

## Imps Forced To Settle For Share Of Second In Bi-County Conference

In what turned out to be a season for sharing, Mooresville Junior High will gladly give up a share of what it got for a share of what it really wanted.

Instead, the football Red Imps are forced to settle with a third of the second-place honor finish they earned upon the completion of their sophomore season of Bi-County Conference play.

Assured of sharing either first or second place, depending on the outcome, entering Wednesday afternoon's season finale, the hosts were dished out a portion of the latter following a 22-0 loss administered by defending league titlist Statesville Junior High.

As a result, Mooresville ends the season with a two-game losing streak and finishes the year at 3-3 overall and 2-2 in the Bi-County Conference.

What we really wanted at the first of the season, "I admitted head

coach Joe Pinyan, who with the game closed out his first season at the Red Imp helm, "was the conference championship. We were still very proud of our guys. We were smaller and younger than just about every team we played, and we held our own in each game. We were beaten by some good teams, and we beat some good teams. Overall, we're satisfied with our season. We just hate it had to end on such a sour note."

Mooresville entered Wednesday's game needing a win over Statesville to salvage a tie for the league championship, something that Statesville has owned for now two consecutive years as a result of the three-touchdown win.

"We kept fighting to the end," added Pinyan. "We really wanted to put something on the scoreboard. We just weren't able to execute on offense, mainly because they wouldn't let us. We just couldn't match up with their strength on the line."

As a result, Mooresville winds up sharing second in the league with East Lincoln, which topped the

Imps a week earlier, and Lincoln, a team Junior High beat for only the second time in a number of years this season.

Mooresville's other league win was in its season-opener at home against West Lincoln.

"Outside the league, the Imps fashioned a 1-1 showing, beating visiting Hibernia to successfully celebrate Parent's Day and losing to a tough host North Rowan team that was able to combine both its seventh and eighth grade teams in the game."

Mooresville's three overall defeats were administered by teams that, combined, have but three losses between them.

"Looking back over our season," summed up Pinyan, "we feel like we accomplished most of our goals. We were in a position to at least tie for the league championship, we finished with a non-losing record, and we developed some solid, fundamentally sound football players."

He thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the support of the school, the parents, and the community. That helped make the season worthwhile.

Wednesday, the Imps, notorious all season for their late-game

surges, were never able to mount any type of serious threat after their opening possession, which ended with a fumble on the Statesville 25.

From there, the Bulldogs scored in three plays, and they then converted a Mooreville fumble for a TD on the Imps' next possession to take a quick, 16-0 lead in the opening period of play.

The guests tacked on another six-point lead in the third period, after which the conversion was stopped for the first time in the game, to account for the final winning margin.

As was the case all season, the home team's offense centered on running back DeComba Connor, who although was held scoreless still cracked the 100-yard rushing barrier for the fifth time in six games.

He fashioned a 128-yard effort in 15 tries, a production that pushed him to the 776-yard level for the season. Connor, understandably, wound up pacing the Imps in practically all of the offensive statistics, scoring 86 points with 11 TDs and a conversion to go along with his rushing total.

Tight end Mac Gulin was next in line in scoring, with three TD pass catches from quarterback Erin



Among A Sea Of Bodies, Duquette Cradles Ball In Search Of Running Room

Brandon, while Ronnie Duquette, Connor's backfield running mate, rushed for 277 yards for the season, including 32 in the season finale.

As a team, the Red Imps had a knack for falling behind early, as they were outscored for the season by a 76-64 count in the first half, and then charging late, reversing that with a 57-38 scoring advantage in the

second half, a stat boosted by a 43-14 cushion in the final quarter alone.

"That right there proves that we weren't a team that quit when it got behind," beamed Pinyan.

And Pinyan hopes it's a team trademark that carries over into next year.

The nucleus of that squad is already present, as this year's team

was split near evenly between seventh and eighth graders.

"We're already looking ahead to next season," nodded Pinyan. "We hope to build on the positive things that happened to us this year."

And in the process, the Imps may be able to follow a season of sharing with one highlighted by sole ownership of what they really want.

