

## MHS' Athlete of the Week

About the only thing junior Sky McCombs, left, hasn't done already for Mooresville's varsity football team is drive the bus. Based on his performances to date, head coach Mike Carter is considering giving him the keys. For his most recent contribution during the Blue Devils 58-0 thrashing of Alexander Central Friday night that included holding for six successful point-after touchdowns, scoring on a two-point conversion run for the second straight game, causing a fumble on a kickoff return and then recovering that fumble, McCombs, also a halfback, has been selected as the school's athlete of the week. Helping acknowledge the recognition is Ben Goins with Edward Jones, Co., who presents McCombs with his top player plaque.



## Blue Devils

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The offensive unit joined in on the fun starting early in the second period. Senior halfback Chris Winford raced 70 yards for a touchdown, after which sophomore David Sherrill added a four-yard push. Later in the frame, senior quarterback Patrick Marsh capped a third drive on a six-yard keeper. Kicker Darrin Edwards dicked the quarter's first score with a point-after kick, while McCombs tacked on a conversion run after the third.

In the third period, with primarily second-unit players on the field for the hosts, senior back Lonnell Dunn tallied on back-to-back runs of three and two yards, after which Edwards followed with PAT kicks.

In the final period, Sherrill recorded his second short scoring run of the night, it another four-yard job, before Winford, playing as the back-up quarterback, completed the scoring

with a 33-yard run off a busted play. Edwards added the point-after kick on Sherrill's TD, while Doug Haneline supplied the game's last point on the heels of Winford's run.

Winford finished the night with 173 yards rushing, while five other runners also collected double-digit yardage totals. The 22 yards gathered in by Matt Lambert ranked second on the team. Marsh completed three of his five passes, hitting Dunn, and tight ends Clay Ledford and Andrew Brown once each on plays covering 17, 34, and 38 yards, respectively.

Mooresville faces its stiffest test of the young season this week when calling on an undefeated Davie County team expected to contend for its 4A class Central Piedmont Conference championship this season.

Game time is set for 7:30 p.m. on the War Eagles' home field.

## Devilettes

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comes. That 5-1 edge guaranteed the visitors the win in the meeting with a squad that as late as last fall was aligned within the same conference before statewide realignment kicked in at the start of this school year.

In doubles, Mooresville increased its margin thanks to battles won in that seg-

ment by the duos of Bean and Moon at one, and Pierce and Kenyon at two.

In the loss against St. Stephens that denied the Lady Devils a shot at squaring that season series against yet another former same-league opponent, the Devilettes picked up their only two points in singles, courtesy of Bean at one, and Kenyon, playing at number five.

At the time, that loss was Mooresville's fifth in row.

The Lady Devils, now 3-5 overall, head deeper into this week slated to christen NPC play with a visit to Northwest Cabarrus before taking their last peek outside league play when completing a season-long road trip by calling on non-conference foe Lincolnton Monday. That will be the team's fourth straight road appearance.

## Vikings

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Rowan, but they were forced to forfeit the outcome upon the revealing of the use of an illegal player.

Unofficially, however, the Vikings bagged their second win of the season at home in as many tries and first in two straight appearances against the second of four fellow Iredell County foes they will face this season, three of which South Iredell meets in succession.

Never trailing in Friday's game, South Iredell took the lead for good on the only scoring of the third period. Then, the hosts led the issue with their three final-period tallies, the last two of which came less than a minute apart.

In so doing, the winners used a pair of better than 100-yard rushing nights to boost their ground-oriented attack. Fullback Ronnie Williams lugged the football 20 times for a game-high 181 yards, halfback while Tommy Martin served as a more than suitable sidekick with 15 rushes for his 158 yards. Quarterback Will Murdock completed two of his seven passes, finding Martin twice for all 24 aerial yards.

The Vikings racked up all their scoring damage via rushing plays.

In the first period, Martin burst loose and scamper 33 yards for a score, it dotted by Marshall Hitchcock's point-after kick. West Iredell forged the 7-7 tie with what turned out to be the Warriors' lone score in the first minute of play in the

second frame. The home team grabbed the lead for good just ahead of the third stanza's midway mark, as Michael Rankin completed a charge with a seven-yard bullet.

