

Down-But-Not-Out Imps Seek Share Of BCC Title In Today's Finale

The Red Imps are down, but not out. Mooreville Junior High's hopes of winning the Bi-County Conference football championship outright were dashed following a 34-14 loss administered by host East Lincoln last Wednesday afternoon.

But despite staggering, the Imps still haven't been knocked out of the first-place picture altogether, as a

victory in their season-finish game (Wednesday) afternoon will earn them a share of their first BCC pennant.

"We were thinking about winning it by ourselves," acknowledged Joe Pinyan, the Imps' first-season head coach, "and the guys are a little down because that can't happen now. But we also realize that we can still at least share the championship. We've

put the pressure back on ourselves, and we'll just have to wait and see if we can handle it."

Mooreville backed itself into a corner by suffering its worst offensive day of the season on its way towards suffering its first league loss. The verdict dropped the Imps to 3-1 in league play, and to 3-2 overall, heading into today's finale.

Mooreville's incoming league foe this afternoon in Statesville, the reigning BCC titleists whose Bulldogs have won 11 straight games dating back to last season.

"Had we beat East Lincoln," surmised Pinyan, "then Statesville would have had to come in here and beat us to win the conference. As it stands now, we're the ones who have to win just to earn a share of the

title. It looks to be quite a big game, and I hope we're up for it."

That's something that the Imps weren't against East Lincoln.

The hosts pushed out to an 8-0 lead after one quarter, and increased it to 16-0 in the second period before Mooreville tallied just before the half.

East then tallied 12 points in the third period to put the game out of

reach. Mooreville won the scoring battle in the fourth quarter, 8-6, to account for the final winning margin.

"I really don't think that East Lincoln is 20 points better than us," stated Pinyan, "but they were in this game. We didn't appear really ready to play. I don't think we were looking ahead to Statesville because East Lincoln has given Mooreville trouble in the past. They just outplayed us from start to finish."

Looking at the 16-0 deficit in the second quarter, Imp quarterback Erin Brandon connected with tight end Mac Gulin on a nine-yard dump play to account for the visitors' first score. The conversion attempt failed, leaving Junior High on the short end of the 16-0 halftime score.

Mooreville's comeback attempt in the opening kickoff, which East Lincoln returned 75 yards for a touchdown.

"That score in the second quarter put some heat back in us," noted Pinyan, "but that touchdown run-back took it right back out of us. Looking back at the game, I feel like we gave them three of their touchdowns. You can't make those kind of mistakes and expect to win."

East, which made the most of Imp mistakes by returning two Junior High fumbles for scores as

well as taking advantage of the breakdown on the part of the guests' defense, added another score in the third period before Brandon emerged again.

This time, the Imp QB did so early in the final stanza by taking the call himself on an 11-yard scoring jump. Brandon then capped the Imps scoring by tucking away the snap and bursting the two yards back to the 10-yard line.

East went on to add an insurance score later in the frame.

DeCombe Connor, the Imps workhorse fullback who had rushed for over 100 yards in each of the team's four previous games, this time was held to 75 yards on 15 carries. That was still enough to enable him to reach the 600-yard barrier for the season.

Ronnie Duquette added 60 yards on a half dozen carries, while Brandon added 52 yards while passing for one TD, running for the second, and adding the conversion.

Mooreville will not be finishing touches on its season, and attempt to snare at least half of the league crown, by hosting Statesville in today's 4:30 affair.

The battle between the two Iredell County rivals will take place in the Mooreville Stadium behind Junior High.

Friday's Foothills Athletic Conference varsity football clash to decide the first-place resident was everything South Iredell's Vikings expected it to be, only less on their part.

And because of it, the Vikings lost their grip on the share of first place after host North Iredell scored a touchdown apiece in the even-numbered quarters to register a 14-0 decision over its neighbor to the South.

The battle was billed as the biggest yet to take place within the F.A.C. as both clubs entered the duel with identical, 3-0 league records and ranked among the state's top 10 3A teams.

North Iredell's Raiders, keeping intact their undefeated unit, looked to protect their number seven rank in the Associated Press' 3A poll, a spot that four teams were tied for.

For one of the few times this season, the Vikings struggled with their vaunted rushing attack, finishing with a mere 33 net yards on the ground and managing to add 64 more through the air.

"North Iredell's defensive line didn't have a job of controlling the line of scrimmage," acknowledged Mayhew. "They didn't budge. We knew a lot would depend on which defense could hold off the other team's offense; and on this night, North Iredell was better at doing that than we were."

South's junior running sensation Omar Lester, one of the county's and league's top per-game gains heading into the game, was held to just 40 yards, perhaps his lowest output of the season. Teammate Ray Grady totaled 21 yards, while most

Mooreville To Host Ultimate FAC Soccer Match Tonight

It could perhaps be the single biggest soccer match in Mooreville's history.

