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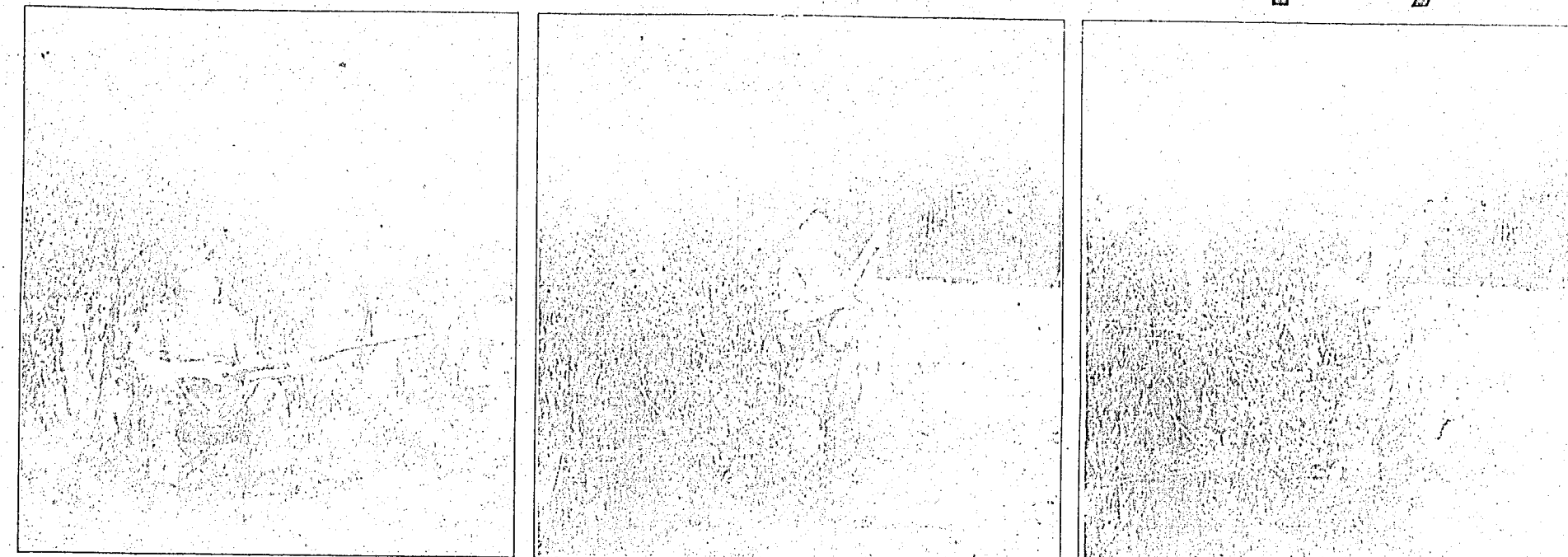
THE Tribune

Friday, September 7, 2001

Section B

Sports

Watchful hunters wait for prey



Well-hidden behind brush, Stewart keeps his seat, far left, before standing, at center, to follow flock into view. Then, taking aim, at right, he readies to take his best shot

Beginning Labor Day Weekend, armed warriors fill area fields, take aim at doves

According to Mooresville's Glen Stewart, most of the time hunters spend dove hunting is actually spent waiting and watching.

Doves, on the other hand, might want to argue that point.

The great debate over which is actually true got off to a rousing start over the most recent extended-weekend Labor Day holiday, traditionally marking the opening of the first segment of the dove hunting season in North Carolina.

Beginning with the first Saturday in September, in-state hunters can officially stop waiting for the season to arrive and start waiting for their airborne prey to arrive.

"You have to be ready," assured Stewart, one of a number of shooters decked out in full camouflage and ducked into a well-covered area in a field cut and primed especially for the fast-flying small birds to feast. "Most of our time is spent waiting and watching for the birds. But when they come in, you have to be ready to shoot."

Shots were heard throughout the area all Labor Day weekend, this time the season arriving at noon and lasting until sunset until the first phase draws to a close during the first full week. After that, hunting can begin a half-hour before sunrise and continue until sunset until the entire opening segment draws to a close in early October.

In Stewart's case, he was among a group of some 20 area hunters filling a local field for opening day hunting Saturday. A rain shower that hit the area just before the season kicked in served to provide cooler temperatures, helping set the stage for a better shooting day.

Hunters were staged throughout the field, some of them barely visible by taking cover under existing brush and along the tree-lined edges.

All were careful, however, to know exactly where everyone else was stationed in order to prevent opening-day disasters that often take place when other hunting seasons arrive.

To help make the day complete, this particular group decided to make a full day of the hunting trip, complete with the providing of an outdoor grill for the cooking of hamburgers with all the trimmings.

Hunting targets, again according to Stewart, were readily available, as he estimated that he had accounted for some 20 doves in just his first couple of hours of waiting and watching.

Reports indicated that, depending on which fields hunters visit-

ing, productions were much more evident.

