

# On Target

By Sturgis Hedrick



WILSON DAVIS THINKS, dreams and plans a King-sized future for baseball in Carteret County.

And why not?

People swarm hereabouts from all 50 states in the Union and a foreign country or two or more to enjoy our God-given myriad of natural blessings.

Nature has endowed other surf-side communities with the traditional combination of sun, sea, sand and beautiful girls. But apparently our visitors find a subtle something that makes the local bounty unique.

EVERYONE HAS his own thoughts on this welcome asset. But one family of newcomers suggests the primitive natural beauty that has remained remarkably unchanged through the years, the deep-rooted religious sincerity, the economy and — above all — the ante-bellum courtliness.

True friendliness, courtesy and the readiness to accept visitors with honest cordiality can rarely be feigned. "Hurry back, now, y'all," has become a standard Southern good-bye from shopkeepers. Alas, that too often translates, "We'd be mighty happy to get some more of your business."

BUT THAT ENDS THIS unseemly digression. Please forgive. Now back to Wilson Davis and baseball.

Why, wonders Wilson, do our fine teams have to go to Roxboro and Kinston to find the best in diamond competition? This far-sighted manager of the perennial leaders in our top circuit, the Eastern Blues in the Seashore League, tried a toddling step in the right direction over the weekend.

The Grifton Reds, the Wilmington Barons and our own Carteret Tides played the host Eastern Blues in their own first invitation. And guess who met in the final? The two Seashore entries, the Tides and Blues.

AND RIGHT THERE we have quite a tribute to the caliber of Carteret County baseball. Wilmington has beaten the Durham Bees, runner-up team in the just-concluded Eastern Semi-Pro Championship. Grifton also has met and defeated the best.

So just what do we lack to attract the top semi-pro or amateur teams from North Carolina and anywhere else where proud communities like to test their ball clubs against the best?

THE OBVIOUS answer is a proper ball park, capable of holding enough spectators to pay the freight. Salter Path can boast the finest local facility, in the opinion of On Target. But this proud private-enterprise diamond ~~and itself~~ confined into a limited plot of land and unable to accommodate more than 1,000 or so fans.

That leaves the county parks: Swinson, Eastern, and Freedom. Gannon Talbert Field would seem to be out of the question, because of its primary mission to serve West Carteret High School. (Kings Mountain, Cleveland County, must have a unique situation in that it has a properly-lighted field for baseball, football and outside tournaments.)

EASTERN WOULD appear to be the

## SEASHORE BASEBALL STANDINGS

	W	L	AVG.
Eastern Blues	10	3	.769
Newport Red Sox	7	5	.583
Coastal Greys	6	7	.462
Carteret Tides	5	6	.455
Salter Path Braves	3	10	.231

## GAME TOMORROW AT 8 P.M.

Blues at Tides (Swinson Park).

## GAMES SUNDAY AT 2 P.M.

Tides at Braves (Salter Path Ball Park).  
Red Sox at Greys (Swinson Park).

most likely site for our dream ball park and it certainly has the incredibly loyal Downeast interest to make it go.

Can't you capture the vision: The present park in Smyrna, with big-league lighting, 10-foot or higher wooden fencing completely enclosing the playing field, enough bleachers to seat 3,000-5,000 minimum and one or more turnstiles.

IS THIS REALLY all that impossible? After all, we talk convention center, which would certainly entail a far greater expense. The county already owns the land in Smyrna.

What most readers will call this "fantasy" requires no more, really, than financial co-operation between county and community (sometimes in yesteryear referred to as "free enterprise"). Of course, the sudden appearance — as if by magic — of a comfortably-wealthy philanthropist would prove the ideal solution.

But, we can dream, can't we, Wilson?

MOST OF HIS RIVALS in the Seashore League consider Wilson Davis a complex personality. Merely keep in mind his passionate love affair with baseball and his burning desire to win and you have rubbed off the outer coating of a basically single-minded guy.

You don't have to be a Leo Durocher to be consumed by a zeal to finish on top. Some fairly strict disciplinarians, yet highly popular individuals, have won more than their share of pennants.

WILSON (ONE-PUNCH) Davis added another colorful chapter to his legendary career last Friday night when he decked the ring-leader of a highly-obnoxious gang of drunks in Swinson Park. After all, baseball tradition and even law have held it the responsibility of the home team to police its crowd.

This weekend brings another golden opportunity to the Carteret Tides to climb in the Seashore standings. They play host to the leading Blues tomorrow at 8 p.m. in Swinson and then visit Salter Path Ball Park Sunday at 2 p.m. to challenge the furious-with-war-paint Braves.

Those buoyant boys from Belk, John Turnage and George Mettrick, bounce back from one of their executive missions to Charlotte in the knick of time.

John will try to continue his no-hit pitching string against the Blues. And George hopes to extend his home-run barrage for the Newport Red Sox against the Coastal Greys at 2 p.m. Sunday in Swinson.