

Turnage Thrills His Old Coach; 'Dem' Blues Keep Rollin' Along

By STURGIS HEDRICK

'Twas ALONG ABOUT 10 years ago and a skinny teenager named John Turnage was day-dreaming at his desk in West Carteret High School.

If the truth be told, the youngster wasn't hanging on every word of his classroom teacher. John's thoughts wandered outdoors to the West baseball diamond.

"I wonder what I can do to make my coach (Mr. Gannon Talbert) proud of me," day-dreamed young Master Turnage. "I'd sure like to pitch a game some day that would make him really proud of me."

WELL, THE RECORD books tell the story of how many times in his high school career and later that John made Mr. Talbert mighty proud of his young protegee.

Little did either of them dream, however, that yesterday afternoon Turnage would be playing the game of his life on a field named after his coaching idol, Gannon Talbert Field, in the Seashore Baseball League.

And that Mr. Talbert would be cheering on the sidelines, watching a 26-year-old, 6-foot-1, 195-pound, John Turnage, now a top executive at Belk's Department Store, pitch a fine ball game for the champion Carteret Tides and enjoy the greatest batting day of his life.

ALL JOHN DID was coast to his second victory against one defeat in the Seashore season, hurling a 7-inning 7-hitter over the Coastal Greys on Talbert Field. Turnage struck out 6 and walked just one in the 19-3 triumph. Fletcher Pouk hurled the final 2 shutout innings, just to give his arm a workout, and gave up 1 hit.

But what a day for Turnage at bat. He enjoyed that once-in-a-lifetime 6-for-6 afternoon, with 4 bullet singles, a crashing double (limited to 2 bases, rather than a home run, by a ground rule) and a 360-foot rifle-shot homer to left. He also scored 4 runs and had 6 RBIs.

John's 6-for-6 set a new Seashore record and he raised his batting average to .385.

SPEAKING OF HITTING, Chuck Lewis, the smooth-stroking Tide first-baseman, reminds you more and more of a human batting machine. All Chuck did yesterday was stroke 5 singles in 6 at-bats to score 4 runs and drive home 2. That gives this sweet-swinging clean-up clouter an average of .558 in Carteret's full 9 games.

Catcher Winston Arrington shared in the glorious day-dream with a double and triple and 6 runs-batted-in for a perfect 4 for 4. That boosted his average to .353. Fletcher Pouk climbed to .333 with his 4-for-6 afternoon, including a double and triple.

GETTING BACK TO THE sweet memories of the greatest coach in the County's history, Mr. Talbert eagerly exclaimed, "John's my boy," at the conclusion of the win.

Gannon cited Turnage along with Bruce Maness, Bucky Smith, Walter Thomas and Jimmy Webb as the greatest pitchers in Gannon's memory of his 52 years in baseball.

Gannon took particular pride in congratulating John. And, ironically, the background for the handshake was the dedication plaque which read:

SEASHORE BASEBALL STANDINGS

	W	L	AVG.
Eastern Blues	9	2	.818
Newport Red Sox	6	4	.600
Coastal Greys	5	6	.455
Carteret Tides	3	6	.333
Salter Path Braves	3	8	.273

to following them in ever-increasing numbers wherever they play.

In fact, the Blues attracted some 300 fans Friday night to see them take the Salter Path Braves in stride, 8-2, in Swinson Park. Brad Piner, 19-year-old right-hander, pitched with the poise of a big-leaguer, walking none and scattering 8 hits while fanning 9. That gave Brad his second victory of the year against nary a loss.

Smiling Jimmy Davis hurled well enough to win 9 out of 10 games for the Braves. But this proved the 10th. Neal Smith gave up 4 runs on 3 hits and 3 walks in his one-third of an inning in the first. And that spelled the ball game.

NOW IT'S MAKE-or-break week for the Carteret Tides. They face the Coastal Greys Friday at 8 p.m. in Swinson Park and the second-place Newport Red Sox Sunday at 2 p.m. on Talbert Field. The Blues face the Braves Sunday at Salter Path.

The Tides and the Sox also have their 4-4 7-inning tie of July 9, halted by rain, to make up. Some mistaken opinions have suggested that this game should be played from the 8th inning on, to completion.

This erroneous thinking contravenes all the rules of baseball. The rule book of the National Baseball Congress and a poll of all umpires consulted during the last 2 weeks unanimously state:

"A game halted by rain after 5 (or in this case 7) innings qualifies as a complete game." In other words, that's all she wrote on that one. A full 9-inning game must be contested as the replay.

GANNON TALBERT FIELD

"In honor of his service
To School and Community."
TEACHER-COACH
1938-1975

NO ONE TAKES the league-leading Eastern Blues for granted, certainly not the downeast fans who have taken