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## South Retains Soccer Title

The Foothills Athletic Soccer Conference title is South Iredell's until others can prove otherwise.

And for the fourth straight year, no other league member was able to provide any contradicting evidence to disprove what has become the obvious.

And so, while the rest of the league put the wraps on their regular-season Monday night, the Vikings enjoyed an open date during which to relax in their fourth consecutive year at the head of the FAC soccer class.

The Vikings shook off some late-season sluggishness, during which they suffered their first league loss as well over two seasons, and returned to their formidable playoff style with a 1-0 blasting past Salisbury's visiting Hornets Wednesday night.

That decision iced what the league already knew anyway, as with the win South closed its FASC season with a 10-1 record that sews up sole possession of the league hardware for an unprecedented third straight season.

The Vikings began their current four-year reign after finishing the runner-up during the conference's first season of play, they shared top honors with Statesville.

Since then, though, it's been all Vikings, who have now earned their third straight outright ownership of the crown despite the comings and goings of three head coaches during that time.

This year's mentor, Greg Crowley, becomes the first South Iredell soccer coach to stay with the team longer than a season, and he's a sure bet to place another coach of the year plaque beside the one he cornered last season as the Vikings' rookie instructor.

The Vikings, themselves, are also sure to hold their own in the league, wide recognition, fielding perhaps as many as five all-conference candidates, including a couple who could provide each other with the closest competition for player of the year honors.

Top on that list is Scott Cernowka, who shared last year's leaguewide accolade and is once again among the top scorers. This year, Cernowka climbed over the 100-goal mark in his career.

A stiff challenge is expected to be provided by goalkeeper Jackie Wallace, who was injured and unable to take part in last week's regular-season finale but, expected to return to Vikings in time for the playoffs that get underway later this month.

Despite Wallace's absence, the Vikings still rolled, as the hapless Hornets, who failed to register a win in their first season as members of the steadily-growing league.

The circuit began those five years ago with only five members, and it currently fields seven members, as Wilkes Central joined the family just last season.

South Iredell leaped out to a 4-0 lead at the half and continued to pelt the Salisbury net with shots. All the while, starting goalie Chris Gilleland, out there in Wallace's absence, recorded six saves in just a half's work before others pitched in to secure the shutout.

Offensively, the Vikes also featured their share of heroes, as Jarrod Doucette added the 13th tally, and he also picked up a couple of assists.

Smith, Spalding, Cook, Eric Smith, David Deltz, and Peter Weber were all each credited with an assist in the balanced attack.

The victory lifted South's league record to 10-1 and pushed its overall record to 14-1 heading into the first round of the state playoffs.

As the FASC champion once again, the Vikings will enjoy the homefield advantage through most of the playoffs, which they will open by entertaining Moore Parkwood, the second-place finisher in the Rocky River Conference, when postseason play begins shortly.

Last year, South Iredell, making its fourth straight postseason appearance, advanced into the second round of the state playoffs before being eliminated by eventual state champion Charlotte Catholic.

## Pee Wees, Midgets Rise To Bowl Day Occasion

There's nothing like rising to the occasion. And that's precisely what Mooresville's entire representing party managed to do Saturday in the biggest, single-day gathering within the Southland Football League.

In helping cap the town's first year as a member of the established youth-oriented football program, all four local teams, two each at the Pee Wee and Midget age divisions, snared Bowl Day victories in games that took place on the Bandys High School field.

On what was the final official day of play in the league, it marked the first time in the eight-week-long season that all four Mooresville teams pocketed wins on the same day.

At the Pee Wee level, the Burlington Mavericks topped Sherrells Ford, 12-0, and the Traxer Construction Terminators blitzed High Shoals, 28-0.

In the Midget division, the Black Knights edged Sherrells Ford, 12-8, and the Civilians capped the sweep in dramatic fashion with a double overtime, 12-6 tugging past High Shoals.

"This is a great way for us to finish," boasted Ron Ramsey, chairman of the Mooresville Midget and Pee Wee Football League commission. "The kids have worked hard all season, and this makes it all worthwhile. We're all proud of them and pleased about the way things turned out. It looks like we saved our best for last."

