

Defeats On And Off The Field Damaging To Devils In Baseball

It was a most damaging week for Mooreville Senior High's baseball team, both on and off the field.

On it, the Blue Devils, who entered the week challenging for top honors in the Southern Dis-

trict Seven Conference, were dealt three defeats, including a loss by conference opponents that now forces them to battle for the last of the three available playoff berths.

Off it, Mooreville was dealt a severe blow to those postseason hopes when it lost one of its most consistent hitters, both for average and power, for the remainder of the season due to an injury.

"This might have been the

week that did us in," moaned Joe Pinyan, Mooreville's first-year head coach. "It's going to be awfully tough for us now. Hopefully, the kids can hang on."

Mooreville's shot at the playoffs, a reward that goes to the league's three regular-season finishers, was delivered a staggering one-two punch with back-to-back league losses within as many days, and any hopes the Devils had of recovering were additionally shattered when the losing skid stretched to three games with a homefield, non-conference loss that closed out the hectic playing span.

The skid began at Bunker Hill late Tuesday evening, when the host Bears took advantage of four Blue Devils errors to register a 6-2 triumph.

It continued at Bessemer City Wednesday night, in a contest twice delayed by rain, as Mooreville surrendered three three-run uprisings and suffered a 9-5 setback.

It finally drew to a close at home Thursday night, when visiting non-league foe North Stanly dropped in and walked away with a 9-1 triumph.

Adding injury — literally — to insult, during the Bessemer City game, starter Decomba Conner, among the team leader in every major offensive category, was lost for the season when he broke a hand attempting to steal second base. Conner, who underwent surgery Friday, will be wearing a cast from four to six weeks.

"It's just not a good time for us," continued Pinyan, who saw his club dip to the 7-4 mark within the league and to 10-7 overall.

Now with just four regular, scheduled games remaining, and a fifth hanging in the balance if its needs to be played, Mooreville finds itself in a near must-win situation in order to qualify for the state playoffs a fourth straight year.

"It doesn't look good for us," shrugged Pinyan.

The picture grew dimmer at home against North Stanly Thursday night, in a rare non-league outing for both teams this late in the season.

The contest matched former Mooreville head coach Mark Quinn, now in his first year as the North Stanly manager, against his former squad.

And Quinn's new squad enjoyed the upper hand over his old one, using a five-run sixth inning to put the game away. The Comets did so despite a combined 17 strikeouts showing by Devil pitchers Daron Patterson and Roy Frye.

Patterson, the starter and loser, chalked up 12 strikeouts to go along with the five notched by Frye in a relief role.

North Stanly took a 2-0 lead into the second inning before the hosts cut the margin in half with their first run. The guests charged back on top with a pair of runs in the third and then cleared the deck with their final five runs in the sixth.

Mooreville tallied its final two runs in the last of the seventh. At the plate, Patterson collected a pair of hits, while Frye, Otis Cowan, Sean Templeton, who tripled, Rod Bowers and Rickey Greene all added a base knock.

At Bessemer City Thursday three turned into the Devils undoing, as the hosts paced their many runs in that many different innings to account for the damage in the 9-5 outcome.

Bessemer City notched its three in the first, third and fourth innings, offsetting the two runs Mooreville managed in the first inning to go along with its other three scored in the seventh.

Bowers started and took the loss, tossing four innings, with Frye being called on in relief.

Conner clubbed a pair of hits and drove in the two first-inning

runs before being lifted following his injury midway the contest. Nathan White, Daron and Tremayne Patterson, Greene and Frye all added a base hit apiece.

At Bunker Hill Tuesday, the downfall began, as the guests collected three hits offensively and committed four errors defensively that contributed to their 6-2 demise.

Frye started and absorbed the loss, his second of the season against six wins. He allowed the six runs, two of them earned, on five hits with eight strikeouts. Bowers pitched the sixth inning in relief.

Mooreville picked up but three hits, White's double and singles by Conner and Cowan.

The Devils scored their first run in the first inning and tallied their second run in the fourth. Mooreville enters this week with two league games on tap.

The Devils kick off the week by hosting Bessemer City and hit the road to take on Maiden Friday.

If needed, the game earlier in the season between Maiden and Mooreville that was rained out will be added to both team's schedule if it affects the regular-season standings by way of determining playoff berths.

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Devils Apply The Pressure To Regain Golfing Status

Instead of feeling the pressure in Thursday's second and final round of the Southern District Seven Conference golf tournament, Mooreville applied it.

As a result, the Blue Devils reinstated themselves as the league's golfing medalists after an extended, five-year absence.

Entering the final 18-hole round trailing nontrouncing

Bunker Hill by five strokes, Mooreville, which last won the league title in 1986, covered the ground it needed to with a putt to spare to overtake the disappointed Bears and win the conference championship by a single stroke.

The Devils, boosted by the fielding of the final round's individual medalist, toured the

Imps' Season Of Streaks Turns Towards Winning

Mooreville Junior High's baseball season of streaks continued its turn towards winning last week.

