

# Blues Beat Sox in Battle; No-Hitter for McIntosh

By STURGIS HEDRICK

YOU'RE NEVER quite as good as you look when you win. And you're never as bad as you look when you lose.

And there you have the stormy story of the Eastern Blues in a near-replay of the Revolutionary War in quite an independent sort of a July Fourth baseball week-end.

The Seashore League Blues lost their opening shot at the Eastern North Carolina Regional championship, 14-5, Saturday night to the Roxboro Blues in the latter's Person County Optimist home park. And, believe it or not, the Carteret County Blues didn't look nearly that bad. But more, please, later about that sad, sad story.

Roxboro

YET, AS WE all know: The very saddest of stories of tongue or pen is this — it might have been. And there you have the tragedy of the gallant Red Sox, who fought the fiercest of fights all the way, only to lose to the blessed Blues from Down East, 9-8, in the Broad Creek home of the Sox yesterday afternoon.

Oddly, about 500 fans witnessed the Saturday night game in spacious Optimist Park in Roxboro and the same number thrilled to yesterday's battle royal at Broad Creek. That speaks rather well for the fan interest in Carteret County.

THIS SEASHORE League is really something ultra special. Bobby McIntosh, pitching his first game of the season, hurled a no-hitter as the Braves from Salter Path went into their war dance, 24-1, in Bogue.

As has happened too often to the Red Sox, they did everything but win yesterday. They outit the Blues and, above all, the league's mightiest power hitter, Alec Fox, hammered two ferocious home runs, stole a base, batted in five and his 4-for-5 afternoon at the plate lifted his average to .373.

FOX STANDS 6 feet 3 and weighs a mass-of-muscle 205 pounds. But, at age 25, he looks more and more like "The Six-Million Dollar Man." All he did yesterday was boost his home-run

total to seven for the season and his runs-batted-in league high to 20.

Around the Seashore League, the Down Easters' rivals speak of "the luck of the Blues." Here's the hard fact: The Blues make their own breaks. Nobody outhustles the league champions, who now are undefeated in 27 straight contests in the two-year history of the Seashore circuit and have won 13 and lost 0 this 1975.

YESTERDAY'S 9-8 donnybrook typified this incredible will-to-win of the Blues. They faced down the frustration of a rain-out in Roxboro Friday night, then drove all Sunday morning to get to Broad Creek by game time.

Manley Gaskill went 3 for four at bat and Ronnie Fulcher hammered out 3 for 5, with a double, 2 stolen bases and 2 runs-batted-in. Gaskill's plate average looks a bit more normal every day. It now reads .314, while Fulcher's average is .412 and rising.

BUT, IN THIS Red Sox-Blues' game of heroes, you just can't overlook "Mr. Hustle," Crawford Pigott. He's hitting an even .400, but this 6-1, 215-pound behemoth proved himself as smooth a shortstop as — let's say — an acrobatic ballet master. And he has played first-base in the main since 1974.

Crawford handled five spectacular errorless chances in his brief three innings in the game. He threw out all three Sox to go down in the fifth, his epic on speedboy Richard Collins the greatest play we've seen this season.

BRAXTON PINER smote the key blow that sounded the death knell of the Sox in the seventh. His line-drive homer cleared the fence at 330 feet and would still be traveling, if it hadn't nudged a deep bruise in a pine tree in long-gone right field.

Braxton waved the bat in the home half of the seventh and thus earned dismissal, along with Joe Willis and Ronald Greene, for the afternoon. Joe-Boy scored from third and smashed into Sox catcher Greene like a rocket crunching a tank.

Piner lofted his bat at the prescribed combat position of "butt-



ALEC FOX

stroke" when plate umpire Ron Fernandez halted possible mayhem by ejecting the two Blues and Greene.

BOBBY MCINTOSH struck out 12 and walked three in his seven-inning no-hit masterpiece for the Braves over the Western Blues, 24-1. His own

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