

Devils Open New Season By Hosting New Opponent

The alarm clock ringing in the start of their new football season isn't set to go off until Friday night.

But Mooreville's Blue Devils, too keyed up to sleep, are already wide awake and eagerly awaiting their campaign's sunrise.

"We had our best practice of the season Monday," praised Steve Young, into his fifth season as the Devils head coach. "You can tell just by looking at them that they're ready to play."

And, after resting on the season's official first weekend for perhaps the first time over, that's exactly what the Blue Devils will do Friday, kicking off their season as well as the extended Labor Day holiday by entertaining schedule newcomer Mt. Pleasant.

Mooreville, which observed its lone open date last weekend, will host the 2A Rocky River Conference-member Tigers at 8 p.m. Friday in the Mooreville Stadium to open 10 straight weeks of regular-season play.

"It seemed a little strange," admitted Young, "not playing that first Friday of the season. But we've been able to use the extra time to our advantage. Everything hasn't been so rushed. It has given us time to get everything ready."

That preparation will be tested to the limit this week, when Mt. Pleasant, coming off a season-opening, 19-6 loss to Central Cabarrus, prows into town to open the football season between the intra-class schools.

Unlike last year, Mooreville is boosted this season by a host of experienced players, with 15 seniors listed on the roster. A lot is being expected from those class of '88 representatives, who are joined on the team by only four juniors, a dozen sophomores and nine green freshmen.

Members of each class have earned varsity status this year because, as was the case last year, the lack of numbers has once again bit into the team's development process, so much so that plans for a junior varsity team have been shelved for this year.

But among those present on the varsity are 15 returning starters, each of them with sites set on making advances for last season's disappointing, 2-8 overall showing, including a frustrating, 2-0 record during Mooreville's second season of play within the established Southern District VII Conference.

With that change in mind, on offense, the Blue Devils have deserted the ground-oriented, split-back year attack used last season in favor of the more versatile I-formation, one that will make better use of its backfield experience.

On defense, Mooreville will again employ eight-man front alignment, complementing the four down linemen with just as many linebackers and a three-man defensive backfield.

Among those players manning spots on both sides are as many as nine players who could see action both ways.

"Everybody basically has an offensive and defensive position," explained Young. "We figure we've got 20 players who will do the majority of the playing. They'll be getting rest for a few plays here and there, but we just don't have the numbers to let many of

them go only one way.

Back to guide the offense in this his second starting assignment is quarterback Chris Sherrill, at 5-9 and 157 pounds who is only a junior.

Sherrill will be joined in the backfield by senior tailback Tommy Blakeney, a 5-10, 188-pound senior, who rushed for over 1,000 yards as a sophomore but was slowed by injuries last season. Blakeney has over 1,600 yards to his credit in what amounts to a season and a half worth of games.

Also in the backfield will be either junior Andy Phillips, 6-1 and 179 pounds, or sophomore John Linker, 6-2 and 190, at the fullback slot.

Anchoring the receiving corps will be senior John Alexander, 6-1 and 152 pounds, who moves from the backfield, where he started last year, to split end. Anthony Harper, a 5-9, 167-pound sophomore, will be at flanker, while Tod Alexander, a 5-9, 182-pound senior who sports only one name with the first string split end, will start at tight end.

The offensive line will be headed by the return of senior tackle Ricardo Vargas, a 5-11, 217-pound backer for his third starting nod. It will be joined by classmate Chuck Linker, 6-1 and 200 pounds, at the other tackle, and guards Ron Carroll, a 5-9, 173-pound senior, and either Rodney Wilson, a 6-1, 200-pound senior who's nursing an injury, or Cliff Powers, a 5-10, 180-pound senior. Junior Tom Boyles, 6-1 and 166 pounds, will again operate at center.

As many as nine offensive starters are expected to remain on the field once the ball changes possession.

On the line, Vargas and Chuck Linker will clog holes as tackles, with Wilson and Phillips containing runners at the defensive ends.