The Red Imps, who began the season with three straight wins before suffering four straight defeats, matched their season-high of consecutive wins with a pair of Tri-County Conference triumphs last week.

Those two wins improved to three straight enjoyed by the Imps, tying their streak that opened the season, and improved their record to 6-4 both overall and in TCC play.

Junior High capped its second straight three-game winning streak at Knox Monday afternoon, racing out to an 11-1 lead after two innings and polishing off a 13-2 victory in a game shortened to five innings.

Late last week, and also on the road, the Imps of head coach Rick Spielman made it two straight wins to the time and for the season over homesteading Corriher-Lipe with

Blue Devils Headed To Golf Finals

What a week for Mooreville's golf team.

First, it overcame a five-stroke deficit during a single 18-hole round to surface as champions of the Southern District Seven Conference.

And then Monday, with the celebrating of the league championship just a few days old, the Blue Devils performed well enough in the 1A-2A Midwest Regional to qualify as a team for next week's 1A-2A state golf finals.

"What a week we've had," beamed Preston Harris, Mooreville's state golf coach. "First, we came back to win the conference on the last day. Then, we matched the state final. You just couldn't ask for a better ending to a season."

Mooreville qualified for the state golf finals after placing second overall in Monday's Midwest Regional, held on Norwood's Piney Point Golf Course.

The Devils did so by firing a four-player, 18-hole score of 317 to finish second. Ledford, paced by a pair of co-medalist teammates, won the regional title with a team stroke total of 308.

Mooreville was one of two SD-7 teams to finish among the top three, all of which qualified as a group to participate in next week's state finals.

Bunker Hill, which held a five-stroke lead in the league prior to last Thursday's final 18-hole tournament round, beat East Davidson in a playoff for the third and final state berth after both schools had completed regulation play with 318 strokes.

As a result, Mooreville joins Ledford and Bunker Hill in representing the Midwest Regional in next week's state finals.

It marks the first time since the mid 1980's that Mooreville has qualified as a team for the golf finals.

By qualifying, all members of the Devils golf team will make the trip to Chapel Hill early next week to compete in the state golf finals.

Mooreville was carried to the day's second-best stroke total by the one-over par round of 73 carded by Matt Ray.

Ray missed by a putt tying three others in the field for the day's top round of ever par 72. As a result, Ray, a two-time all-conference selection, wound up fourth individually.

Of the three players who carded even par rounds, two of them were Ledford teammates. A playoff on the course took place to determine the day's medalist.

It came down to a showdown between teammates E.G. Smith and Scott Newton, who by Smith on the fourth hole of sudden-death play.

In addition to Ray's round of 73, others whose scores were used to help the Devils produce the second-lowest team total were senior David Wilson, with an 80, and underclassmen Jason Young, with an 81, and Butch Farrington, with an 83.

All four players made this season's all-SD-7 roster.

In addition to those four, Jason Single will round out the group that will make the trip to the state finals.

The 36-hole finals are scheduled to take place Monday and Tuesday at Piney Point Golf Course on the campus of the University of North Carolina.

Catawba Country Club course in a near-best 324 strokes among its top four players to squeeze past the year-long clubhouse leaders by one shot.

The day's total provided Mooreville with a one-stroke victory over Bunker Hill, whose Bears finished second in the final tournament round with a team score of 340, one more than they needed to salvage no worse than a share of the league title.

"There definitely was some pressure," noted Preston Harris, Mooreville's head golf coach, "but I don't think our kids felt it as much as Bunker Hill's players did. We knew that even though we were five strokes back, we had a chance. The course played tough, as our kids accepted the challenge. It's a real tribute to them."

For the day, only three players bested 80 despite near ideal conditions.

Of those three, Mooreville's Jason Young emerged as the team and overall match medalist, crafting a round of 77 that was the lowest of the day.

Already assured of finishing among the league's top 12 players, and thereby earning a second all-conference certificate, Young's round boosted him up to fourth place overall in the league's stroke standings, tops among Mooreville's players.

Two of the other three players whose scores were also used to reach the team's total Thursday also made the all-conference team.

May Ray and teammate Jason Single each turned in cards of 86, while David Wilson, the lone senior in the group, fashioned an 87.

Both Ray, who finished ninth in the league, and Wilson, who place eighth, also made the all-conference team for a second straight time.

As did freshman Butch Farrington, in his first year of eligibility, who failed to use his score for the team's benefit Thursday but still finished 15th overall in the league's stroke standings.

According to Harris, it was poetic justice that his team was able to make up the difference needed and win the title outright.

Prior to competing in two 18-hole rounds of tournament play on two different courses — the first round was held on Hickory's Rock Barn course earlier in the week — all teams and players were allowed to drop their highest two previous regular season nine-hole scores.

However, without dropping the scores, Mooreville had crafted the lowest stroke total.

