

Defense Helps Spur Lady Vikings To Season-Opening Basketball Win

Woman to woman, the Lady Vikings got down to some serious business last Wednesday night.

For on that Thanksgiving Eve, South Iredell's girls varsity basketball team, employing a scrappy woman-to-woman defense most of the way, pulled ahead early and stayed there to harbor a 51-51, season-opening victory over the hostessing Lady Mustangs of East Lincoln.

It was the initial game of the season for both teams, former same-conference opponents now housed in separate 3A circuits. South Iredell is a charter member of the Foothills Athletic Conference, while East Lincoln is one of the original members of the Big Six Conference.

The two schools competed on an twice-annual basis several seasons back when both were on the roster of the now-deceased Western Piedmont Conference.

It was the Lady Vikings of third-season head coach Sandy Torrence who made the most of the renewed acquaintances in the first of what will be two non-conference meetings between the two.

East Lincoln is scheduled to return the favor and visit South Iredell Dec. 15.

The guests shot ahead, 18-1, in the opening period and were never threatened, even though the hostesses managed to score the last eight points of the initial frame to pull to within 18-9 entering the second quarter.

The Lady Vikings maintained their early advantage through intermission, using a 15-11 scoring cushion during the second eight minutes of play to enter a 33-20 advantage at the break.

"We adjusted well at the start of the game," offered Torrence, attempting to breathe a new life into a girls basketball program that was desperately gasping for air when she took over the reins prior to the 1985-86 season. "We got that big lead, and that allowed me a chance to let everybody play. The man-to-man defense is something that we've been working on. We're at the point now where I feel like we can play it. We still had some defensive lead-ins, and our foul shooting and ball movement on offense needs a lot of work. Overall, it was about what I expected for our first game. We did some things well, but we still need a lot of work."

In the second half, the Vikings rested on their first-half laurels to protect their lead, one that was narrowed by two points with an 18-16 East Lincoln showing in the third period and then whittled to the final of 10 after the home team eked out a one-point, 33-32 cushion in the final stanza.

With eight of the team's 10 players—the same number Torrence fielded a year ago when the Lady Vikings constructed the decade's first non-losing season at the school—contributing points, three of them fashioned double-digit efforts, with fourth just missing that plateau by a field goal.

Regina Ikard, a junior, tossed in a game-high 16 points to lead all scorers. She was joined in the double-digit department by sisters Tonya, a senior, and Melissa, a junior, Davenport, who contributed 14 and 12 points, respectively.

All three of those players help make up the Lady Vikings' first-string frontcourt, which reflects the strength of this year's crew. "Our strength is definitely our inside game," noted Torrence, who guided the Lady Vikings to a 12-2 season last year and to a third-place finish in the final FAC standings. "We're going to need a little more offensive help from the outside, though, so we can open up our inside game a little more."

The top scorer among the back-courtiers was senior directing guard Gina Josey, who tapped home eight points in her seasonal debut.

Josey and Davenport make up half of this year's collection of seniors, as they join fellow upperclasswomen Janna Bell and Michelle Parton.

In addition to Ikard and the other Davenport, Sabrina Bertling and Perrie Grady also hail from the junior class.

One sophomore, Dana Torrence, and a freshman, Heather Woodfin, round out the well-represented

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Young Matmen Host Opener

Given his choices, Mooreville wrestling coach Scott Bruton would rather have a team that produces matches instead of one that looks good in practice.

And Bruton got his wish in the Blue Devils' grappling season-opener last week, a quad outing hosted by Senior High.

Even though the hosts dropped two of their three matches, they displayed skills previously unseen in a month's worth of pre-season workouts.

Mooreville opened its showing in the four-team affair by moving past North Rowan, 54-22.

From there, the match took an anti-home team look, as the Devils suffered a 44-25 loss to 4A South Rowan prior to wrapping up their performance with a 36-30 loss to Salisbury that was decided on the final weight class bout of the match.

Despite the 1-2 showing against some premier competition, Bruton, now in his fourth season as the head varsity wrestling coach, was impressed with his relatively young crew.

"We wrestled much better than I anticipated," revealed Bruton, who listed four freshmen and two other first-year grapplers among his top 13 in the quad outing. "Based on our practices, I expected us to be much less fundamentally sound than we were. We did some things well that we haven't been doing in practice. I guess maybe the guys were just waiting for the real thing. We were matched up against some good teams, so I was fairly pleased with our overall showing."

Mooreville played host to the event that featured on 4A team, in South Rowan, and a pair of 2A squads, in North Rowan and Salisbury.

Of that trio, Salisbury's Hornets entered the attraction with the majority of the attention, and they featured nine wrestlers back of last year's team that finished third in the 2A state finals.

"We knew going into the quad meet," addressed Bruton, who this year is being assisted by first-year coach Joe Pinyan, "that we were going to have our work cut out for us. The kids showed a lot of heart. If this is any indication, then we're expecting a successful season."

But even this year's team will have to exceed those expectations in order to match the accomplishment of the 1986-87 edition.

That team featured the school's first seed in scoring by the tournament, four-year starter Pete Hall, as well as another state runner-up, and a pair of regional champions. However, to help members of this year's team return to anchor this year's squad, and both performed accordingly in last week's season opener.

Scott Barrier, a third-year starter as a junior, and Chad Daniels, a senior also in his third season, both emerged victorious in all three of their matches, the only two to escape from the quad match unscathed.

The 3-0 Barrier, a third-place finisher in the state who pocketed 30 wins last year after a 10-win

freshman season, is on pace to become the school's first-ever 100-match winner, something that even Hall failed to accomplish.

Barrier, the team's 112-pounder after wrestling at a weight lighter last year, captured all three of his wins by pins to become the only Blue Devil to accomplish that.