Hitchcock's accompanying kick helped double the lead. Then, in a free-scoring fourth quarter, it opened on Martin's 12-yard dash, after which Williams knocked would-be tacklers out of his way on a three-yard ram. Then, Martin completed his hat trick of touchdown scores by squirting 24 yards for his third six-point run.

Hitchcock followed all three scores with successful PAT kicks.

The second and third TDs of the fourth quarter took place within a 55-second span.

South Iredell, now three weeks into its first-ever stint as a member of the state's largest 4A class and new Central Piedmont Conference, stays in the county but goes on the road to open a two-week road trip this week when facing North Iredell Friday night.

Game time on the host Raiders' home field is set for

## Richmond

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to remain in contention for his first career points championship while keeping him in the highest position - currently second - that he has ever been at this point in the season.

Rudd, one of six different drivers involved in eight lead changes, uses the win to close the gap a little as the current points runner-up, knocking 120 points off what looked like a near unsurmountable margin heading entering the race. He was also able to open up some room between himself and the standings' third-place driver. It was also Rudd's 22nd win of his career. It gives him his second multiple-win season and his first win at Richmond since 1984.

"We had some mechanical breakdowns almost two races in a row," noted Rudd, "that took us out of the points championship. There are some tough races ahead. I'm not thinking about that now."

What did weigh heavy on Rudd's mind, however, was the way he was hit from behind on Lap 383 by series rookie Kevin Harvick. He bumped Rudd's Ford from behind, but the latter was able to recover and spend the next few laps plotting his revenge.

"That was no polite bump," assured Rudd, earlier in his career considered a self-described "hot-head" who wouldn't think twice about retaliation. "I was a little upset. I knew I had to move him a little bit. What I gave him was a clean love tap. What he gave me was a cheap shot trying to wreck me, so there is a little difference. Certainly I was mad, and I overdrove the car for about two laps. Then, I gathered myself up and was on a mission. I've mellowed over the years. I feel like I've gotten a

little smarter, a little wiser."

It showed Saturday night. Once Rudd got his second lead, he never let it loose, holding on for a .833-second margin of victory. He was one of three different area entries to ride point at least once. Others included Chip Ganassi Racing's Sterling Marlin, who got there once for four laps, and Penske South Racing's Rusty Wallace, a tough-luck entry who was at the lead for a race-high 276 of the 400 laps.

"It's frustrating to have led all those laps," noted Rudd, who also paced the field for the most turns in the May race held at the same site before finishing third, "and come up short."

With Rudd, who started ninth, taking first, he captained a group of three area entries among the top five. Mooresville-based Dale Earnhardt Inc.'s Dale Earnhardt Jr. placed third, following an eighth-place start, while Wallace wound up fifth after cranking his engine on the outside pole in second. Earnhardt remained unchanged in the points standing's seventh spot, while Wallace dropped back a spot into ninth.

Despite gathering in bonus points as a race leader, Marlin fell two spots in the standings into fifth after posting a 32nd-place start following a promising third-place start.

Among the field's second 10, Mooresville's Jerry Nadeau finished 14th, up from a 39th-place start, while Jasper Motorsports' Robert Pressley wound up 15th, jumping from his 24th-place starting nod. Mooresville's Joe Nemechek took 16th, falling from 11th. DEI's Michael Waltrip settled for 20th, cutting his starting spot of 41st more than in half in the process.

Elsewhere, Kenny Wallace, subbing indefinitely for the injured Steve Park with DEI, took 21st, up from 28th; Ganassi's Jason Leffler placed 28th after starting 42nd; Penske Racing's Jeremy Mayfield, 29th and 30th, respectively; Mooresville's John Andretti, 30th and 20th; and Eel River Racing's Rick Mast, 34th and 34th.

Area teams and drivers now steer toward this week's race, the New Hampshire 500 at New Hampshire International Speedway Sunday afternoon.

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## U-14, U-15 Spark boys tryouts set

Basketball, not a traditional late-summer and early fall sport, breaks that tradition later this week.

It does so when a pair of teams within the local Lake Norman Spark program conducts tryouts for the upcoming season.

Both the 14-and-under and 15-and-under boys Spark will be conducting these sessions. They will be held tomorrow and Friday, Sept. 13-14, all at Lakeshore Middle School.

Thursday's hours will be 7:30-9 p.m. The following day, hours will be 6-8 p.m.

Players eligible for the 14-and-under team are those currently in the eighth grade and who were born on or after Sept. 1, 1987.