One group, hunting on a privately-owned tract of land, estimated spotting some 500 doves during the first day, with some members of their hunting party giving themselves sore shoulders by the firing of 20 boxes or so of the shotgun shells.

The spotting of hunters along open fields will be a common sight throughout the area for the next two months. Most of their time might be spent waiting and watching, but as far as the doves are concerned, they still won't be waiting long enough before pulling the trigger.

JVs perfect



Little, right, one of several multi-goal scorers, fends off defender while battling for control of ball

The Labor Day break was the last thing members of Mooresville's junior varsity soccer team wanted.

Prior to it, the Little Devils had been among the most hardworking and successful of all of Senior High's fall sports teams, fashioning an undefeated, 6-0-0 record supported by the logging of three shutouts.

"We've been playing well," agreed Terry Shinn, the jayvees head coach. "We're getting scoring spread around by a lot of players, and our defense has really been great. The guys have been super all season."

It shows.

Mooresville's Baby Devils booters closed out the before Labor Day segment of their season with a 4-0 blanking of visiting Forestview, their second whitewashing in four matches.

Other blank jobs have been fired over South Point, 2-0, and in a 10-0 rout of season-opening foe Alexander Central that also accounted for the highest single-game output of goals to date.

Additional decisions have been rendered over Davie County and South Rowan, by identical 5-1 counts, and over Newton-Conover, 2-1, in a match that wasn't decided until the final minute.

Defense has been the rule instead of the exception for the unbeaten Little Devils. Manning the net as keepers have been both Chad Dickerson and Jordan Dumford. Pitching in efforts for that unit have included backs Will Sullivan and Webber Crowell, along with midfielder Johnny Chalacas.

Meanwhile, the offense has had a virtual heyday, with as many as 10 different players registering at least a goal apiece.

Topping the point-scoring corps is Wes Sackenheim, a sophomore striker, with four goals. Punching home three has been Dee Little, a freshman striker. Notching a pair of goals each feature sophomores Eric Childers, a midfielder, Blair Belew, a midfielder, and freshmen Eli Tyson, a striker, and Matthew Skidmore, a striker.

Others legging in single tallies so far include Alex Thunberg, Gene Schneider and Dickerson.

Mooresville's junior varsity soccer team headed into this week slated to join the school's varsity squad by competing in the jayvee segment of the Best of the West tournament taking place at host Hickory and also including teams from South Iredell and Morganton Freedom.

Next week, the Little Devils return to regular-season play when christening inaugural North Piedmont Conference play when visiting Northwest Cabarrus Monday night.

State rank on line in Devils home opener

Mooresville's varsity football team will bring more than just an undefeated record into this (Friday) evening's home regular-season opener.

The Blue Devils, fresh off last week's comeback, 37-20 triumph over host Forestview in an endowment game that kicked off the season for both teams, will also tote a lofty statewide ranking into their first of the season's five at-home appearances.

The Devils, who reached last year's state 3A class West finals that was the equivalent of the entire state's semifinals, gathered in 58 points from a statewide panel of high school sportswriters to fashion a seventh-place ranking in the poll released earlier this week.

With one of the team's in the poll yet to play a game, the Devils are one of just three undefeated teams with at least one game under their belt in the state's top 10. That team yet to play is also the 3A class top-ranked squad in Bolling Springs Crest.

While Mooresville is the only team from Iredell County to earn a state top-10 ranking, it is also one of two teams from new North Piedmont Conference to crack the rankings. Kannapolis A.L. Brown, despite suffering an upset loss last weekend, also sits in the poll, ranked 10th with a 1-1 overall record.

Mooresville and Kannapolis are two of the seven charter members making up the NFC. Other schools in the fold include Statesville and North Iredell from the county, as well as Northwest Cabarrus, and East and West Rowan.

Of that group, Statesville and West Rowan each also received

See BLUE DEVILS, page 3B

Earnhardt inducted into Hall

There are those who always knew the late Dale Earnhardt of Mooresville was an exception to the rule.

That fact was taken literally during Labor Day Weekend ceremonies surrounding the induction festivities involving this year's members into the National Motorsports Press Association's Stock Car Racing Hall of Fame.

Earnhardt, who was killed in a crash on the final lap of this year's season-opening Daytona 500 in February, was inducted under an exemption to the traditional five-year waiting period.

He was the first person voted in under a rule adopted in January allowing "extraordinary candidates" to become eligible immediately. He joins his father, Ralph, as a Hall member.

On behalf of the family, his sister, Kathy Earnhardt Watkins, was on hand in Darlington to accept the selection.

"A few years ago," offered Watkins in a short but sentimental address, "our family attended this same gathering in honor of our father. Dale was then a champion in his own career and very well known in his style of driving and personality traits. That night, he attended as a son and a brother."

"We knew the day would come," added Watkins, "that we would honor our brother because of his contributions to this sport. I wish it had not come this soon, but that doesn't change the honor and pride we feel as a family."

Watkins' speech capped an evening at the Darlington Country Club during which fellow motor-

See EARNHARDT, page 3B