

Larry Sullivan's

SPORT SIDE

A Strike That's Good For Baseball

Touching All The Bases: It's been said that strikes are only good in bowling and army strategic maneuvers. Now we can add baseball to that list.

What's that, you say. You've known all your life that the last thing you want in that game is a strike, much less three of them that constitutes an out. Well, don't worry about re-learning the rules of the game. You're correct in your thinking concerning a strike in that sense.

What I'm specifically pointing to here is the senseless strike, as in employees rebelling against employers and boycotting their jobs, now underway by the National Football Player's Association, a worker's union, they tell us, that makes us realize that big-time sports is actually big-time business.

Be serious now, did anybody really miss football Sunday? You shouldn't have. All you had to do to completely forget about that sport was tune into any NBC affiliate, locally channels 36 out of Charlotte and 12 out of Greensboro, and catch the crucial battle between baseball's American League East Division members Toronto and Detroit. The bout was carried into the 13th inning before the guesting Tigers salvaged the final game of the fourth-game series with a one-run win. All four games in the series between the two teams embroiled in one of only two division title races that still exist were decided by a single run. And to think we would have missed it all had football been on the air.

Of course, if you needed a football fix, between innings you could have flipped to CBS, WBTV out of Charlotte around here, and caught a re-run of last year's Super Bowl. Now that would have been fun, wouldn't it. I wonder if the Giants won again? I wonder if Las Vegas released point spreads on the game? I wonder if there were any takers? I would guess yes as an answer to all three.

Pardon me, but I just can't understand the position of these players. No matter how hard they try to convince me that it's more than a game to them, I still consider them mere players instead of workers on the job.

As best as I can gather, the primary reason for the current strike is free agency. Simply put, the players want the right to offer their services to the team willing to play the most for them, and the owners are balking at the request. Can you beat that? Something that simple is behind all this ugliness. And grown men, which despite the fact that they make their living playing and organizing an athletic sport they tell us they are, can't get together on an answer.

It's the same kind of matter that has hit pro baseball so hard. As you might recall, recently an arbitrator, an unbiased outside judge, ruled that baseball owners did indeed conspire not to sign a host of free agents a couple of years back. This,

folks, is what our world of sports is turning to. We're having to pamper our athletes so we can meet their every demand.

They feel they are valuable, so they set the price for their services, and either that price is met or something isn't right. In the case of free agency, the players felt the owners worked together in not signing those available.

Now the football players want that same right. Can you see the cycle starting here?

Here's the way I see it. If a player chooses to travel the free agency route, he's on his own. Maybe, just maybe, he's not quite as unbeatable as he thinks he is.

There are many to blame for the situation. The bulk, of course, rides with the players themselves. They are the ones who have let their greed overcome their abilities to the point where we can hardly see the latter for the former.

Of course, team owners and even us fans have contributed heavily. Owners are the ones who pay the outrageous salaries to begin with, and in most cases they have to because of cries by the viewing public.

I'm beginning to wonder where it will all end. This is now the second strike by the NFLPA in the past five years. Will the threat of walkouts be with us forever? There is now talk of a possible players strike in pro basketball. And no real settlement has yet come out of the baseball ruling.

For the next few weeks, or as long as the baseball season continues, football won't be missed that much from this corner. But there will come a time when it will be. I'm glad to see that colleges have turned down the lucrative offers from the networks to switch their games from Saturdays to Sundays, but money always rules out in the end.

Stikes are still possible avenues of attack in both bowling and in war, and we'd sure like to be able to keep it that way, wouldn't we.

The Ben Bishop Behind The Ben Bishop: Read this, courtesy of Spencer McLaughlin, who is currently in the process of organizing what he says is his last area golf tournament, next month's Ben Bishop Bluebird Open.

Benjamin Marion Bishop was born in Woodstock, Ohio. His father was a teacher, coach, and superintendent of schools, so young Ben moved a number of times while growing up.

He was a good athlete and was active in most sports. After high school graduation, he got a job working nights at Bunting, Brass and Bronze, Co., in Toledo before enlisting in the U.S. Navy in November of 1943.

He received training in electronics and radio technology at Wright Junior College in Chicago, and through the University of Texas. He served aboard the USS LCI in the South Pacific and was honorably discharged in April of '46. He attended Ohio State University before re-enlisting in the Navy a year later.

While stationed at Little Creek, Va., aboard the USS LSMR 512, Ben met Rena Lou Howell of Mooresville, and they were married at Duke University Chapel by Dr. James T. Clelland in 1950. Their first child, Ben Jr., was born in Mooresville in March 1954. When the child was six months old, he went with his mother to join father and husband in Japan.

