

1976

# Seashore League Fuss Resolved; President Cancels Tournament

By JEFF JONES

AN ORGANIZATION in disarray, the Seashore Baseball League, made a good first step toward getting its house in order Tuesday night, when league officials and representatives of the five-member baseball conference met in the superior courtroom, county courthouse in Beaufort.

Of greatest importance, though not the first item on the agenda, was a decision by league president Wade Bell to cancel the Seashore double-elimination tournament, voiding results of all playoff games to date. The league champions and runners-up were determined by regular season standings. They are the Blues, who finished with a 16-4 win-loss record, and the Carteret Tides, second with a 12-8 mark.

MR. BELL reached that decision after counseling with managers of all five teams. Most of them agreed that division was too great, feelings "too high," to continue with an official playoff. Tournament trophies purchased by the County Parks and Recreation Department will be returned for a refund. Only a championship trophy, for the regular season winner, will be awarded this year, and that will go to the Eastern Blues.

Plans for a single exhibition game Sunday, Oct. 10, between Blues and Red Sox, an "unofficial championship" test, fell through. Newport

manager Aycock announced yesterday that several of his college-age players couldn't get home for the weekend.

THE SITE FOR the tournament championship was one of several issues of contention which led Mr. Bell to cancel the playoff. The Red Sox, winners' bracket representative, had chosen Salter Path as its home field for the tournament and claimed the home game privilege by virtue of being the tournament's only unbeaten team. The Blues claimed the Smyrna School field as their home territory and had demanded the home field privilege as regular season champions.

The league president decided that issue, and a few others, Tuesday night, but cancellation of the playoff made the squabbling academic.

THE FIRST item on agenda was a protest lodged by the Coastal Greys against the Blues in the sixth inning of a tournament contest last Saturday at Smyrna. The protest involved violation of the league's designated hitter rule. The rule states that a designated hitter can only be used for the pitcher. There was no question that the rule was violated, but at least three of the league's five team managers reported and they had played all season under the assumption that a designated hitter could be inserted for any position, decided prior to the start of each game.

The result of the ensuing, and rather lengthy

argument, was that the league should, prior to the start of the 1977 season, nail down each and every rule, then go by them religiously.

THE GREYS' PROTEST, by the way, was upheld. But instead of re-playing the game, from the sixth inning to conclusion, Greys' manager Jimmy Walker agreed to accept the score at that point. The Blues led 9-1, when the protest was filed, and went on to win 20-2. The game, therefore, would have been scored a 9-1 victory for the Blues, but, again, the decision makes little difference — the game and the tournament have been voided.

After conferring at length with team managers concerning the site for the tournament championship series, another moot point, the league president ruled that an original agreement by a majority of the four teams participating in the playoff would be followed. That agreement, according to Carteret Tides' representative Donald Leatherman, Blues' manager Davis, Grey's manager Walker and Mr. Bell, was that Smyrna would have been the site. However, with the tournament canceled, the decision itself was voided.

FINALLY, THE league president took up a protest from the Blues involving the eligibility of five players on the Newport Red Sox team. The

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