

Larry Sullivan's

SPORT SIDE

Devils, Vikes Making Moves

Touching All The Bases: The end of the 1990-91 high school sports year is in sight. It could possibly turn into a happy ending for both Mooresville's and South Iredell's athletic programs.

Entering the third and final spring leg of the three-phased prep sports year, South Iredell shared top billing alongside perennial power Statesville for the Foothills Athletic Conference's coveted Wachovia Trophy. Meanwhile, Mooresville stood nearly as tall within the nine-member Southern District Seven Conference, trailing yearly dominator Newton-Conover by a scant three points in the Trophy's year-long, all-sports race.

Both the home of the Vikings and Blue Devils are performing well enough in the spring to perhaps win a Trophy for either or both.

The Wachovia Trophy, for those who may not know, recognizes high schools that have the best overall sports programs for boys and girls within respective conferences. It is the smaller sister award to the statewide Wachovia Cup. The more prestigious Cup is awarded to one school in the 1A, 2A, 3A and 4A classifications for top overall athletic performances.

This marks one of the few times both Mooresville and South Iredell, both with a third of the current spring season still remaining, have been in the running for individual conference-wide attention. Neither has ever won a Trophy while participating in their current conferences.

It would be quite a boom for either.

Statesville has emerged as the dominating force in the FAC, winning the Wachovia Trophy that recognizes the circuit's top athletic program each year since the 3A league's existence. Not to deny Statesville its due, but it's always nice to see a fresh face atop the leader board. South Iredell managed a share of first-place in golf for its best showing this spring. Second best was the second-place finish turned in by the boys track team. If the Vikes and Vikettes can make some noise the rest of the way in tennis, softball and baseball, the chance is there for them to shake loose of the tie that existed between them and the Greyhounds and Lady Greyhounds and bring home the Trophy.

The road appears much more shakey here in Mooresville. The home of the Blue Devils entered the final spring fling trailing powerhouse Newton-Conover by three points, 108 to 105. That meant that Senior High had to out-perform the Red Devils in just about every spring sport in order to make up the difference.

Mooresville managed the feat in golf, winning the SD-7 championship for the first time in five years. The school is also on tap to make up points in softball and baseball. However, shortcomings in boys and girls track and tennis, areas in which Newton-Conover always excels, may be too much for the locals to overcome. We'll just have to wait and see.

As in most conferences, points for the Trophy in both the FAC and SD-7 are awarded based on participation and standings in conference play. Mooresville is hampered by the fact that neither girls or boys soccer, a sport fast on the rise at Senior High, count in SD-7 point challenges. This year, that would probably be enough to push the locals over the hump.

There's still some spring left in both sports programs. The chance is there for either or both of them to make their move. More power to them both.

While on the subject, another note in passing. In the statewide Wachovia Cup battle, only the FAC's Statesville is mentioned. The Greyhounds rank sixth statewide in the 3A class. No other FAC school appears among the top 10, and

no SD-7 school is in the 2A class' top 10.

Camping Under An Infield Fly: The comings and goings of a single player. Nevertheless, the success of Mooresville's high school team, and this summer's American Legion Mooresville Moors, both were dealt severe blows in one failed swoop the middle of last week.

The Blue Devils Decomba Conner, a hard-hitting speedster who was knocking the cover off the ball during the prep season to emerge as one his squad's top hitters both for average and power, broke a hand in two places during a theft of second in a SD-7 game at Bessemer City last Wednesday night. Perhaps coincidentally, Mooresville went on to drop its second straight league game and now borders the line of missing out on the state playoffs.

Conner, a pivotal member of last year's highly successful American Legion squad, underwent surgery the morning of Senior High's prom Friday. He is expected to be adorned in a cast for the next four to six weeks, and be out of action for approximately two full months. That means he'll miss the remainder of the prep season and all of the upcoming legion campaign.

Whitney Meadows, coach of the Moors, has the luxury of scouring the countryside in search of a replacement for Conner. Joe Pinyan, Mooresville's first-year mentor, has no such luck. Both are in the midst of the most crucial phases of their respective team's play.

For Meadows, he's watching players in anticipation of his team's upcoming season that is just three weeks away. He's attending games involving players who, if interested, are eligible to play for the Moors. Post 66 opens its season later this month.

