

Larry Sullivan's

SPORT SIDE

Spreading The Good Sports News

Touching All The Bases: This being what we call a "home-town newspaper," it's only fitting then that I'm a home-town sportswriter. With that in mind, let's take a look at some of the good things that are happening to our sports locally.

Members of Senior high's girls volleyball team are especially pleased this season. When Mooresville was realigned a couple of years back and dropped from 3A to 2A status, the volleyball team was one of the few at the school that was left without conference affiliation. The past two seasons, the Devilettes have dragged through a hit-and-miss schedule, facing other teams in other conferences on their open dates and facing them on non-regular playing days. As a result, the Lady Devils found themselves participating in matches with little but pride at stake.

Those days, though, are now behind us, as this year Mooresville is once again involved in a league. The schools within the Southern District Seven, Mooresville's conference, and the Rocky River Conference, another 2A circuit, that sponsor volleyball are now combined in one league, it being called, suitably, the RR-SD7. This means that the Devilettes have more riding on the outcome of designated matches. Should they finish with the best record of any team in the league, and they're already off to a 5-0 start, then they'll earn the right to advance into postseason play. Now that's something worth crowing about.

Hip, hip and hooray for Mooresville's Midget and Pee Wee football players. I've written here before how nice I think it is that we have managed to strengthen our youth football program. Consider this a simple restating of that fact.

Mooresville's two Midget and pair of Pee Wee teams christened play this past weekend in the Southland Football League. The first of two Saturdays of local play this season will take place this weekend, with eight games tabled for play on the Mooresville Stadium field. Action is slated to begin at 9 a.m., and the last games of the day features a 5:45 p.m. kickoff. Admission is \$1 for adults and 50 cents for children under 12, and concessions will be provided.

Midget football had been around as long as I can remember. This is our first year, though, of fielding teams at the Pee Wee level, which caters to players eight and nine years of age. Let's show our support by planning now to attend the games this weekend. Mooresville's four teams, the Pee Wee Terminators and Mavens and Midget Civitans and Black Knights, will be involved in the final four games. The first of those tees off at 2 p.m., followed at approximate one hour and 15-minute intervals by the remaining three.

Blue Devil football senior Tommy Blakeney, additionally saluted with a separate story last week following his stellar season-opening performance that helped turn the key to Mooresville's overtime victory past Mt. Pleasant, reaped even more harvest from his 172-yard rushing romp. Last Wednesday, Blakeney, a 1,000-yard rusher as a sophomore, became Senior High's first athlete ever to be recognized as the *Sundrop Player of the Week* by WBTB's Paul Cameron. During a college game last season, Blakeney purposely bumped into Cameron and warned him to be wary of the Devils this season and to keep one of the weekly player honors reserved for the upperclass runningback. Blakeney has already lived up to his personal promise. The team is next to follow.

You can't make a list of positive sports happenings in the area without making mention of Dale Earnhardt. Sunday, Earnhardt, a Lake Norman shoreline resident of the Doolie Community on the outskirts of town, pocketed his 11th win this season on the NASCAR circuit in dramatic fashion in the Wrangler 400 in Richmond. Earnhardt, who on the next-to-the-last lap dodged one of the biggest pileups in the history of the race, extended his whopping points lead towards a second straight Winston Cup championship to 608 points with the 31st victory of his career and sixth out of just as many tries on the

so-called short tracks, speedways of less than a mile in length. In more ways than one, Dale's in the driver's seat this season. A tip of my hat goes to Lakeside Cable, for providing us with a service that includes ESPN. The sports-oriented network has come through with yet another blessing, NFL Primetime, which on Sunday nights presents highlights of every pro football game played that day. You know how it is on most sports telecasts broadcasts by the likes of WBTB and WSOX. They show highlights of the Redskins and perhaps a few of the most spectacular plays from a select number of other games. But ESPN runs the gamut, flashing before us scenes from every blessed game. Now if I could just figure out how in the world to program my VCR so I could tape off the blame channel. If anybody out there could help me out here, I'd appreciate it.

And Now For The Not So Good: I'm surprised I haven't heard more about my comments made last week concerning the havoc that was wreaked by East Carolina University fans following the Pirates' upset win over the host Wolfpack of North Carolina State. To be honest they were a bit premature. In fact, I didn't realize the extent of what took place until after I wrote what I wrote. Over the weekend, I spoke with my former ECU roommate, who married another schoolmate of ours and still lives there in Greenville. He said that a number of college students there are pesting off their ECU bumper stickers and hiding the fact that the attend school there. They're embarrassed over the proceedings, and I admit, I am, too. Older brother Lynnie was there, and he tells of the actual fighting going on. And it wasn't all that one-sided, even if the visiting faithful did perhaps start the ruckus and cause the bulk of the damage. The cancellation of the series for at least one year definitely hurts ECU worse than NCSU. Maybe it will provide the lesson Pirates fans need to learn.

The weather sure isn't being cooperative when it comes to North Carolina hosting big-time golf tournaments. The PaineWebber World Seniors Invitational held in Charlotte this past weekend became the second professional tour happening in the state to be shortened because of rain. The Seniors event was lowered to 54 holes after Friday's 18-hole round was washed away. Remember the PGA's Greater Greensboro Open. It, too, lost a round because of bad weather. Come on, Mom Nature, give us a break.

What's all this about a NFL players strike. We look at our professional athletes to give us a break from the real working world, and they talk of walking off the field following this weekend's games. That's the kind of stuff we look forward to getting away from on our Sunday afternoons, and they're bringing it right back into our living rooms. They've got some nerve, wouldn't you say.

McMahon Is All He Seems To Be: The guy named Roy was probably just making small talk and telling me the biggest lie of his life, but I listened and believed.

Nephew Jeremy and myself were trapped at one of the kewpie game stalls during Saturday afternoon's downpour at the Irrell County Fairgrounds. Instead of just watching it rain, and waiting for a break during which to dash for the car, I forked over a couple of bucks and tried to stand this empty beer bottle up 10 times with a two-pronged plastic fork.

Roy had made it look so easy. I did it six times before running out of money. The rain was still steady so we stayed right there. While we waited, we talked. Roy claimed he was from Chicago, a big Bears fan, and had a wife who worked in a Windy City bar frequented by members of the football team.

"I've had Jim McMahon sitting down in my living room, drinking a beer and watching TV," Roy said. "I think he had his eyes on my old lady. He thinks he's God's gift to football." I don't know about Roy's story, but I do know about McMahon. He's got this image about being cocky and confident. If Roy's telling the truth, then maybe it's more than just an image. Maybe it's the real McMahon.

Teen Club Meeting Planned

The Mooresville Recreation Department hears and is doing its best to obey.

Following a number of inquiries into the matter, the recreation department is putting into gear plans for a Mooresville Teen Age Club.

Part of the initial plan is to stage an organizational meeting, open to and urged to be attended by area teen-agers and parents alike.

The gathering will take place Sept. 30 at 7 p.m. in the War Memorial Building.

"Basically," stressed Sandy Church, recreation superintendent, "we want to find out what they want. We want to hear from the teen-agers, and from the adults, too. We're definitely interested in helping start such a club. First of all, though, we want to talk about what it will involve."

For more information, contact Church or Wanda McKenzie, athletic director, at the recreation department office during regular hours, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

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