Those eligible for the 15-and-under roster are those in the ninth grade born on or after Sept. 1, 1986.

For more details, those interested in playing on the 14-and-under team can contact coach Manning, at 704-662-6552, while those attracted to the 15-and-under team can contact coach Weyenberg, at 704-664-6125.

The Lake Norman Spark basketball program houses teams for boys and girls at a number of age levels. It is a non-profit organization geared towards local boys and girls who are interested in extending and advancing in the sport of basketball.

## Storm tough in opener

The South Iredell Storm, a new boys' U-10 Challenge soccer team, debuted in the Charlotte Challenge League on Sunday with a 2-0 loss to the powerful North Mecklenburg Storm. Spectacular goalkeeping by Grant Gowing in the first half and Patrick Wurtz in the second half fended off repeated North Meck attacks, and kept the score 1-0 until North scored on a penalty kick in the final minute.

In the second game, the Lady Mustangs of Mooresville, a new U-11 Classic soccer team, battled two tough teams over the weekend in Raleigh. In the opener, the Mustangs got strong goalkeeping from Alicia Danenhower to hold the Capital Area Soccer League Spartans at bay, but eventually fell 2-0. Lauren Carter had a pair of shots on goal for the Mustangs, who sparkled defensively.

Thomas and Caroline Moffett fought a constant physical battle to get the ball to the forwards. Moffett and Megan Brantley managed shots for the Mustangs, while the Wave was held to three shots on goal. Calli Prevost stepped into goal for the Mustangs and had two good saves late in the game.

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## JV Devils pad streak despite too-late scare

Numbers may not lie, but they can be a tad misleading. To those just checking final scores, it might have appeared as though Mooresville Senior High's junior varsity football team's three-year-long and running win streak hovering at the near 40 mark was in jeopardy following the Little Blue Devils' season-opening, 20-17 loss of homecoming Alexander Central Thursday night.

It wasn't. The Baby Blue Devils charged out to a 14-0 halftime lead, motored out to as much as a 20-2 advantage in the fourth quarter and held a 20-10 lead in the final seconds of play before the Little Cougars scratched for their final touchdown with six seconds left to account for a final score that made the game look closer than it actually was.

With the win, ultimately helping set the stage for what would be a program sweep within a two-night span, Mooresville's Jayvees pushed that overall win streak to 37 straight dating back to the middle stages of the 1997 season.

Also, to additionally enhance the varsity team's feeder program's success, Thursday's season debut accounted for the 58th win in its past 59th appearances, stacking up consecutive perfect, 10-0 campaigns in each of the past three seasons in the process.

The Little Devils went right to work improving that past for the present on the Alexander County High School field in Taylorsville Thursday, using a pair of offensive strikes combined with a defensive one to build the early cushion.

It was that defense that actually put the visiting team on the scoreboard first, forcing a snap through the end zone for a safety with just over three minutes left in the first period.

Getting the ball back after that safety, it took the visitors another two minutes to manufacture their first touchdown. It came on sophomore halfback Charquall Sherrill's 10-yard dart for the 8-0 lead after a failed conversion.

In the second quarter, the lone blow was struck near the period's eight-minute mark when freshman halfback Eric Wilson scratched on a seven-yard zip. The six-pointer shot the lead to the 14-0 mark at intermission.

Following a safety by Alexander Central for the only scoring of the third quarter, Mooresville notched its third strike of the game when Wilson this time fled 11 yards for a TD. A third failed conversion left the spread at 20-2 with most of the fourth period remaining.

Alexander Central closed to within 20-10 with a score and two-point conversion midway the final frame, and the hosts then landed the late blow complete with a point-after kick to close the gap to the final of three points.

Mooresville ran for 198 of its 222 total yards, paced by workhorse sophomore fullback Roger McLendon's 113 yards. He was also on the receiving end of two passes for all 24 of the visiting team's aerial yards. Wilson gathered in 41 yards, while Sherrill added 31 yards on the ground. Quarterback Chip Pickard completed two of his five passes for all yards gathered there.

Defensively, the visitors forced a pair of turnovers, a pass pickoff from safety Joseph Toupin and a fumble recovery gathered in from linebacker Jonathan Oliphant.

Mooresville's junior varsity team makes its at-home debut this season when meeting Davie County tomorrow (Thursday) night in the Mooresville Stadium. Game time is set 7 p.m.

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