

Seashore Baseball League Will Begin Play on Sunday

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By STURGIS HEDRICK

SEASHORE League baseball opens Sunday with five spirited rivals going hammer and tong to challenge the Eastern Blues, who last year won everything there was to win.

They went undefeated through the regular schedule, eliminated the Newport Red Sox in the opening playoff and then sunk the Coastal Stars in two straight playoff finals. That's why their foes are training their sights with extra precision on the Eastern Blues in this, the second year of operation of the strictly amateur Seashore League.

THE LOOP'S only age limit is a minimum of 18 years. The league's rosters can carry high school stars, but these youngsters cannot compete until all scholastic games are complete. What it boils down to, then, is that this is men playing men — with all the chips of pride riding with every pitch.

That's why the Eastern Blues, managed by Wilson Davis, stand aloof as such vulnerable targets. The other league members don't easily forget last year's non-stop victory march by the "down-east" Blues.

THE TEAMS, counting on 1975 as their year for revenge, hope they can detect a certain creaking in the aging bones of the champion Blues.

BUT THERE'S truth in the adage that the Eastern Blues may be showing their age. Butch Saunders, for example, lists his age as "39 and holding." Butch is a pressure pinch-hitter who pitches and plays the outfield. Crawford Pigott, the 6-foot-1 215-pound first baseman, admits to age 37. But he hit .369 last year, rarely bites at a bad pitch

and runs bases with his head as well as with his legs.

The Blues have other senior statesmen like 44-year-old Davis, who catches in a clutch and runs bases with a derring-do that belies his gimpy knee. But the roster bristles talent at every position and boasts its ample share of youth.

CENTER-FIELDER Joe Willis led the league in hitting last year with a startling .529. He very well could be playing major league baseball today, but for his brilliant business future as a computer expert.

Left-hander Dallas Wayne Arthur will start on the mound Sunday against the Salter Path Braves. He's 22 and had a 10-0 won-lost record in '74, averaging 13 strikeouts per game. Randy Grady, 23, will be Dallas' catcher. He hit .425 last year and was called by his teammates the Blues' Most Valuable Player. In the pro prospect department, keep an eye on Richard Arthur, 20, who had a 5-1 pitching record with Atlantic Christian College and a 4-0 mark with the Blues.



Dallas Arthur of the Eastern Blues shows form that carried his team to the Seashore Baseball League championship last year. Dallas will start for the Blues Sunday in their opener with Salter Path.