

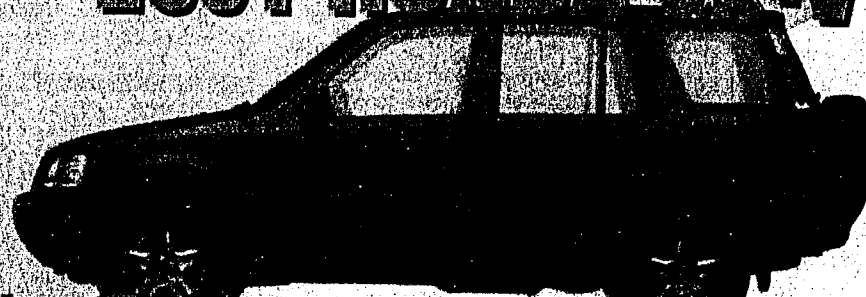
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# THE MOORESVILLE Tribune

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

Section B

## Sports

Time again to consider rec. level changes

August? You must be kidding. Nope, the calendar says it's so. Hard to believe.

But with the arrival of the year's eighth month officially as of today, it's time to start looking ahead to the arrival of another high school sports year. Yet it wouldn't be entirely fair to start anticipating the future without fully recognizing the most recent past.

Another local recreational level youth baseball and softball season has come to an end. It does so once again

### SPORT SIDE



with Larry Sullivan

with more thoughts being tossed around, some of them out loud, about what changes could take place to make these leagues even more successful. Time and time again, when it comes time for our league representatives to try and make their marks during postseason all-star time, we always tend to lag behind those charges of other programs. There are those who are tired of these same old results.

So, a few of these suggestions have reached the old sports desk, and, as we look ahead to what could happen, it's best to take the time to digest these opinions and perhaps allow some of them to take effect.

One of the most major suggestions is the urging of our local recreational programs to change youth affiliations completely. Currently, Mooresville Recreation Department teams are covered under the PONY umbrella, that acronym spelled out by using the first letters of the program's official title, Protect Our Nation's Youth. The most obvious choice of new affiliation is the perhaps the more nationally-recognized Little League program.

This idea has been spoken of in the past. If memory serves, sanctioning fees for Little League association are vastly increased over those from the PONY group. I don't have the figures right here in front of me, but it seems that I recall these fees being a little on the high end. Still, for what you receive, such as national exposure and increased level of competition at practically every age level, it seems something that might need looking into once more. Also, I'm not entirely sure if the program, widely recognized as a baseball structure, even provides an outlet for youth softball. Odds are it does, but I really don't know for sure. That, too, might be worth some additional investigating.

Another idea that sounds much more likely to take place is a major change in the way our local programs handle all-star team selection. Presently, we normally wait until the end of the seasons before gathering the circuits' respective head coaches and make the selections. This procedure, in general, gives our players a week or so - sometimes even less - for practice together before embarking in play. That is just not enough time. Usually, when we make our visits to tournaments, we are doing so against teams that have been preparing for quite some time, some of them all season.

The main suggestion here is to go ahead and conduct all-star team try-outs during the course of the season. Make them open to all interested and have a true selection process. If deciding on a head coach is a problem, allow the coach of the league's regular-season champions from the previous season fill that spot. If, as is sometimes the case, a coach moves from one league to another during the off-season, give that all-star position to the current coach of that reigning champion. Once a team is selected, practices could be held in and around regular league games.

The overriding beef among all-star team followers is that our players just don't seem to be properly prepared. This would be an ideal way to combat that major shortcoming. It would also allow coaches and players to go ahead and complete vacation plans, another wrinkle that often plays a huge role in player availability.

Naturally, these are just suggestions. It will take more than that for them to be put into motion. Still, they are worth considering.

## Top of the line

Teams back billing with adult tournament crowns

It's one thing to receive top billing. It's another thing to live up to it.

That was precisely the case for all three victorious teams within the past summer adult softball league postseason tournaments, which drew to a close late last month to bring both the Industrial and Open Softball League seasons to a close.

Each conducted through the Mooresville Recreation Department, one phase of play-offs was held at the six-team Open League level while, due to the increased number of teams - 10 - within the Industrial League, it was divided into a pair of divisions.

In all three double-elimination tournament scenarios, the top-seeded entry with each field not only emerged as champions but did so without so much as losing a single game combined between them.

In the case of a pair of tournament champions, they each used respective marches to first-place hardware to accompany earlier earned regular-season championships.

In the Open League, Shoreline Properties appeared in the bare minimum of needed games to complete its sweep of both top team accolades. In the process, Shoreline failed to lose a game, knocking off each of the teams that finished both second and third during regular-season play. In the finals, where it reached undefeated, Shoreline outlasted runner-up and loser's bracket winner Randy Marion Chevrolet in a slugfest by a 30-27 score in

which both teams used up their respective limits of eight allowed home runs each.

Randy Marion ousted regular-season, third-place finisher Homes by Greg Smith, 20-2, to get to the finals.

By reports, it was at least the sixth straight time that Shoreline has won either the summer league's regular-season and/or the tournament championship.