In June of 1955, Ben Sr. participated in the Life National PGA Golf Day, and he was awarded with a bronze medal inscribed "I beat the U.S. Open Champion, Ed Furgol."

Ben entered a golf tournament at Camp Drake, Japan, as the sole Navy entry. He won first place with a 54-hole total of 235, and he took second place in the handicap division with a 215. The tournament was played in August of 1955, at about the time his second child was born in Tokyo. With every shot he hit, Ben would say "Baby, this is for you."

A second tour of duty in Japan found the family enjoying Japanese culture, the lovely country side, and the making of many new friends, both native and from America.

Bishop was commissioned in June of 1957, and he took special training at Officer's Candidate School in Newport, R.I. He was assigned duty in Japan, Turkey, England, Cheltenham, Md., Great Lakes, Ill., Norfolk, Va., and Fort G.G. Meade, Md., where he retired in September of 1975.

He had always loved Mooresville and the people in this community, and the family bought a home here in 1976. He often said he was a "transplanted Yankee."

He accepted an offer with Bendix Field Engineering Corp., and he was assigned to Shemya, Alaska, for a year and a-half. He returned to Mooresville, where he died April 1, 1979.

Ben spent more than 30 years of his life in the military service of his country, in the US Navy, through World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam Conflict, and post-war service, starting as Boots and retiring as Lt. Commander.

His father wrote in his memoirs in 1979 that Ben was "a good athlete, a staunch Christian, and as fine a young man as a father could want."

His wife, Rena, is still an avid bird watcher. One day in the spring of 1978, Ben observed Eastern Bluebirds on the Mooresville Golf Course, and he purchased four bluebird boxes. He placed them on trees near the club house to encourage their nesting.

The next day, Ben reported that a pair of the birds were already building a nest in one of the boxes. This became the start of the Bluebird Trail that still exists in Mooresville.

So there you have it, the story of the Ben Bishop behind the Bluebird Tournament. Deadline to enter the individual-formatted affair is Sunday.

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SD-7's Red, Blue Devils Stay Perfect

While one family member fired shots at an outsider, and another sat on the outside looking in, it was otherwise brother against brother as the Southern District VII Conference opened intra-league varsity football play Friday night.

Of the four games that took place involving SD-7 clubs, three of them featured contests between circum cousins, while the fourth represented the final non-conference call for that league entrant.

All the while, the final league member was observing the league's last open date of the regular campaign.

In all four cases, SD-7 clubs collared wins, three of them coming at the expense of brother units.

Those pocketing wins in their conference debuts included Maiden, Newton-Conover, and Bessmer City, with initial league losses being planned on a respective basis.

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Elsewhere, West Lincoln climbed back to the 500 level with a non-conference win, while Bandy's became the league's final team to

christened their ventures into conference activity with victories.

County schools North Iredell and South Iredell joined city slicker Statesville in the winners' circle from Friday night, all doing so at the expense of hosting fellow circuit foes.

It gave Iredell County a perfect 3-0 showing, as the only county member losing FAC affiliation, West Iredell, was idle.

On the negative side, the home field advantage was of little advantage to the trio of losers in North Surry, and Wilkes Central, respectively.

It is assured that a similar occurrence won't take place this week, as a pair of Iredell County league members are slated to square off against one another.

This week's games find West Iredell calling on Statesville, Forsyth visiting South Iredell, and North Surry playing at North Iredell, with Wilkes Central taking the weekend off.

North Iredell's Raiders constructed a week's most overpowering production, as they upped their overall mark to 4-0, making them the league's only undefeated team, and shot to 1-0 in league play with a 3-0 thrashing of the host Forsyth Falcons. The defeat dropped the double F's to 1-3 overall, and 0-1 in the FAC.

Also on the road, South Iredell fourth offense had been looking for all season to slay a 3-13 decision

As is the case every week, all of this Friday's action features 8 p.m. starting times.

THIS WEEK'S FAC GAMES
Forsyth at South Iredell
North Surry at North Iredell
West Iredell at Statesville

Those interested in taking part can also do so by contacting the Iredell County Recreation Department, at 602-1018, and asking either Kim Burnette, or June Tutherford.

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Imps Ramble Past Rebels In Opener

It didn't take the Red Imps long to get over their first game jitters. Eleven seconds, to be exact. That's how much time expired on Decemba Connor's touchdown return of the opening kickoff in Mooresville Junior High football season-opener here last Wednesday.

At the 7:15 mark of the opening eight-minute quarter, both teams had already scored, with West Lincoln leading, 8-6.

From there, though, it was all Mooresville, as the Imps latched on three more touchdowns in the first half and accounted for the only points scored during the second half.

On overnights contributed to Odis Washam's first-place finish in this past week's Mooresville Tribune high school and college football contest.

