildlife officers have reported a marked drop in the number of hunting accidents in which the victim was mistaken for game.

This year, hunters of rabbit, squirrel, grouse, pheasant and quail are required to wear fluorescent orange that is visible from all sides.

Some small game hunters started wearing blaze orange voluntarily in recent years because they felt safer in the woods, said Capt. Wilton

Pate, who heads the wildlife commission's hunter safety program.

"We probably have as close to 100 percent compliance as we are going to get," Pate said. "Most of the big game hunters complied immediately, and we've seen many small game hunters wear orange when they were not required to wear it."

Blaze orange won't help reduce the number of self-inflicted wounds or falls from tree stands. Pate said many of those hunting-related accidents occur due to carelessness.

The new blaze orange requirement for small game will be enforced with warning tickets until October 1992. After that, any violation of the law will result in a \$25 fine.

The rabbit, quail and grouse seasons run from Nov. 23 through Feb. 29. The season for gray and red squirrel runs from Oct. 14 to Jan. 31, and the fox squirrel season runs from Oct. 14 to Dec. 31.

North Scorpions Aiming For Basketball Playoffs

BY DOUG RUTTER

North Brunswick High School's boys' basketball team has set a lofty goal for the 1991-92 season.

Despite finishing in a three-way tie for last place in the Waccamaw 2-A Conference last season, boys' coach Cliff Gibson said this year's team has set its sights on the playoffs.

"Our whole objective is to get into the playoffs," Gibson said. "We want it really bad. We're thinking about winning."

He said the players have been giving more than 100 percent in practice. "This team here is really working. They really want to achieve the goals we've set."

North Brunswick, which finished 2-12 in league play and 6-16 overall last year, opens its 1991 campaign on the road Nov. 26 at Dixon. The home opener is Dec. 3 against Topsail.

The Scorpions have three starters returning from last year's team—

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—Cliff Gibson
North Brunswick Boys' Coach

forwards Barry Baldwin and Maduka Ballard and guard Dwain Waddell.

"Those three are our co-captains and they are our leaders," Gibson said. "I've also got a good crop of JV kids coming up that played last year."

Gibson said he expects the athletes who played junior varsity basketball a year ago to get a lot of playing time on the varsity level this season.

Besides the co-captains, other players expected to contribute include Ronnie Ballard, Dermertius Bell, Ricky Lowery, Redderick Johnson, Brent Ellington, Adrain

Black and Marlin Cobb.

"I think our team will be much improved," Gibson said. "Our bench will be stronger and I think we'll have a little depth on that bench."

North Girls

Assistant Girls' Basketball Coach Charlie Luck said the team is taking a positive look at the upcoming season.

The Lady Scorpions lost all 14 conference games last year and finished the season at 1-21.

Luck said the team may not improve its win-loss record very much this season, but should be competitive in a couple of years.

"The caliber is not up there at this point to compete with teams in the Waccamaw 2-A," Luck said.

Jo Ann Johnston is the head coach this year. She has a young team, with only two seniors and several freshmen and sophomores.

Luck said the starting five haven't been chosen yet. "We're not loaded with talent, but we have better ball handlers all around than we had last year," he said.

Tosha Robbins, one of two seniors on the team, is the Lady Scorpions' top player, said Luck.

She will be playing center or forward this year, and Luck said she is the "stalwart of the front line."

Other than Robbins and one other returning senior, Treola Bress, the rest of the team has little experience playing competitive basketball.

"We have freshmen and sophomores galore," Luck said. "We feel that we're at a crossroads and we're going to be positive now."

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