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Hail to the Champ Tides; Raynor Hurls 1-Hitter

By STURGIS HEDRICK

CARTERET cartwheels emerged as the order of the day yesterday afternoon at 4:31 o'clock as the Tides hit their high-watermark for 1975.

Andy Raynor remained calm and cool amid the whirlpool of excitement that surrounded him after he pitched the Tides to the Seashore League baseball championship.

NORMALLY one of the best catchers in the circuit, Andy hurled the best game in the two-year history of the league when he slammed the door in the faces of the Newport Red Sox, 5-2, before close to 1,000 fans in Swinson Park.

Andy had a hunch Saturday night. He called George Gilbert, one of the four-man Carteret board of strategy, and said, "My arm feels real good. I'm ready to pitch, if you think I can help."

HELP? ANDY dominated yesterday's final playoff like no player has dominated a game this year and perhaps last year, as well, in Seashore history.

All Raynor did was retire the first 21 Red Sox in order. He was firing his way to a perfect-game no-hitter until Alex Fox lofted a fly that was dropped in right field. That opened the eighth and perhaps unsettled Andy just a bit.

ANYWAY, Tom Mann then drew a base-on-balls and Tom and Fox executed a perfect double steal to shatter Raynor's shutout. The net result was a one-hitter with no earned runs.

The Red Sox runs were unearned, because Raynor followed the walk to Mann by striking out George Mettrick and getting Cecil Hardesty on a grounder to shortstop Fletcher Poulk. That, with the error on Fox, would and should have retired the side without a run.

DURWOOD Winston then followed Hardesty by singling to left and driving in Mann. Thus credit Durwood, the "Super Toothpick," with the only Newport hit and the only

run-batted-in. He also weighed in with three fine catches in left field and barely missed going over the fence to haul in Poulk's home run. Winston leaped, but missed gloving the drive by 5 feet.

But back to Andy Raynor. He walked just the one batter and struck out 10. In other words, he pitched to just 29 men. And when he wasn't blazing his high hard one past the handcuffed Red Sox, Andy was mighty busy at the plate. He led all batters with a single, double and triple in four times-at-bat.

QUITE A 21-year-old prize, this young Mr. Raynor, whose older brother, Jimmy, pitched six years in organized professional ball. Andy starred for Sandhills Junior College and is considered to have a bright future in the North Carolina Department of Fisheries.

That's if some far-sighted scout doesn't grab him for pro baseball. The future Mrs. Raynor just may have something to say about that. He's getting married to a young lady from his native Clinton in December.

RODNEY KEMP, Donald Leatherman and Jim Piner, along with George Gilbert, the co-leaders, are mighty proud of the fact their Tides are the best.

Sure, they are and nobody can dispute that. They proved they're the best when they won the championship playoffs, 2 games to 1, in yesterday's finale. They also defeated the defending champion Eastern Blues in the final game of the regular season.

BUT, HONEST, boys, here's what applies the gold plate to your silver trophies. You beat some mighty fine ball clubs en route to your title. No one belittles you in any way when they say the Eastern Blues, the Newport Red Sox and Salter Path Braves can play the game of baseball pretty well, themselves.

Call it a team victory. Any triumph is, when you get right down to the final analysis. But Andy Raynor proved something extra special yesterday.

POULK VERY well could have had a 5-for-5 day at the plate. He singled, poled a home run and lined out to the