Over in the Industrial League, Freightliner used a similar path to also post its double-double, adding the Division I postseason title also in the minimum number of games to go along with its



Tourney title completes season sweep for Division I's Freightliner



Postseason trophy is twice as nice for Open League's Shoreline Property teammates

## Offense eludes Pony all-stars in sectional

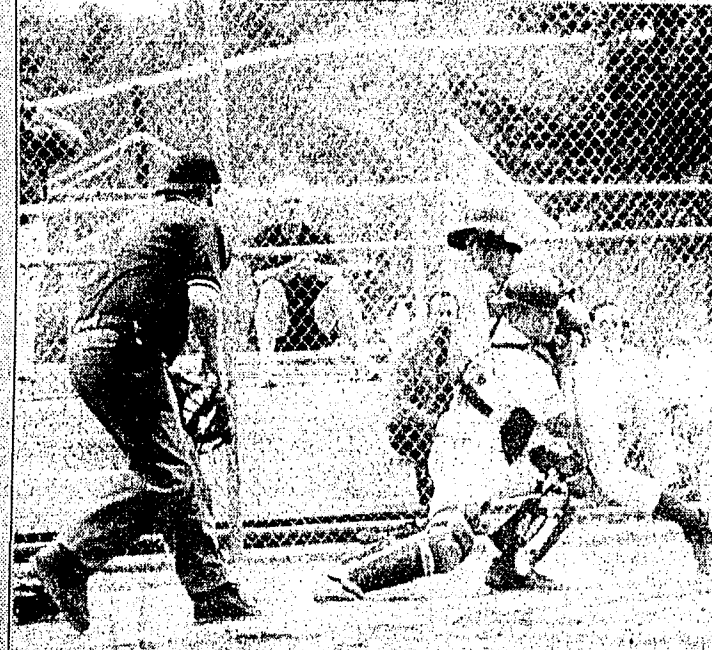
Lack of offense proved to be down right offensive for Mooresville's entry in last week's South Sectional Pony Baseball League tournament.

Facing quality pitching in each of its two appearances, the batch of all-stars representing the Mooresville Recreation Department's Pony Baseball League managed just seven hits, all but one of them in one game, and scored a total of five runs to suffer quick two games and out elimination.

The double-elimination, five-team affair was staged at Davidson's reworked McEver Park, one featuring dimensions of just 250 feet down each foul line and a maximum distance of 300 feet in dead center.

Despite the shortness of the fences, in sharp contrast to the distances played on the Moor Park facility that serves as the home team for the local Pony League players, the Mooresville entry came within several inches just once of launching a shot over the fence, it coming courtesy of the team's leading hitting during the limited sectional appearance.

Mooresville became the final of the fields three teams to be delivered an opening loss following a 13-3 defeat at the hands of a North Mecklenburg National team that had earlier advanced with a first-night win.



Catcher Thomas Harris well-braced for contact on play at plate

Then, in a stay-alive affair in loser's bracket play the following night, the local all-star entry's hopes of extending its stay took an early hit by allowing two runs in the top of the first inning and it never recovered, dropping a 6-2 decision to University City to bring its postseason stay to a close.

As a result, Mooresville became the first team in the field to be eliminated.

only Mooresville hit.

In the loser's bracket outing against University City, the latter scored twice on two hits in the first inning and never trailed, Mooresville twice closing the gap to as few as three runs. The locals trailed 4-1 before facing the final 5-2 deficit.

In the pitching department, Doug Yacek earned the starting nod and worked the first three innings. He was relieved by Seth Rhynne, who toiled the final four stanzas. Yacek was shouldered with the loss.

Mooresville scored single runs in the third and fifth innings but was hurt by having two runners picked off the bases, one each straying too far off second and first.

West was the one who came within inches of a home run, smacking a double off the green wall in left center for his second hit. He also collected a single. Seaford, batting in the lead off position, added two hits, while Tilley, with a pinch-hit double, and Yacek added the other hits with one each.

Ouster from the South Sectional, taking place as part of the nation's 50th anniversary of the Pony Baseball organization, brings the postseason stage on play to a close for Mooresville's all-star team at that level.

## Linked-up rafters keep opponents at bay on shore

One of the truest signs of total domination is lack of competition.

Consider then, those boaters taking part in the annual Raft-Up on Lake Norman tops in their line.

Breaking a Guinness Book of World Records-recognized mark they set two years earlier, a larger group of Lake Norman boaters stayed linked long enough together for the official aerial photo required to establish yet another world record last weekend.

The raft-up took place near Lake Marker T-5,

close to Interstate 77 and old North Harbor Cafe.

Besting the old mark of 400 by nearly 20 boats, the new mark of 419 was set Saturday afternoon, creating a new barrier in a category that, as far as event officials know, has no other challengers.

"If there is one," noted Mickey Nutting, one of the yearly affair's organizers, "we want to stay ahead of them. It's kind of important to do that. We don't know."

The previous record was set during the sec-

ond annual adventure in 1999. Last summer's attempt to snap the record was hampered by high winds that prevented the in excess of 600 boats from staying bound together long enough to make the attempt official.

"This time around, though, cloudy conditions kept the number of participants lower than expected, the ones who did gather stayed linked long enough to establish the new record."

"Why do you do anything to break a record?" offered Nutting.

See RAFT-UP, page 2B