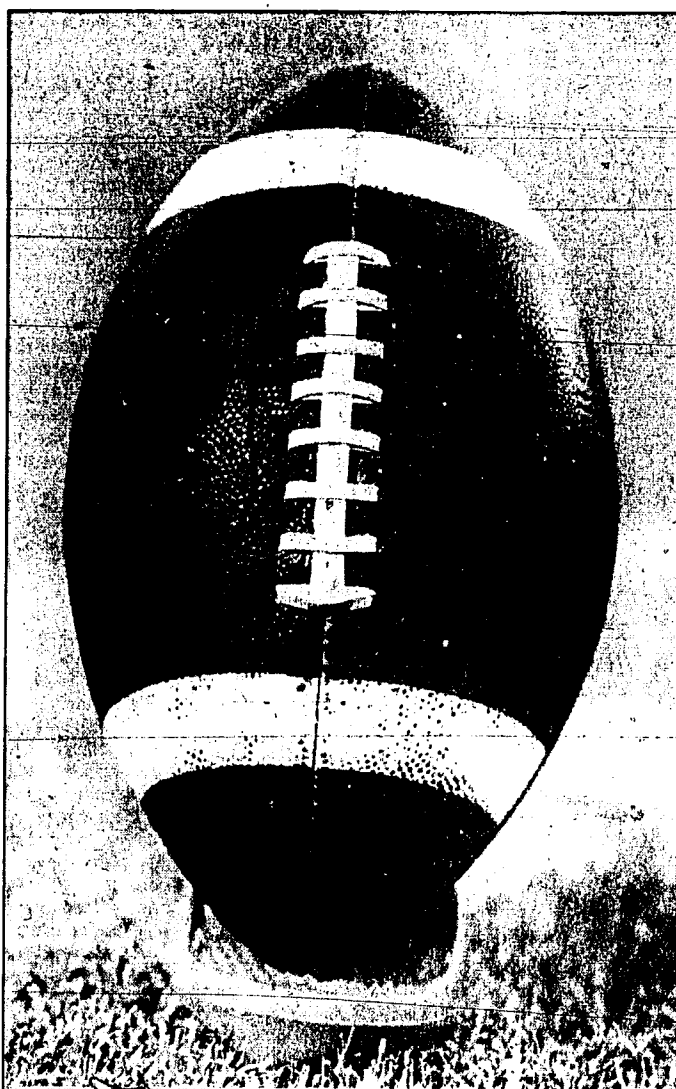
The linebacking crew, will consist of insiders John Linker and Carroll, with the new faces of Brian Weatherman, a 5-11, 158-pound senior, and Eric Blackwood, a 6-0, 181-pound senior who transferred here from South Rowan, manning the outside posts.

The defensive backfield appears to be the Devils strong point, spearheaded by safety Tod Alexander, who plucked a school record 10 interceptions last season, four of them coming in one record-setting fourth quarter.

Cornerbacks Harper and Alexander, both of whom saw action in those spots last season, are also back to tighten the team's pass-defending troop.

Mooreville's specialties will be handled by a pair of two-sport, same-season seniors, as both James Gallimore and Frank Matthews will take time out from their duties as co-captains on the Blue Devils soccer team to handle the place-kicking and punting chores, respectively.

After opening the season at home against Mooreville, Mooreville takes the road for two straight games before returning home Sept. 25 to open SD-7 play against pre-season league favorite Maiden.



"We had our best practice of the season Monday. You can tell just by looking at them (the players) that they're ready to play."

Mooreville head coach Steve Young

"We could have played last Friday. The kids are pumped up about the season. We're ready to see what we can do."

South Iredell head coach Bill Mayhew

Waiting Is Over As Ready Vikings Christen Campaign

How ready are South Iredell's Vikings to play football?

They're so ready, they were ready to play last week, when they weren't even scheduled to.

That's how ready.

"We could have played last Friday," plugged the Vikings' Bill Mayhew, the school's only head coach and a veteran of 24 past seasons as a head coach who is just as eager as his players to kick off season number 25.

And that's precisely what the boys in dark blue and gold do, albeit a week later than they are accustomed to, this Friday when they make the trip farther south to battle the host Buccaneers of Charlotte Country Day.

After observing their lone open date last Friday, which marked the opening of the prep grid season across the state, the Vikings and Bucs get together to renew their annual rivalry, this one taking place on Country Day's home turf beginning at 8 p.m.

"Maybe it's the extra week," shrugged Mayhew, "but whatever it is, it's made them more ready to get started. The kids are pumped up about the season. We're ready to see what we can do."

And with good reason.

Last year, the Vikings enjoyed unexpected success, winning all four non-conference games and fashioning a 7-3 mark overall in what was supposed to be a rebuilding season.