"I think it's only fair that the best team really did win," stressed Harris. "We never mentioned that because it's league rules that you can drop your highest scores. Without dropping them, though, we had the fewest strokes."

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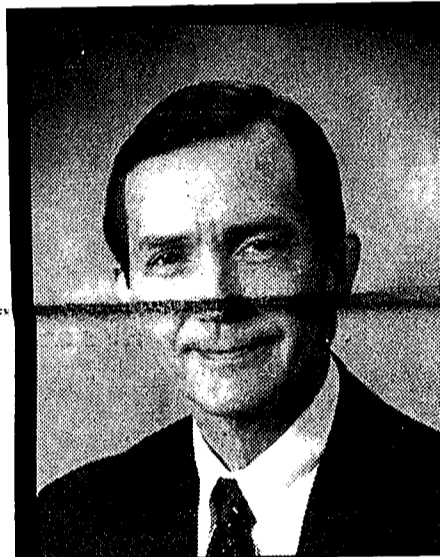
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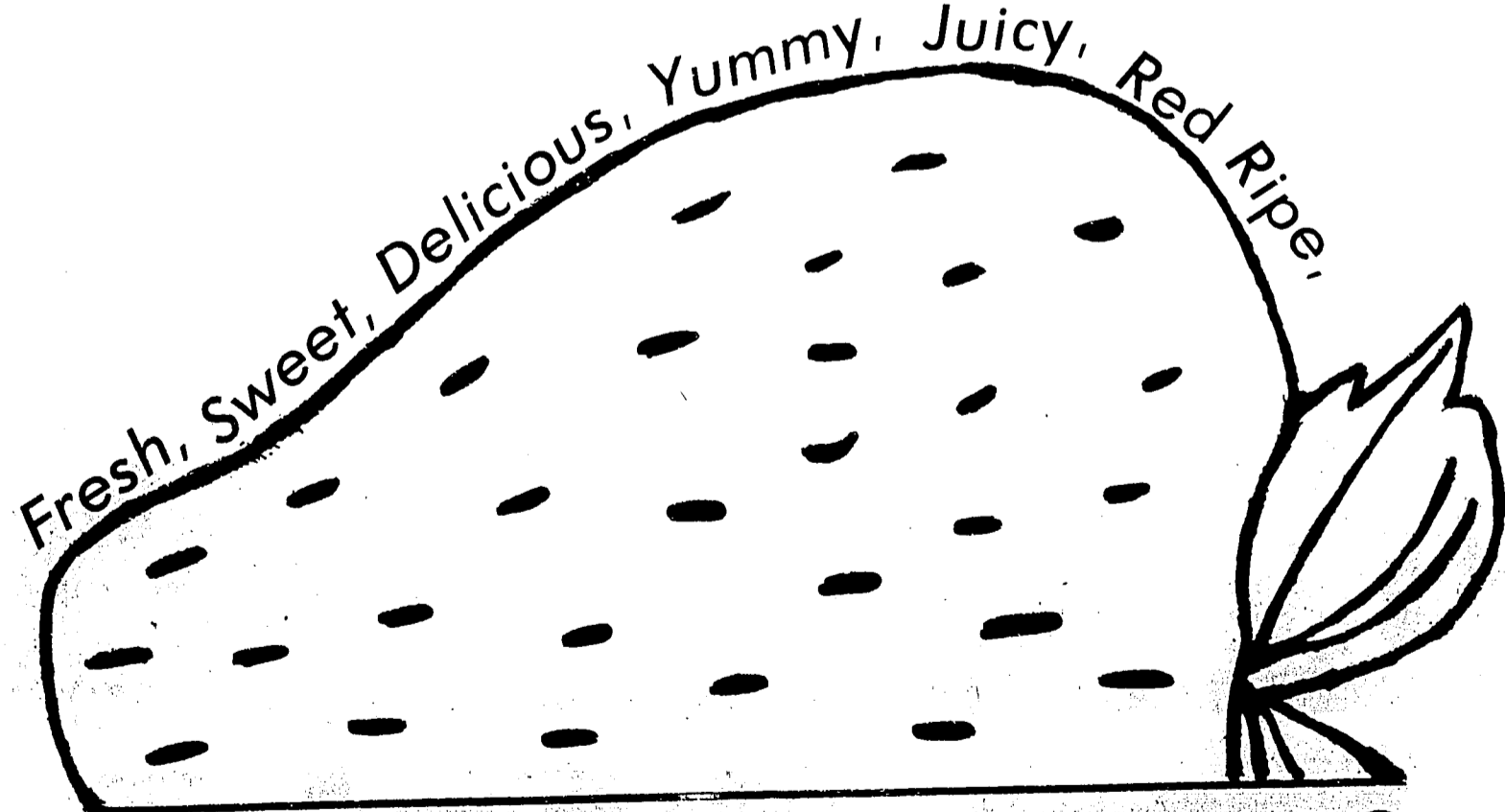
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