

On Target

By Sturgis Hedrick



"YOU MIGHT SAY we dedicated this one to Mr. Rudy and Mr. Peck."

Thus did one of the veteran Eastern Blues describe Sunday's significant 6-2 baseball victory over the battling Braves in the Blues' opening game of the Seashore League season in the distinctive Salter Path Ball Park.

Mr. Rudy (Rudolph Dowty) and Mr. Peck (Everett Fulcher) both died in recent weeks. But they'll be remembered into eternity as two of the greatest of that immortal breed, the Downeast baseball fan.

THEY CERTAINLY MUST have been proud of their Blues Sunday in an electrifying conflict that could have gone either way. This Downeast-Salter Path rivalry ranks as possibly the oldest and keenest in Carteret County competition.

So now the Blues, the Coastal Greys and the Carteret Tides rule at the top of the league with one victory apiece. The Greys nipped the Braves, 7-6, Friday night in Swinson Park, while Swinson set the spectacular scene for Sunday's 11-3 win for the Tides over the Western Red Sox.

INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, the veteran Eastern Blue who expressed the team's reverence for the late Mr. Rudy and Mr. Peck, did the most toward dedicating the victory.

His name? Kenny Lewis.

And all the indestructible one-man

tug-boat crew contributed toward the triumph was 2 home runs and 3 runs-batted-in in his 3 hits in 4 trips. Kenny, who suffered all through 1976 after back surgery, also excelled at his unfamiliar position of second base.

BRAD PINER SHOWED the Braves' the right-handed pitching ace of the Blues over the first 5 innings. He hurled a 2-hitter and didn't walk a man to gain the victory, handing over a 2-0 lead to the left-handed mound ace, Dallas Wayne Arthur.

Dallas Wayne yielded 2 runs, 4 hits, walked 3 and was the victim of a clean steal of home by Keith Waters in the 4th inning hurled by the Blues' south-paw. Lefty did manage to strike out 7 of the 19 batters he faced.

FAR BETTER DAYS lie ahead for the Braves, however, with a strong team that's going to get a whole lot better in a great big hurry. Waters hurled a strong 8-hitter against the best-balanced team in the league and Keith pitched a beauty for Campbell College just 38 hours before.

Neal Smith chimed in with 2 doubles in his 3-for-4 afternoon at the plate.

Despite Kenny Lewis' early start, this looms as quite a season for home-run honors, because big Paul Damren of the Blues exploded the day's longest circuit blast over the Emerald Isle Fishing Pier sign in right center.

Paul just might have 10 or more tucked away for the rest of the season.

THE COASTAL GREYS dished out a 7-6 win over the Braves on Friday night in Swinson. With a temperature of 44 degrees and winds roaring in at 10 knots from left field, certainly no man nor beast who had a choice would have wandered from the warmth of his hearth.

Unfortunately, the Seashore League schedule demanded this April 29 night game, reminiscent of the over-coated benumbed fans of last year's Bowie Kuhn World Series.

AT ANY RATE, this glacier-age night chill made the individual performances all the more remarkable.

Mike Dudley, the Greys' right-hand fireballer, struck out 18 Braves and gave up 2 hits and just 3 earned-runs. 'Tis true that Mike issued 12 walks, but 'tis also true that no one had the right to ask a pitcher to risk his arm in that arctic air.

LOUIS MEADOR PROVED the only Brave to solve Dudley. Lou collected both Salter Path hits, 2 robust doubles. Meador's 9th-inning shot, scoring Ted Willis all the way from first, fell 15 feet shy of clearing the left-center fence to tie the score.

That 10-knot Nor'wester proved the decisive factor.

By the same token, Joel Whaley showed great mound promise for the Braves. But the Jacksonville fast-balling right-hander suffered a stiff hurling wing in the dank chill. Just watch his smoke in the hot weather.

Alex Fox and Richard Collins paced the Greys at bat. Big Alex had a perfect night with a single, double, triple, a stolen base and 4 RBI's. Collins stole 2 bases and went 3 for 5.

GRADY WILLIS' JUBILEE continues to roll along to a success that surprises not a single one of his Carteret Tides.

Gary Raynor and Rick Heal shared the pitching honors in the Tides' 11-3 shellacking of the Western Red Sox Sunday in Swinson. Gary got the win, aided by home runs by his brother and batterymate, Andy, and big first-baseman Chuck Lewis.

Tommy Vincent started on the mound for the Sox and had the Tides at his mercy until the roof caved in on a 9-run 5th. Errors destroyed Tommy's pitching hopes, but he retaliated with 2 ferocious home runs.



SPORTS

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single-elimination tourney will take place May 18-20 at Swinson Park near Morehead City. The competition is being arranged for spectator interest and revenue, not to pick a league representative for the state 3-A playoffs. The regular season winner in the Coastal 3-A circuit will advance to the state competition.

A tentative schedule calls for the No. 3 and 4 teams, by regular season standings, to meet at 4 p.m. on May 18. The No. 2 and 5 teams will meet at 7 p.m. that day. At 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 19, the No. 1 team and the winner of the 4 p.m. game on May 18 will do battle. The championship contest will begin at 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 20, matching up the winner of the May 19 game and the winner of the 7 p.m. game on May 18.

SEASHORE BASEBALL League teams will be busy again this weekend. The Eastern Blues will take on the Western Sox at 8 p.m. Friday at Swinson Park near Morehead City; the Coastal Greys will meet the Eastern Blues at 2 p.m. Sunday at Smyrna; and the Salter Path Braves will do battle with the Carteret Tides at 2 p.m. Sunday in Swinson Park.