For Pinyan, his team's time is now. Mooresville has been among the league's top three teams practically all season. It's those top three who advance to the state playoffs. Conner was a vital cog in the machine. The Devils are now battling for that third playoff spot. Last week's two league setbacks further dented their hopes. Entering this week's agenda, the Devils had but four more scheduled games, and perhaps a fifth if a rained out game against Maiden is needed, to smooth out those dents.

Pivoting On A Double Play: We've already reached the point in golf and track. Tennis is next. Softball and baseball aren't that far behind.

The end of regular-season play, and the beginning of postseason, is here or soon will be for all the spring sports. Time sure flies when you're having fun.

Golf teams and qualifying track personnel advance to state-level competition this week. Tennis teams make the move following league tournaments this week. As for the diamond squads, they still have a couple of weeks of regular play left before making the next step, for those eligible.

And Monday marked the midway point of spring. I swear it's later than that.

Cleaning Out The Locker: Johnny Hayes, veteran scorekeeper, bookie (as in keeper of the league books) and general field overseer during Men's Open Softball League play, enjoyed a week-long vacation just prior to cranking up the league's spring season last week. Little did he know how well he was preparing himself.

At Hayes' regular retreat, on the North Carolina coast, he and wife Lori witnessed first hand a flood, a hurricane, and an airplane crash.

"It was quite a week," assured Hayes, back at his regular post fieldside during opening-week contests one day last week.

The experience will probably serve Hayes well. He never knows what to expect during a long season of keeping score at the adult softball games. At least now he knows that he's prepared for anything that might fall his way.

SISA Squads Stay Busy Catching Up, Playing

It's a busy time of year for the South Iredell Soccer Association. Not only did SISA teams spend the past week adhering to regular-schedule play, but several of them also engaged in additional games as part of a make-up schedule due to games being earlier lost by rain.

Teams in all four age divisions were in action over the weekend as a result of regularly-scheduled matches.

In addition, teams in three age levels were involved in an array of make-up games played throughout the week.

In U-5 play this past weekend, the Brawley Steamers were the SISA's lone winners, racking up a 1-0 win over Cool Springs. Charles Robinson tallied the game's lone goal, off a feed from Marshall Hitchcock, while Hitchcock, Nathan Dyckes and David Lackey all shared time as goalies.

In U-10 play last weekend, the Brawley Cougars swamped the West Roadrunners, 13-0.

Nine different players notched goals, as Mark Degan, Mark Davis, Josh Graves, Nick Rhoton, Stuart Cullinan, Luke Ford, Kelly Dowdy, Nick Shuemaker and David Holbrook all contributed offensively.

The Brawley Panthers battled the Troutman Rowdies, to a 2-2 tie, as Michael Cook and Sammy Jepko each scored for the Panthers. Derek Hager and Seth Graham each tallied as keepers.

The Brawley Tigers dropped a 2-1 decision to the West Bobcats, as Ben Lane provided the offense, assisted by Rob Voegel.

In U-12 play over the weekend, the Brawley Rowdies topped Har money, 2-0, as Brad Barger and Dustin Bumgarner accounted for the scoring with a goal apiece, off assists from Web Brannon and Jonathan Baker, respectively.

Jason Harwell, Barger and Brannon combined efforts to post the shutout in goal.

In U-14 play Saturday, the Brawley Blast was shutout by the Troutman Terminators, despite the efforts of keepers Luke Ray and Matt Stewart.

In make-up action involving U-10 teams, the Brawley Panthers bruised past Ebenezer's Hawks, 11-0, as Cook unloaded a hat trick. Five goals were scored for the Panthers, while Clayton Boan chipped in with two goals, and Kaleb Walker, Hunter Levan, Graham and Eric Kerr all kicked in one apiece. Jepko and Graham again shared time as goalies.

The Brawley Cougars dropped a 2-1 decision to Union Grove, with David Teal scoring for the Cougars.

And the Brawley Tigers were shutout by the Troutman Rowdies, 3-0.

In U-12 make-up action, the Rowdies were in action twice and won them both.

They bested the Brawley Sting, 3-0, behind single goals apiece from Harwell, Baker and Bumgarner. Barger, Harwell and Brannon all shared time as keepers.