As for Daniels, he, too, moved up a weight class to 13 pounds. Daniels followed a pair of wins by pins with a forfeit decision in his final outing to also close out the quad meet with a 3-0 record.

Daniels captured more than 25 victories last season and advanced to the state finals after finishing as a regional runner-up.

"Scott and Chad are our leaders this year," assured Bruton. "They both were there last year and know what it takes to be a winner. They're ideal examples for the other guys to follow."

In the match victory over North Rowan, there was a lot of following on the part of the hosts, who took advantage of a player-shortened

team on the part of the Cavaliers to roll to the 32-point win.

Barrier at 112 pounds, Blaine Brawley at 125 pounds, Daniels at 130 pounds, and Brian Weatherman at 150 pounds, all claimed wins by pins to set the initial pace.

Chris Benson, at 135, Ricky Greene, at 140, Bob Dyson, at 170, Scott Humphrey, at 180, and Darrin Bridges, at 190, all were awarded wins by forfeits.

In the fight against South Rowan, Mooreville's 22 points were accumulated on pins by Barrier and Daniels, decisions by Brawley and Benson, and a draw recorded by Johnny Redford at 150 pounds.

In the final against Salisbury, Mooreville came within a weight class of tying the reigning three-place state finishers.

Gaining the points for the hosts were Barrier, Greene, and Redford, all with pins, Jeff Coomb, at 103 pounds, with a decision, a draw fought by Brawley, and a forfeit awarded to Daniels.

The quad match opened the non-

conference portion of the season for the Devil grapplers, who this year are welcoming the return to conference affiliation after patrolling the wrestling scene the past two years as independents.

Mooreville is one of three schools hailing from the Southern District VII Conference that will join forces with four members of the 3A Big Six Conference to form a combined league.

In addition to Mooreville, SD-7 members West Lincoln and Newton-Convener will join charter BSC members West Caldwell, Hibernia, St. Stephens, and East Lincoln to form the combined conference.

Although it will be considered a 3A league, the 2A members will advance against others in their own classification once postseason wrestling begins in late February.

Mooreville, now 1-2 for the season, will make its next appearance this weekend as one of the eight teams competing in Saturday's annual North Mecklenburg Tournament.

South Iredell's junior varsity basketball Vikings were more than thankful than most for Thanksgiving.

For that Thursday, along with Sunday, provided the jayvee Vikings with their only days of complete rest from on-the-court action during the most recent extended holiday break.

That was the case as the Baby Vikings first christened their 1987-88 campaign on Thanksgiving Eve Wednesday evening prior to competing in a four-team, two-day rare junior varsity tournament over the weekend.

South closed out its busy period on a new era under first-year head coach Tony Helms, emerged from the hectic session with a 2-1 record, sandwiching the pair of wins around that single loss.

South closed out its busy period with a victory in Saturday's tournament consolation game with a 64-50 downing of Foothills Athletic Conference opponent North Surry.

"That victory followed by a day the Baby Vikings' first defeat of the year, an 86-52 setback delivered by tournament host and eventual champion Wilkes Central, another member of South Iredell's conference.

The jayvees opened their season the previous Wednesday with a 45-38 stopping of host East Lincoln, a victory that provided South Iredell with a split of the four games—two at the jayvee level and the other two at the varsity level—with the Mustangs.

South Iredell was among the four teams to participate in Friday and Saturday's tournament, offering the team a rare opportunity. Most tournaments in and around the area are geared only for varsity squads.

In addition to South Iredell, host Wilkes Central and North Surry, all hailing from the FAC, the fourth team present at the affair was Winston-Salem Carver.

The first annual tournament was staged as a benefit fundraiser for a local charity, and it is expected to become a yearly post-Thanksgiving event.

South Iredell managed to even its tournament record at 1-1 thanks to its four-point win Saturday over North Surry, whose Greyhounds were defeated in the attraction's opening round by W-S Carver.

In the triumph, the Vikings were led in scoring by the tournament-high 31 points chucked in by guard Bobby Renwick. Chad Gallyon, who along with Renwick provided South with a solid one-two punch throughout the first week of play, tossed in a team second-best 11 points in the win.

Friday's tournament opener wasn't quite as successful for the Vikings, who were matched up against the hosting Eagles of Wilkes Central.

It is WC's jayvee team that has been consistently feeding the school's varsity program, making it one of the premier outfits in the FAC.

Wilkes dominated the battle from the beginning and wound up as the 34-point winners, but not without holding Gallyon to a team-high 23 points. Renwick warmed up for his event-high total by buckling eight.

"It was a well set up tournament," summed up Helms, looking over the season in place of Ron Shipe. "It was a great way for us to get some experience playing under pressure. We were also able to get an early look at a couple of the teams we'll be playing later in the conference."

In South's season-opener at East Lincoln Wednesday, where and when all four games were staged in the Mustangs' gym, the Baby Vikings made a success of their debut with the seven-point verdict.

Gallyon and Renwick combined for more than half of the team's total, with the former finishing with 14 points while the latter contributed 13 to the winning cause.

With that win, the jayvee Vikings joined the varsity Lady Vikings in taking opening wins.

South Iredell's jayvee team entered this week with a couple of more games on tap.

The Baby Vikings were slated to make their home debut last (Tuesday) evening by hosting Central Cabarrus, one of four games unfolding on the South Iredell gym floor.

South then returns the favor on Friday by visiting the identically-named Vikings to close out the non-conference, home-and-home series with Central Cabarrus.

The team returns home for the second time within a week by entertaining Bandys the following Tuesday.

Unlike in past seasons, when the jayvees have played at opposite sites on same playing dates as the varsity squads, a number of this year's attractions will be held on the same day, meaning that all four games will be held at the same site on the same day.

Thanksgiving Short Holiday For JV Vikes

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