None of the Mooresville teams finished higher than fifth in the final eight-team standings in each division.

But, as a result of their wins Saturday, all four teams received trophies, and they will open their season with a game against the league's top team, the Mooresville Raiders, when the season resumes on Saturday.

Mooresville wound up bringing home more trophies than any other league member, as its four teams make it the league's largest participant in this local program's first season of Southland League play.

With eight games taking place Saturday, half of the hardy participants followed the games was earned by Mooresville teams.

The earliest party towards doing so was followed by the Pee Wee Traxer Terminators, who scored two touchdowns each in the first and

second half to power past the High Shoals Raiders in shutout fashion. Joshua Hopkinson enjoyed a stellar afternoon, as he accounted for all four six-pointers. The Terminus quarterback scored on a sweep and a fake reverse in the first half, and he tallied on a bootleg and short run in the second period.

Hopkinson's third TD run was set up by a 69-yard dash by Roderick Campbell.

Monty Knox and Nekema Alexander each pitched in offensively with a conversion run apiece, while Patrick McLaughlin, Sauran Howell, Chris Taylor, Bo Adkins, and John Mork all contributed to the win.

Another shutout was registered by a Mooresville team at the Pee Wee level, as the Mavericks recorded their second win of the season by the 12-0 count over Sherrells Ford.

Traxer scored the first score, and then, Leroy Ship returned the second-half kickoff for the second strike. Luke Ray, Gregory Kennerly, Lin Wheatbine and Brian Martin all played well for the Mavericks.

The Black Knights received a pair of scoring efforts from Damon McKee and forced three turnovers to waltz past Sherrells Ford, 12-8.

Jeff Warlick also contributed to the offense, while on defense, the Knights were paced by the play of Billy Fathera, who collared an in-

terception, Gene Clark, Ricky Gailmon, who blocked a punt, Kevin Broome, who recovered a fumble, and Charlie Dymond.

In perhaps the most exciting game of the day, the Civilians relied on a stifled defensive charge and a clutch offensive punch to squeak past High Shoals, 12-6, in two overtimes.

Daron Patterson scored the Civis only touchdowns in regulation, and he then accounted for the game-winning points by producing the only score of the two overtimes.

In between, the victors managed to hold off High Shoals for eight straight plays in overtime before securing the win.

On offense, in addition to Patterson, Joe Wilson, Jason Brawley, James Mayhew, and Ryan London chipped in, while on defense, the play of Patterson, Scott Vanderburg, Blake Crymes, Scott Hager, Joe Smith, and Ryan Whittington was crucial.

While play in Saturday's bowl games brought an official close to the Southland League season, Mooresville teams are slated for further duty by unofficial all-star teams.

A team of Pee Wees and Midgets were scheduled to face East Lincoln in a couple of game last (Tuesday) night.

The Pee Wee team will be formed simply by combining the entire

rosters of both the Mavericks and Terminators.

As for the Midget team, it will be formed by picking players off the Civilians and Black Knights.

Representing the Civilians will be Hager, Whittington, Crymes, Peter Sline, Robert Gray, Brawley, Lee Shoen, Patterson, Craig Benfield, Vanderburg, Mayhew, London, Michael Culbreth, Smith, and Dwan Lytle.

From the Black Knights, selected players include Morrison Brandon, Broome, Clark, Dymond, Fathera, and Warlick.

Several adult basketball leagues are being planned this winter, with action in all of them being scheduled to take place in the Woods School gym.

For the men, an Industrial-Church League, and an Open League will be in the works.

An Open League is also being planned for women.

The entry fee for all of the leagues is \$325 per team.

The total amount of the fee is due no later than Nov. 20.

Play must begin the first week in

December, so no extensions to the deadline will be made.

At least six teams are needed in each league.

All money will be refunded if fewer than the required number of teams are entered.

Industrial League teams must be made up entirely of players who are employees of the sponsor, and Church League teams must be made up of current church roster members.

A meeting will be held later to discuss rules, player contracts, and any other necessary items of concern for any and all of the leagues.

For more information on the adult basketball leagues, contact Wanda McKenzie, athletic director, at the sponsoring recreation department.

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