Washam, of 803 Spruce Street, was one of two contestants to correctly identify the winners in all but one of the 12 games offered, forcing the first of possibly two tie-breakers to come into use.

But in that tie-breaker, which contestants are asked to predict the total number of points scored in one of the featured games, it went in Washam's favor, as the only other contest entry to miss only one game failed to make a total-points prediction.

The game used was the one between host Mooresville Senior High and visiting Maiden that kicked off Southern District VII Conference play for both dens of Blue Devils Friday night.

The guests lived up to their third place ranking in the state's three-point play contest, as they outscored the home team by a 21-14 victory, as the two teams combined for 45 points.

Washam, who joined a host of other entries in making the Maryland-North Carolina State game, predicted 29 points would be scored by the two teams to collect his \$12 cash prize.

As for C.C. Neilson, odds are that he will be remembered to fill in the tie-breaker blank, which he failed to do this past week. As a result, he is \$4 poorer, as he, too,

missed only the State-Maryland game but failed to write in a total point prediction.

As a result, Neilson claims the \$8 that goes to the second-place finisher.

Third place was also decided by a tie-breaker, as three entries missed only a pair of games.

The final cash prize of \$5 goes to Donna Donaldson, who was closest among that trio with her total points guess. Donaldson guessed 33 points would be scored.

Others who also hit 10 of the possible 12 winners but were off by more than 15 points with their total point guesses included Jimmy Lewis and Herb Swanson.

Teen Club Meeting Tonight

Hopefully, Mooresville's voice of concern, heard so loudly in the past, will be as profound tonight (Wednesday).

For that is when it will matter the most.

Acting on a number of suggestions from teenagers and adults, the Moore'sville Recreation Department is in the process of helping form a Teenage Club.

An organizational public meeting will be held tonight in the War Memorial Building to further discuss plans for the club.

That gathering will take place at 7 p.m.

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Washam Is Winner Of Grid Contest

No contestant this week wins any of the prizes offered to those who pick the exact score of the Mooresville game, because none of them did.

In addition to Maiden and North Carolina State, other winners from last week's games were North Surry, South Iredell, North Iredell, Statesville, Princeton, Clemson, Virginia, North Carolina, Wake Forest, and Mitchell County.

Contestants may enter as many as three times per week, but only one entry per player will be considered for a cash prize.

The entries must be received at the Tribune no later than 3 p.m. Friday.

On the Imps' next possession, tailback Connor, who finished witty 133 yards rushing, again responded on a near identical play, this one covering 50 yards.

On the final play of the first half, two-way Red Imp lineman Fred Brown, himself enjoying a spectacular game, came out with the grand prize in a mad scramble for the loose football, falling on it in the Rebel endzone of the host's fourth TD of the first half. The point after, a kick attempt, this time was blocked, leaving the Imps as 26-8 leaders at intermission.

After a scoreless third period, quarterback Erin Brandon, who was perfect in his passing for the game, dumped a pass to tight end Mac Quin, who then carried a couple of defenders into the West endzone to cap the game's scoring.

Patrick Shuts again was called on to attempt the point after boot, and this time his kick was on-target as he provided the winners with the final point.

Unity To Host Oct. Tournament

Softball and October don't usually go together.

Until now, that is.

Thanks to the Unity Church Recreation Center, softball will indeed be spotlighted during that mid-fall month.

That is the case as the recreation center planning to conduct a Men's, Open, Softball Tournament Oct. 2-4.

Entry fee is \$70 per team, and each team must furnish its own Blue Dot playing balls.

An organizational meeting will be held at the recreation center Sept. 30 at 7 p.m.

For more information, contact Carolyn Bentley, at 664-4066.

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Guin Carries Defenders With Him Into Endzone For Final Junior High Score

"The first time we tried to kick the extra point," explained Pinyan "we were one blocker short, and he's the one who blocked the kick. We wanted to see if we could do it with everything just right. Who knows, we may need something like that somewhere down the line this season."

Everything the Imps needed Wednesday, they got, with Connor and Brandon, the latter who was four-for-four in passing with a couple of tight end dumps and two passes to receivers coming out of the backfield, paving the way on offense, while Brown and fellow lineman Steve London opened and filled holes, depending on which team had the ball, all day.

Pinyan also acknowledged the efforts turned in by a versatile JJ Gray, who was called on to relieve three different players at as many positions and performed flawlessly each time.

"It was a total team effort," added Pinyan. "We were able to get every player some playing time, and that, too, could be valuable as we get deeper into the season. They should all have their first game experience behind them now. I'm sure all of our games will wind up like this."

Junior High is scheduled to be back in action (Wednesday) afternoon, when the Imps make their first road trip and tackle the first of only two non-conference teams appearing on the slate by facing North Rowan.

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