South, which finished with a 3-3 conference record, wound up missing out on a coveted postseason bid only by losing its season finale.

This year, with 21 letterman back, including a number of starters in key positions, South Iredell emerges as one of the early top picks within the seven-member Foothills Athletic Conference.

With its program again being enriched by the fielding of a junior varsity team, the South Iredell roster is packed with seniors and juniors.

A baker's dozen 13 overclassmen, all of them lettermen, dot the line-up, and most of them are being heavily counted on either as starters or top reserves.

A healthy number of nearly 20 juniors also appear on the team roster, which is complemented by the presence of four sophomores, one of the latter also a returning starter and letterman.

Deciding not to fix what isn't broken, South Iredell will again follow the same offensive and defensive schemes as last season.

The Vikings will engage in a ground-oriented year offensive attack, which does allow for some aerial surprises, and they will stick to the 3-3 defensive alignment that worked so well in grounding opponents' running attacks last season.

On offense, junior Mike Hobbs, at 160 pounds, steps in to attempt to fill the club's record void, including a 4-4 mark in his first year as a starter.

Hobbs gained some valuable game time last year, with his first official play being good for a touchdown against Mooreville. He

was also given the starting nod in the game against Statesville last year after an injury felled Harris.

Hobbs will be joined in an all-junior backfield by a pair of classmates, Omar Lenster, a starter last season as a sophomore, returns as the tailback, while Ray Grady, a 200-pounder, will receive the ball and blocking assignments as the fullback.

The offensive line, damaged by the loss of two starters via graduation, will be stiffened by the play of four seniors.

Chris Brown, at 170 pounds, will balance the line at center. He will be flanked at the guard spots by classmates Baron Smith, at 180 pounds, and Mark Overcash, at 215.

One of the two tackle slots will also be filled by a senior, he being 200-pounder Dick Campbell, while Chip Smith, a 190-pound junior, will man the other post.

A pair of juniors and a senior will form the receiving corps.

At split end will be that senior, 170-pound Gerald Childress. At flanker, Kenny Michaux, a 170-pound junior, will reside, while classmate James Hamilton, also at 170 pounds, will settle in at tight end.

Heading into this week's opener, only two linemen, lineman Campbell and runningback Grady, were assigned two-platoon duty.

Mayhew is hopeful that even those two will be able to receive needed change-of-possession rests as the season progresses.

Operating out of a five-down defensive front, Lanele Stewart, called up from the jayvees, will anchor that wall at nose guard.

Campbell and senior Chuck Harris, the latter at 200 pounds, will cave in holes as tackles.

Defensive end chores will be handled by senior Rob Woods, at 210 pounds, and sophomore Marcus Moore, at 185.

A pair of seniors and two juniors will combine to thwart enemy attempts through the airways.

Steve Pate, a 180 pound senior, will captain the unit as the strong safety, while classmate Duane Winford, at 160 pounds, will assist from the free safety spot.

Junior T.J. Davidson, at 180 pounds, and Jeff Blackwelder, at 155 pounds, will man the corners.

Handling the kicking game specialties for the Vikings this year will be punter Childress, place-kicker Hobbs, and kick-off whacker Woods, all three of whom also have other key duties.

After opening the season this week on the road at independent Charlotte Country Day, South Iredell returns to make its home-field debut the following week against West Rowan's Falcons.

Following a second non-conference road trip, the Vikings will then christen their third season as charter members of the FAC by traveling to do battle with the Greyhounds of North Surry Sept. 25.

Mid-Season Form Flashed By Rowdies

It may be early in the season, but you could never tell it by the performance of the 75 Iredell Select Soccer Rowdies.

Flashing mid-season form or better, the 75s advanced into the semi-final round of the prestigious Winston Salem Soccer Tournament a couple of weekends ago, leaving themselves little room for improvement as the fall soccer season still remains in its very early stage.

The Rowdies won two straight matches before suffering a one-goal defeat, a showing that still earned the locals a berth in the semifinals.

In that contest, which was the fourth one played by the Select crew over the course of the two-day affair, the Rowdies pushed the 1987 state champion Park Sharon Tornadoes third place finishers in a multi-state regional tournament in Dallas, Texas, into a pair of overtime sessions before suffering a one-goal defeat.

