

NBC Coastal Division Tournament Enters Second Week, Swinson Park

By RODNEY KEMP

OTIS PITTMAN'S Salter Path Braves will take on the Eastern Blues, managed by Wilson Davis, in the first half of Sunday's doubleheader as the NBC Coastal Division semipro baseball tournament enters its second weekend.

The Braves stormed past Chicod 7-5 and the Blues blasted Pollocksville 9-2 to set up the match between these two Seashore Baseball League rivals.

THE LENOIR County All-Stars will play the Grifton Reds in Sunday's nightcap, as all four of these teams strive to remain in the winners' bracket.

The losers' bracket will feature the Chicod Cowboys against the Stantonburg Hawks and the Coastal Greys versus the Carteret Tides in Friday's games. The Cowboys-Hawks winner will play the Pollocksville Bears and the Greys-Tides winner will play the Western Red Sox in Saturday's doubleheader.

THE LOSERS' bracket proves to be a precarious position for the six teams involved. Four of the six will be eliminated from the tournament Friday and Saturday.

This type of situation makes each team pull out all the stops, which will add to the enjoyment the fans have already received from this showcase tournament.

THE BRAVES and Blues have played each other four times this season with the Blues being victorious in each game. However, three of these games were 2-run decisions and the resurgent Braves appear to have gained confidence and momentum in the tourney.

Pitching may prove to be the key in this match-up. The Blues will have left-hander Dallas Arthur and right-hander Brad Piner primed for the starting role.

THE BRAVES probably will start curve-ball artist Keith Waters, but also have fire-balling Jim Davis and John Lippert to call on if needed.

Lenoir County will match its thunderous bats against the defensively solid Grifton Reds. The All-Stars' pitching is suspect, but their run-producing ability became evident after last Sunday's 19-13 win over the Red Sox.

WHEN THE All-Stars play, the Swinson Park fans experience the team's own disc jockey, who uses each lull in the action to spin a "top 100" tune on his record player.

Braxton Piner of the Eastern Blues, No. 8, gets a handshake and a slap on the rear from teammate Randy Grady, third base coach, after slamming out a solo homer in the first inning of the Blues' 8-1

"On the Warpath" plays whenever a home run is hit.

This tournament's winner will meet the winner of the Central Division tournament, being held in Roxboro.

Last year's champion in that tournament, Sonny's Funnies of Greensboro, won their opening game 10-1 over the Winston-Salem Indians.

THE DURHAM BEES, last year's runner-up at Roxboro, who came into this year's tourney with a 38-2 record, were upset Saturday 5-4 by the Greensboro Knights. The Bees beat High Point Christian in the losers' bracket on Tuesday to remain alive.

The weekend schedule for the Coastal Division tourney at Swinson Park follows: Friday, Chicod Cowboys vs. Stantonburg Hawks at 6:30 p.m. and Coastal Greys vs. Carteret Tides at 8:30 p.m.; Saturday, Cowboys-Hawks winner vs. Pollocksville Bears at 6:30 p.m. and Greys-Tides winner vs. Western Red Sox at 8:30 p.m.; Sunday, Salter Path Braves vs. Eastern Blues at 5 p.m. and Lenoir County All-Stars vs. Grifton Reds at 7:30 p.m.

victory over Salter Path Sunday at Swinson Park. The Blues and the Lenoir County All-Stars remain the only unbeaten contenders in the NBC Coastal Division tournament.