And the Blue Devils set the stage for it with a pair of Fortville Athletic Soccer Conference wins during the past week.

Mooreville, never before as much in the hunt for a possible playoff berth, takes its 7-3 FAC record into tonight's (Wednesday) home match against Statesville, with the

winner practically assured of joining South Iredell as the recipients of the two postseason bids being extended to league members.

The Blue Devils remained in the thick of the race by recording second wins of the season over a pair of league opponents the past week.

The second of those came Monday night with a 6-0 conquest of host West Iredell. That decision followed

a thrilling, 1-0 verdict rendered over visiting Wilkes Central the previous Wednesday night.

As a result, Mooreville and Statesville continue to battle neck-and-neck for that remaining playoff berth, something that Mooreville has never had in the four-year history of its varsity soccer program.

Statesville, on the other hand, is well-versed in postseason play, as

the Greyhounds have advanced beyond regular-season play during each of the previous years the FASC has been in existence.

South Iredell, despite suffering its first conference loss in two years Monday night, is still assured of receiving one of the postseason bids as the Vikings need only to beat last-place Salisbury tonight to sew up their third straight conference crown.

Monday night at West Iredell, the Devils may have found themselves looking ahead to Statesville a bit prematurely, as they jumped out to a 6-0 lead early in the second half after a furious 40-yard goal rally on the part of the Warriors before securing the win.

Matt Touchton and Frank Matthews tallied a pair of goals apiece, and Drew White and Jamie Gallimore each provided one, as the Devils piled up the 6-0 lead.

At that time, first-year coach Steve Stitt began adhering to a free style of substitution, and the plan almost backfired, as the Warriors recorded the game's final four goals to put within their grasp of the three minutes left to play.

From there, though, the guests held on to snap their second win of the season over West and maintain a strong lead in the four-year series

between the two league members.

At home against Wilkes Central last Wednesday, the Devils needed a Touchton goal in the game's final minute to ease past the Eagles of Wilkes Central, 1-0.

Playing without Matthews, who was bedridden with the flu, the Devils still maintained a strong edge in shots on goal, firing 18 at the Eagle net compared to only eight in return, but it was Touchton's effort at the 1:20 mark of the match that made the difference.

Mooreville goalie Jeff Lovett recorded seven saves in the victory to notch his first shutout of the season.

After hosting tonight's crucial conference tilt, Mooreville will then close out its regular season the following Monday night by entertaining Salisbury, whose Hornets are still winless in this first season as members of the league.

In Mooreville's first meeting of the season with Statesville, the Greyhounds recorded a controversial win, allowing them to maintain a huge series lead over the Blue Devils.

But never before has a match between the two carried as much clout as tonight's.

Game time on the Mooreville Senior High field is set for 7 p.m.

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South's junior running sensation Omar Lester, one of the county's and league's top per-game gains heading into the game, was held to just 40 yards, perhaps his lowest output of the season. Teammate Ray Grady totaled 21 yards, while most

of the minus yardage came on quarterback sacks.

Junior quarterback Mike Hobbs, coming off perhaps his finest varsity performance, hit on just five of his 18 attempts for 54 yards, and was intercepted three times.

South's defense, which allowed 160 yards rushing, forced four turnovers, two each via the interception and fumble.

Grady and Duane Winford each pounced on a North Iredell fumble, while Winford, in turning in a solid defensive effort, also picked off the Eagles of Wilkes Central.

After a scoreless first quarter, the Raiders and together their first scoring drive, salvaged by the gaining of a first down on a pair of fourth down plays.

Lady Vikes Volleyball Season Ends

An unfamiliar volleyball season drew to a close in a familiar manner for South Iredell's Lady Vikings.

During a season that ended with the Vikes earning their first postseason berth as members of the Foothills Athletic Conference, South Iredell's extended spiking campaign finally drew to a close in third round action of the state 3A volleyball playoffs Thursday afternoon following a defeat to host Forbush.

South's season ended with as administered by those same Lady Falcons who finished as the FAC's regular season champion and handed the Vikes two of their four losses during regulation play.

The only difference this time around, in what constituted the third meeting this season between the same-league members, was that Forbush was able to advance into statewide semifinal postseason play following a straight set win over the visiting Lady Vikings.

During the regular season, both matches between third place finishing South Iredell and conference champion Forbush went the distance of five games, with the Lady Falcons emerging as winners.

South Iredell brought an end to one of its most successful seasons to date after winding up on the short end of the three games by losing 15-15, 12-15, and 15-10, in quarterfinal play in

the Forbush gym Thursday.

The teams entered the third-round match as two of only eight teams still battling for the state 3A title, and Forbush advanced into the round of the final four with the win.

The Lady Vikes of head coach Sandy Torrence earned the right to meet Forbush for a third and final time this season after eliminating second-round foe Fred T. Ford at home last Tuesday night with a straight game, 15-9, 15-12, and 15-9 match.