The also topp the West Bobcats, 8-2, as Baker, Bumgarner and Harwell scratched out two goals apiece, and Adam Hilton and David Hamblin each contributed one. Barger and Brannon worked a half each in the net. And in U-14 action once

delayed by rain, the Brawley Bluebirds topped the Brawley Bulls, 2-0, courtesy of a pair of goals by Shea Alexander and the goal-tending efforts of the winners' Matt Stewart.

SISA teams, competing in a county-wide recreational level program conducted through the Iredell County Recreation Department, complete the regular season portion of their schedule with a full slate of games this weekend.

The SISA teams play their home games at the field beside Brawley Middle School, which serves as their headquarters.

Pee Wee's Phillies Stand Tall

There was nothing pee wee about the Phillies during the opening week of Pee Wee Baseball League play.

During a week that saw all eight teams in action at least once, the Phillies stood the tallest by emerging as winners of both their opening-week contests.

The Phillies were the only ones to play in and win as many as two games.

The Bandits and Athletics were each victorious in their lone outings.

The Cardinals and Cubs both split first-week appearances, while the Astros, Mets and Pirates were all denied opening-week wins.

Home runs were the rule instead of the exception, as each of last week's six games featured multiple outputs of four-base knocks.

Helping the Phillies to their two wins were the dingers smashed by teammates Chris Var of Addison Moore, Brandon Evas and Dwight Sloan.

Others with homers last week included the Cardinals' Justin Horton, Chris Winford, Brandon Winford and Luke Patterson, the Bandits' Jacob Lambert, Duane Barnes, Chad Byers, Tressin Young, and Joshua Burchett, the Astros' Eric Barnhardt, the Cubs' Chris Barnhardt and Walt Hitchcock, the Athletics' Jonathan Holder and Andrew Belk, and the Pirates' Nick Rhoton.

Of the group, the Cardinals' Horton grabbed first-week honors, smacking three homers in one game and adding two more in another.

Pee Wee League action, conducted through the Mooresville Recreation Department, takes place on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings, with all games taking place at Edgemore Park.

Players making up the league are those boys and girls born between Aug. 1, 1982 and July 31, 1984.

Pee Wee League Standings

Phillies	2-0
Bandits	1-0
Athletics	1-0
Cardinals	1-1
Cubs	1-1
Astros	0-1
Mets	0-1
Pirates	0-1

On The Rebound, Baseball Vikes End Season-Long FAC Losing Skid

With nowhere to go but up, South Iredell's baseball team did just that last week.

After hitting rock bottom the

previous week by suffering three league defeats — including one after being held hitless — the Vikings vented season-long frustrations on a pair of Foothills Athletic Conference opponents.

Vikes Are Second, Vikettes Fifth In FAC Track Finale

The Foothills Athletic Conference's track and field season is all over but the shouting.

And South Iredell is doing a little bit of the shouting.

What noise South Iredell did make in last week's annual conference championship meet, held at Statesville Senior High, was accounted for by the Vikings.

For it was they who used one of the meet's three double winners and four first-place finishes over all to manufacture a second-place finish in the boys division.

For the girls, they managed but a pair of first-place finishes, both by the same team member, and wound up fifth among the six teams competing.

In the meet staged throughout the day Wednesday, the Vikings picked up 120 points to finish behind meet host and champion Statesville, which piled up 163 points.

Rounding out the standings among the boys teams, Wilkes Central, third, with 83 points, West Iredell fourth, with 81 points, North Surry fifth, with 51 points, and North Iredell, with 39 points.

In the girls division, the hostessing Lady Greyhounds also made tracks around their familiar home facility to post a first-place finish, doing so with 160 points.

West Iredell and Wilkes Central shared second place, each with 112 points, followed, in order, by North Surry, with 102 points, South Iredell, with 96 points, and North Iredell, with 81 points.

South Iredell featured a pair of double first-place winners in the meet, one each among the boys and girls.

For the boys, Terry Kard turned in a pair of gold medal performances, placing first in both the high jump and the 400-meter dash.

For the girls, both of the Vikettes blue ribbons were worn by Christie Hicks, who again dominated the league's long-distance events. Hicks, who has already qualified for the state regionals, won both the 1,600 and 3,200-meter runs to account for half her team's total points.

The Vikings added two more first-place finishes to boost their showing.

