

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

# Brunswick County Wins Area II Eastern Championship

**BY DOUG RUTTER**  
Brunswick County Post 68 wrapped up its first American Legion Area II Eastern Division baseball championship in 12 years last Thursday with a 6-5 win over Wilmington Post 10 in a game shortened by rain.

Post 68, which beat Wilmington 4-2 in their best-of-seven playoff series, has advanced to the Area II championship series for the first time since 1981. The opponent will be Laurinburg, winner of the area's western division.

Last Thursday, Brunswick County was clinging to a one-run lead in Game 6 of the eastern finals when play was halted in the top of the ninth. A thunderstorm that had threatened most of the night finally arrived.

Umpires officially ended the game 41 minutes later when it was apparent the field wouldn't be playable. The infield dirt was covered with

huge puddles and the home plate area and pitcher's mound were muddy.

"It's a tough way for the deciding game to end, but you can't control Mother Nature," Post 68 Coach Ed Lewis said. "I don't think there's any question about whether the field's playable because it's not."

Playing before a huge home crowd in Leland, Brunswick's Demetrius Bell scored what turned out to be the game-winning run in the bottom of the eighth, just before the storm arrived.

With the score tied 5-5, Bell led off the inning with a walk and advanced to second on a groundout. Following an intentional walk to Adrian Black, Mike Hewett grounded to shortstop Chris Lamarsh.

Lamarsh flipped the ball to second baseman David McCallum, but McCallum dropped the ball as he tried to turn what would have been an inning-ending double play.

The speedy Bell never slowed

*"We worked six years to get this far and I'm real proud of the kids."*

—Post 68 Coach Ed Lewis

down as he rounded third base and slid head first into home, just beating McCallum's throw to the plate.

The one-run victory was the fourth in 11 playoff games for Post 68. It was also the fourth straight home win for Brunswick County, which improved to 13-4 this season at Scorpion Field (23-11 overall).

The score was tied 2-2 after one inning. Post 10 drew first blood in the top of the first on an RBI single by Shawn Gallagher and run-scoring groundout by Ren Chapman.

Brunswick County tied the score in the home first on Mike Hewett's

two-out bloop single down the left field line. Jeremy Child and Black, who had both singled, scored on the base hit.

Post 68 took a 3-2 lead in the fourth inning on Child's towering solo home run to left field.

Wilmington rallied for a 5-3 lead in the fifth. Lamarsh drove in one run with a single, and two runs scored as a result of two straight errors by the Post 68 infield.

Brunswick trimmed Post 10's lead to 5-4 in the bottom of the fifth. Mike Hewett singled, advanced to third on Kelley Myers' double and scored on Glen Hildreth's sacrifice fly.

Myers scored the tying run in the seventh inning after reaching base on an error. He moved to third on Robert Hewett's double and scored on Hildreth's groundout.

Brunswick County's starting pitcher, Casey McBride, left the game in the seventh after being struck on the right forearm by a one-hopper back to the mound off the bat of Bryan Britt.

McBride, who pitched a complete-game victory in Game 2 of the

series, was taken to the hospital.

Matt Mintz pitched to one batter before Jared McGee took the mound for Post 68. McGee, the winner in Game 4, recorded the victory after pitching the final 1 1/3 innings.

McGee was set to deliver a 3-2 pitch to Wilmington clean-up hitter Shawn Gallagher in the top of the ninth when a heavy rain started falling and the game was stopped.

Despite the odd ending to the series, Coach Lewis said the win was deserved. "I thought it was an excellent series. Post 10 did exactly like I thought they would. They battled 'til the end."

Post 10, which defeated Post 68 four games to two in last year's league championship series, had swept Brunswick in their two regular-season games this year. That proved meaningless in the playoffs.

"Like at said before this series started, I thought our guys would never quit and they didn't," Lewis said.

In his sixth year as head coach of Post 68, Lewis was beaming following the clinching win. "We worked six years to get this far and I'm real proud of the kids."

Lewis praised his assistant coaches, Wes Coward and Brian Thomas, and North Brunswick Head Baseball Coach Keith Moore. "There is absolutely no quit in any fiber of their bodies. They have helped build this team into winners and they deserve a lot of credit."

Lewis said he wished former Post 68 stars Chris McBride and Ed Lewis Jr., both Division 1 college players, could have shared in the championship. "They labored five years in this program and helped make it what it is. I guess that's just sentimental feelings coming out in me."

**Game Summary**

Brunswick	20011011X	6	9	2
Wilmington	20003000X	5	8	2

**PLAYOFF SERIES RECAP**

Game 1	.....Wilm. 13, Bruns. 2
Game 2	.....Brunswick 7, Wilm. 6
Game 3	.....Brunswick 3, Wilm. 1
Game 4	.....Brunswick 8, Wilm. 2
Game 5	.....Wilm. 7, Bruns. 2
Game 6	.....Brunswick 6, Wilm. 5

\*Brunswick County wins series 4-2

## Brunswick County Evens Best Of Seven Series With Laurinburg

Jared McGee pitched a three-hitter Monday night as Brunswick County defeated visiting Laurinburg 3-1 in Game 2 of the best-of-seven American Legion Area II championship series.

With the series tied at one game apiece, the teams were scheduled to play the next three games in Laurinburg starting Tuesday night. Games will be played at Scotland County High School starting at 7:30 p.m.

In Game 2, Brunswick County (24-12) broke a 1-1 tie in the fifth when Laurinburg pitcher Parks Buie fielded McGee's sacrifice bunt and threw it past first base into

right field.

Jeremy Child scored from second base on the play, and Demetrius Bell scored all the way from first. McGee then retired 11 straight batters before giving up a two-out single in the ninth.

Laurinburg (21-4) won the series opener 6-0 Sunday at North Brunswick High School behind the strong pitching of Elliott Lowery, who struck out 18 batters.

Brunswick County, which finished third in the Area II Eastern Division during the regular season, defeated Whiteville and Wilmington in the playoffs to win its first title in 12 years.



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