In the first half, Jason Dykes from his center forward position scored off an assist provided by wing Steven Craft. Kernersville tied the game during the first half with a late goal.

In the second half, Nicky Bost scored what amounted to the final goal for the Rowdies, with the assist being provided by Houpe.

Kernersville once again tied the score and the tide turned when goalkeeper Bowman's long, outside goal was nullified on an offside penalty.

The Comets then secured the win on a goal with inside a minute to play.

Rowdies extended their early tournament record to two straight wins with a 2-1 split blanking of the Greensboro Kickers.

In the second half, the team's only goal was provided by Bost, with a stiff defensive effort being turned in by all team members.

In the second half, Bost netted his second of the match with a head shot, set up by a perfect cross assist by Will Beard.

Goalie Hancock tied the defense with his play in the net, highlighted by a key save of a Kickers' shot.

Hancock received solid defensive support from Houpe, Patterson, Sanders, and Bowman.

In the team's opening match of the attraction, the Rowdies registered a 4-1 pounding of the Huntington Rangers.

In the first half, the Rangers

the second half. With about three minutes to play, Jason Dykes

Patterson seemed to score on an indirect kick, but the goal was nullified on a technicality.

At the end of the 60-minute bout, the score stood knotted at zero.

Being a semi-final game, a double overtime session was required.

After three minutes into the first extra period, Park Sharon scored what turned out to be the deciding goal.

Stellar defensive play was demonstrated by all the Rowdies, according to coach Denny Dykes, with goalie Rob Hancock, stopper Simon Houpe, and fullbacks Marcus Sanders, Patterson, and Sammy Bowman leading the way.

In the Rowdies' third game of the tournament, they suffered their first loss, dropping to a 2-2 decision to the Kernersville Comets.

Having a semi-final berth sewed up entering the game, the Rowdies displayed a conservative attack to conserve energy.

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Kneeling, L-R: McRee, Houpe, Bost, Sanders, Craft, And Beard; Standing, L-R: Kimbrough, Patterson, Bowman, Coach Dykes, J. Dykes, Yang, Hancock

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Boosters To Meet Tues., Not Monday

And on Labor Day, all will rest.

Even those members of the Mooreville Athletic Boosters Club. But on the day after, the Boosters will join practically everybody else in returning to daily routines.

And it is that, the Boosters will stage their regular meeting next Tuesday instead of Labor Day Tuesday night.

The meeting will get underway with the showing of the game film from Friday night's season-opener against schedule newcomer Mt. Pleasant at 7 p.m.

The business portion of the gathering will take place a half hour later.

The meeting will once again take place in the Mooreville Senior High School library.

All current Boosters Club members, as well as those interested in joining the supportive group, are urged to attend Tuesday night's session.

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Boosters To Sell Season Tickets Fri.

It's the deal of the season, and Friday night will be your last time to take advantage of it.

In an attempt to meet an increasing demand, season tickets to Mooreville Senior High football games will be on sale at the gate during the Blue Devil home and regular-season opener Friday against visiting Mt. Pleasant.

For \$15, the buyer will receive free admission and reserved seating to all five regular-season home football games.

However, for a mere \$3 more, the recipient will receive admission, reserved seating, reserved parking, and Mooreville Athletic Booster Club membership.

The slabs will be offered by current members of the Boosters Club at the gate Friday night outside the Mooreville Stadium facility.

"Season ticket sales are up this year over last year," revealed Steve Young, Senior High's athletic director and head football coach, early this week. "That's a very good sign."

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Mooreville Hosts First-Time Foe Mt. Pleasant In Opener

Mooreville's varsity football team rings in the new against the new Friday night by not only kicking off their 1987 season but also doing so against a newcomer on the playing slate.

The Blue Devils, on the idle list for perhaps the first time ever when high schools across North Carolina opened season on footballs last weekend, make both their own season debut and home debut Friday night by entertaining Rocky River Conference member and first-time opponent Mt. Pleasant.

While it will be the initial contact of the campaign for the Devils, coming off of and trying to forget last year's 2-8 overall record, this Labor Day Weekend's bout will be the second of the season for the incoming Tigers, who will be initiating the series against Mooreville.

Last week, in its own home and season opener, Mt. Pleasant never rebounded from giving up a touchdown runback on the game's opening kickoff to visiting Central Cabarrus and suffered a 19-0 defeat.

"Except for our mistakes,"