South Iredell received the FAC's third and final postseason bid as well, with it, advancing past both East Rowan and Ford without losing a single game.

As a result, three of the final 16 teams in the field all hailed from the FAC, with South Iredell also included in the field.

Forbush, the winner of the FAC title in each of the league's four seasons of play, holds the distinction of eliminating both of the other two league members, as the Lady Falcons advanced past North Iredell to earn the right to face, and ultimately eliminate, South Iredell.

With the defeat, South Iredell closes out its season at 12-5 overall.

As for Forbush, it entered semifinal play this season with a 15-5 record, and advanced into the state finals hanging in the wings.

opening round of the state 3A-4A playoffs for a third straight time later next week.

Should the Vikes earn the FAC's top postseason bid, all of the team's early-round playoff matches will take place in Viking Valley.

At home against Statesville last Wednesday night, the Vikes and Hounds provided their own form of heat on perhaps the coldest night of the season, as the county rivals scrapped to a 2-2 tie.

South Iredell entered the game needing either a win or a tie to sew up at least a share of the league title for an unprecedented third straight year, and while it was the win it wanted, the tie at least accomplished that.

The Vikings, as has been their custom, struck early against the Hounds for a pair of goals to take the 2-0 lead at the half.

Chris Meredith was credited with both of the Vikes' goals, the first coming after the ball was deflected into the net by a Statesville defender and the second when he drilled home the net-finder in traffic from 10 yards out.

The second half, though, turned in Statesville's favor, as the guests matched the Vikes with a pair of goals.

The two teams then battled through the two required 10-minute sessions of overtime without either producing a score, so the tie became official.

South Iredell can put a lock on the league crown with a victory over Salisbury today, after which the Vikes will enjoy an open date the final playing day of the season next Monday before advancing into the

defensive end—Eric Blackwood recovering a Trojan fumble.

Despite possessing the ball for all but a minute of the first quarter, Bandsman wasn't able to jump ahead until the final minute of the half on a four-yard burst by Doral Catchings. Bobby Dellinger's point-after kick, which in the end proved so vital, pushed the advantage to 7-0, which stood at intermission and throughout the third quarter.

Mooreville was finally able to control the ball long enough to establish a scoring drive of its own, one that took seven plays and was set up by Matt's second interception.

Shawn Gumpford hit a hilt-and-go to Harper and then zeroed in on flanker for a 52-yard connection that quickly pulled the guests to within a single point of forcing a tie at the 8:30 mark of the fourth quarter.

The extra-point snap was mishandled and leftfooted placekicker Frank Matthews was never able to get his potentially tying kick away, leaving the Devils the point shy.

And that's how the game ended.

even though Mooreville was able to gain possession two more times in the final period.

This week, Mooreville matches up with host Bunker Hill, whose Bears are once-beaten both overall Friday.

Game time on the Bunker Hill High School field is set for 8 p.m.

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Behind A Wall Of Blockers, Sherrill Prepares To Cut Loose On Completion

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Vikes Began To Reveal Vulnerability

Could it be that, after nearly two full seasons of flat out domination, South Iredell's soccer team is beginning to show a little vulnerability?

Perhaps, because during the most recent week of play within the Foothills Athletic Conference for the soccer Vikings, not only was their two-year, in-conference winning streak tested but it was also solid proof, proving that they are, indeed, beatable once again.

Although the Greg Crowley-coached crew suffered its first loss in its past 27 league matches with a 7-4 defeat to host North Iredell Monday night, and was prevented from winning one for the first time in the previous 26 by fighting to a 2-2 tie with visiting Statesville a few nights earlier, South Iredell is still very much in command within the FAC.

The Vikings need only to get past a winless Salisbury team this (Wednesday) afternoon in order to sew up their second straight sole ownership of the league title and cap their third straight postseason berth.

South Iredell entered the Monday night match at North Iredell, one of several teams in the league that had never previously beaten the Vikes, needing a win to clinch the title knowing it had already been assured of sewing up at least one of the two postseason bids extended to FASC teams.

However, North Iredell prevented the Vikes from cornering the crown as its expense, using a three-goal flurry in the second half to break away from the 1-1 tie and slap the first league loss on South Iredell in over two years.

The Raiders were forced to play some hard-hitting soccer in order to secure the win, as a pair of South Iredell players were knocked from the game by injuries.

One of these was second-season

goalkeeper Jackie Wallace, who exited the game after a collision with the score tied at three.

South Iredell took a 2-1 lead after one period of play, thanks to a pair of goals by David Deibel.

For the first of the few times in their history, the Vikes were out-shot, as North fired 36 shots on goal to only 16 managed by the Vikings.

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NOTICE

As Chief of The Mooresville Fire Department for 18 of the 38 years I served the people of Mooresville day and night.

I now ask the citizens of Mooresville for a few moments of your time and vote for:

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Robert N. (Bob) Randall

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