



THE WEST BRUNSWICK and Russian Army baseball teams line up for a group photo prior to their game Friday. The Trojans won 5-4.

STAFF PHOTOS BY DOUG RUTTER

West Brunswick Rallies Past Russian Baseball Team

BY DOUG RUTTER

West Brunswick's baseball team served as a gracious host for the touring Russian Army squad Friday night.

The Trojans had a Russian flag in place, the Russian national anthem cued up on the tape player and mouth-watering barbecue chicken

on the cooker for a post-game meal.

But the Trojans weren't about to lose on their home soil, even if it was just an exhibition game.

Pinch runner Steve Holmes scampered home on an infield error in the bottom of the sixth inning to cap a 5-4 comeback win for the Trojans to the delight of more than 200 home

fans.

"This is the biggest crowd we've ever had at this park," West Brunswick Coach Mike Alderson said. "We should do this more often."

The Russians jumped out to a 4-0 lead before the Trojans rallied for two runs in the third inning, one in the fourth and two in the sixth—including the game winner.

West Brunswick senior Scott Gore pitched two innings of scoreless relief and picked up the win. Gore also had two of the Trojans' six hits and scored a run.

The Russians scored three runs in the second inning on an infield error, three consecutive walks and a two-run single by second baseman Oskar Atadzanov.

In the third, the visitors bumped their lead to 4-0. Center fielder Sergei Zigalov hit a lead-off single, advanced to second on a wayward pickoff attempt, stole third and scored on a throwing error.

That was all the Russians would get. West Brunswick started its comeback in the bottom of the third.

Eric Johnson and Marty Earwood opened the frame with back-to-back singles and both scored on Wayne Branch's base hit to center field to cut the Russian lead to 4-2.

The Trojans trimmed the advantage to 4-3 in the fourth. Gore tapped a one-out single back through the middle and later scored from third when the Russians dropped Johnson's fly to center field.

West Brunswick completed its comeback in the sixth. Aaron Butler led off with a walk, advanced on a poor pickoff attempt and passed ball and then scored on a wild pitch to tie the score.

With one out, Gore picked up his second base hit of the game and Holmes was sent in as a courtesy runner for the pitcher.

The speedy junior stole second and third and scored the game-winning run when the Russian shortstop bobbled Johnson's two-out ground ball.

Coach Alderson said he was impressed with the Russian team. "They were fundamentally sound. They field the ball properly and hit the ball well. Their pitching staff's not bad."

Valeri Galkin pitched the first three innings for the Russians, and Jouri Zirov pitched the last four. They combined for seven strikeouts and issued just two walks.

Pitching for West Brunswick were Mike Turner, Yates Gupton, Jason Benton, Eric Johnson, Mike Johnson and Gore, who held the Russians hitless over the final two innings. The visitors had five hits in the game.

"All of the pitchers got to pitch tonight, and all of the players got to play," Alderson said. "That was my game plan for tonight—win or lose."

Alderson said the Trojan players will remember the game for years to come. "A couple of them told me today they've been looking forward to

it all year. They had a lot of fun tonight."

Prior to the game, coaches and players exchanged gifts. Each Russian player received a T-shirt commemorating the game, while the Trojans received Russian Army pins.

Following the two national anthems, West Brunswick Principal Ed Lemon threw the ceremonial first pitch. Off the field, the local crowd was attracted to tables of Russian souvenirs offered for sale.

"There was a lot of preparation for this game," Alderson said. Helping the coach get ready for the game were athletic director Jim Brett and booster club members Alice Gray, Danny Gore and Harold Benton.

The Russian team arrived in the United States last weekend and opened its 20-day baseball tour with a 9-1 victory over Waccamaw Academy Tuesday. The visitors fell to Whiteville 11-3 last Wednesday.

The Russians, who have visited North Carolina each of the last three springs, had games scheduled this week against Cape Fear High of Fayetteville on Wednesday and East Bladen on Thursday.

"This is good experience for our team before national championship," said Nickolai Geresoff, one of the few Russian players who speak English.

He said most of the team members have only been playing baseball a few years. "I think four, five years we be better. This is first generation baseball. Maybe after 10 years we learn to play."

Sergei Onishchuyk said visiting North Carolina each year is the Russian Army equivalent of spring training in Florida.

"In Moscow cold and snow now, much snow. We do not have possibility training now in Moscow," he



ALEXANDER IVANOV sets up his table of Russian souvenirs at the West Brunswick baseball field.

said. "The winter was very cold and the winter six or seven month every year."

The Russian players said baseball is not very popular back home, but it is gaining supporters. "Baseball like in Russia,"

Onishchuyk said. "Right now it not very popular, but he who know this game will like."

Game Summary

Russ. Army 0 3 1 0 0 0—4 5 3
W. Bruns. 0 0 2 1 0 2 X—5 6 3



WEST BRUNSWICK FANS Ryan Gore and Demetria Butler couldn't resist showing a little support for the Russian visitors.

SPORTING SCENE

Tar Heel Fans Serve Up Heaping Helping Of Crow

You'd think I would have learned my lesson by now. After the Super Bowl XXVII blowout, you'd think I would have given up on predicting the outcome of sporting events.

But no. I continue sticking my neck out so every Tom, Dick and Harry in the county can take an ax to it whenever I'm wrong. The big problem is...I'm frequently wrong.

I was way wrong in predicting the winner of the Super Bowl. And I was way wrong two weeks ago when I wrote in this column that North Carolina had been fortunate to reach the Final Four of the NCAA Basketball Tournament.

Predicting the Tar Heels had no chance of winning turned out to be a pretty stupid move on my part. Not only did North Carolina advance to the championship game, they won the blasted thing. Just my luck.

It was bad enough when I blew my Super Bowl pick. But that was nothing compared to blowing off Carolina in the Final Four in favor of the Kentucky Wildcats.

Suffice it to say, I've learned it's not a good idea to pick against the home team, especially if they win. I've also learned that local Carolina fans are more than generous when it comes to serving crow.

The phone calls at home and work were greatly appreciated. It's nice that people actually read what I write and care enough that they would threaten to slit my throat over it.

My only question is, why didn't I hear from any North Carolina basketball fans until after they won? Seems the UNC faithful didn't have much faith in their team.

I heard rumblings that some folks were interested in painting my little red car Carolina blue. Gag me with a plastic "spork." I would roller blade to work before I'd drive a powder blue Subaru. Just wait 'til next year.

A Foreign Perspective

Several weeks ago, a British writer visited our office while vacationing in the Carolinas. He was working on a gift piece, trying to help other golfers decide whether they would like to visit the area.

In last week's mail was a nice letter from Rex Birch and a copy of his full-page article that was published in March 22 edition of the *Guernsey Evening Press*. Guernsey is an island in the English Channel.

"Most things I liked—many very much—but compulsory carts and the fearsomely slow play deserve mention as detractions," Rex said in his letter. "I was intrigued to find when talking to American golfers that they seemed to share my views about compulsory carts. Golf, after all, is an excuse for a 5-mile walk in very nice countryside."

Good point. Rex wrote that Lockwood Golf Links and the Maples course at Sea Trail Plantation were his favorites in this area. However, his "real love" was The Pit at Pinchurst.

Rex concludes in his article that a winter golf trip to the Carolinas is worth the price if you can put up with the carts and slow play.

"I had a great time—nine courses in nine days—and despite what reports sometimes suggest about USA, I was not shot, stabbed or mugged."

"Everyone was friendly and most helpful. And it's flattering to be told repeatedly, 'I just love your accent,' normally by someone speaking just like Dolly Parton."

Doug Rutter
Sports Editor



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