Elmer Barber championed the field in the 110 hurdles, while a four-player team combined forces to top the event in the 1,600-meter relay race.

South Iredell's fellows also added five second-place finishes to their showing.

For the Lady Vikes, in addition to the two firsts turned in by Hicks, their next best showing was a couple of third places.

The league meet was used to declare the FAC's official team and individual championships.

Statesville's boys and girls teams were each determined to be this year's track and field champions, while all those winning first-place honors in the respective events were included on the all-conference team.

While participation in the conference meet brought the league portion of the track season to a close for this year, such was not the case for those individuals ad-

vancing into state competition.

Those competitors, with qualifying times in the running events and distances in the field attractions, are to move on to the state regionals this week. From there, those advancing will move into the 3A state track finals, set to take place later this month.

Bronco's Dodgers Win Two

The Bronco Baseball League Dodgers lived up to their name last week, dodging defeats to emerge as the hottest of the league's opening-week performers.

The Dodgers dodged the bullet twice to wind up as the only league member to play in and win as many as two games during the circuit's initial week of play.

As a result, the Dodgers sit at the head of the class entering this week's play.

In a week that saw all eight teams in action at least once, and featured half the league appearing twice, the Dodgers topped them all, aided by one of the league's two forfeits that marred opening-week play.

The Cubs, Phillies and Yankees were all winners of their lone scheduled affairs to share second in the very early standings.

The Astros were forced to settle with a first-week split, while the Breers, Braves and Mets all were denied opening wins in their only showings.

Of the six games scheduled, only four were actually played, with two of the contests being ruled forfeits. The Mets and Braves each surrendered a game by forfeit.

While the Dodgers were grabbing team honors, the individual spotlight beamed on a couple of players.

One was the Astros' David Neill, who picked up four hits in as many plate appearances to emerge as the only player to rack up that many hits in a single game.

As for the league's display of power, the Cubs' Bobby Cummings and Brewers' Laron Caldwell supplied it, each doing so by belting a home run.

Play within the boys Bronco League, conducted through the Mooresville Recreation Department, takes place on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings.

All contests take place at Magia Field.

Players in the league are those boys born between Aug. 1, 1976 and July 31, 1978.

Bronco League Standings

Dodgers	2-0
Cubs	1-0
Phillies	1-0
Yankees	1-0
Astros	0-1
Brewers	0-1
Braves	0-1
Mets	0-1

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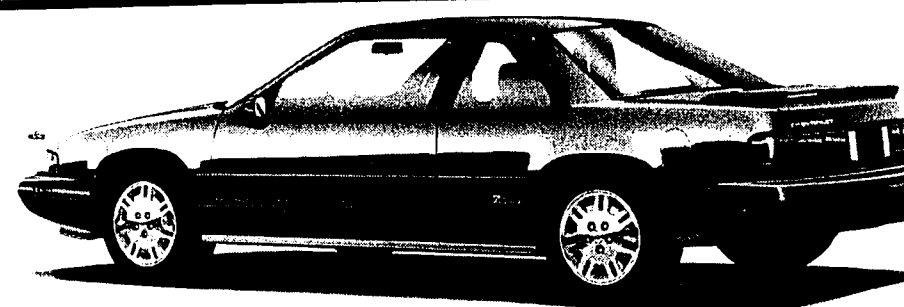
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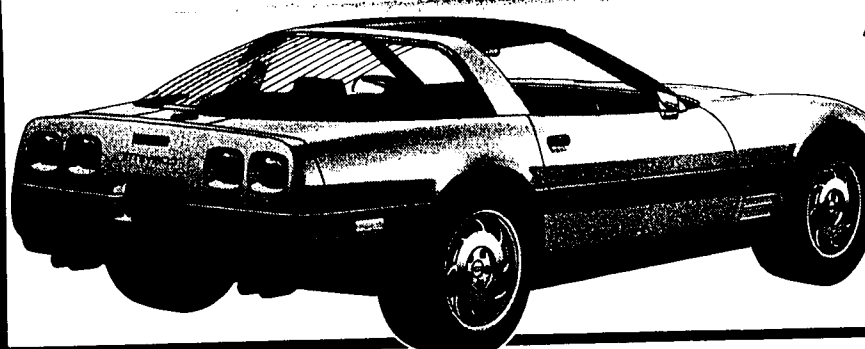
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