

McGavock Forfeits AAA Baseball Crown

By CINDY SMITH

Tennessee Sports Writer

KINGSFORD, Tenn. — McGavock was forced to forfeit the third and deciding game of the TSSAA Class AAA baseball finals here last night, losing the state championship to Sullivan North.

The McGavock Raiders were leading 4-0 with two outs in the bottom of the fifth inning when the Sullivan North head coach, Mike Ritz, stopped the game and informed the umpires McGavock pitcher Larry Leaver had pitched too many innings under high school rules.

"I'm very disappointed, of course," McGavock head baseball coach Mel Brown said afterwards. "But I don't blame Coach Ritz. Everything seemed to be going our way. This

Pitching Rule

Page 45 of TSSAA Handbook

No player may pitch more than 10 innings on consecutive days. After one day's rest a pitcher may again pitch as many as 10 innings on consecutive days. If a player pitched at all in any inning, the inning shall count as one full inning pitched.

is a hard way for a young man to lose."

Then, Brown stopped for a moment, and said: "It's a hard way for an old man to lose, too."

"I do think that if there was an official book that they should have warned us going

into the fifth that Larry had used up his innings," added Brown.

The two clubs had split games on Tuesday with McGavock winning 7-3, and Sullivan North winning 3-1 to set up the winner-take-all finals. McGavock was the defending state champ, Sullivan North won in 1983.

Sullivan North's Ritz, who got the pitching information from Kingsport Times-News sports writer Bill Lane who keeps the official book for the Sullivan North team, said Leaver had pitched 5½ innings in the second game and 4¼ innings in the third game to constitute an 11-inning effort.

According to the Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association Handbook, the rule (page 45, item 2-C) states: "No player may pitch more than 10 innings on consecu-

tive days. If a player has pitched at all in any inning, the inning shall count as one full inning pitched."

Having pitched 5½ innings in the second game, Leaver was credited with having pitched six full innings under the TSSAA rule. Therefore, when he pitched to a batter in the fifth inning of the third game on the second consecutive day, he became an ineligible player and thus brought on the forfeit.

McGavock head coach Brown's book showed Leaver had pitched only five innings in the second game, and Brown thought he had five innings left for the third game.

In fact, Leaver had pitched to two batters in the fifth inning of the second game, recording only one out.

"We didn't have it on our book, but they

have it on their book," said Brown. "I take full responsibility. I know the rules. We didn't have it on our book, and I thought that Larry could go five full innings."

Before making the final decision about the forfeit, the umpires, Ted Griffith and Jack Cox, called the TSSAA office and spoke with TSSAA officials concerning the rule.

McGavock principal Dr. Howard Baltimore echoed the sentiments of the McGavock parents on hand when he said: "I just wish that the TSSAA had had someone here at the championship game."

As for the McGavock players, the turn of events was devastating.

(Turn to Page 6, Column 1)

McGavock Forfeits AAA Baseball Title

(From First Sports Page)

Center fielder Dwayne Morris, who had given an outstanding performance in the series, stood in right field and sobbed. No player was immune from tears.

"What a way to end a career," said Carmon Brown, the head

coach's son and senior shortstop.

"I asked their coach if this was the only way they could beat us and he said, 'yes,' said Tommy Randolph, the pitcher who ended his year with a 14-0 record and was scheduled to replace Leaver for the final three innings that never came about.

Leaver said only, "We beat them and they know it. They found some little way to beat us, but they didn't beat our team."

Leaver would not comment about the number of innings that he did or did not pitch. "I don't know," he said tearfully.