Putter a silver lining for Moors

There's now a silver lining in the slowly-brightening cloud hovering over former Mooresville Moors member Michael McClain.

It comes courtesy of a silver-lined putter.

The Gresham-Baker Post 66 American Legion Baseball Committee, which organized a project aimed at generating a fund to help cover the family's medical expenses surrounding McClain's extended hospital stay and rehabilitation following injuries sustained during an on-field collision, has been presented with a silver golf putter appraised at nearly $1,500 to assist with the fundraising effort.

The putter, made of sterling silver, is a present from local resident Curt Kerns, whose involvement with a company that makes the items just for similar fundraising purposes makes the gift possible.

According to Kerns, associated with Ashberry's Charities, the putter has a price tag of $1,375. Now in the process of being hand-made, it will be presented to the Post 66 committee as a drawing card for a raffle that will get underway later this month.

Frank Owens, athletic officer for the Mooresville Moors American Legion baseball team, tickets will be printed and available for sell for a drawing that is tentatively scheduled to be held at some point during the upcoming high school football game between Mooresville Senior High and South Iredell High School.

McClain, who suffered a fractured skull as the most serious of his injuries following a collision chasing a foul ball during the regular-season's final game in late June, is a rising junior at South Iredell. The Moors play their games at the Mooresville Senior High School field.

Following his injury, McClain, rendered unconscious, was in intensive care for more than a week. Immediately following the hit, his life was in jeopardy. He has since undergone remarkable improvement, recently released from the hospital completely while commuting daily for continuous rehabilitation. Some reports indicate that he still faces at least a year of rehab before full recovery is possible.

"I see improvement in him every day," praised his dad, Patrick McClain, late last week. "He still has a very long way to. He's a very determined young man, and we all believe he will make it. He really has come a long way."

McClain has been at the center of attention during a number of area events of late. He made his second appearance at his local church surrounded by extended family members and friends earlier this month. Then, over the past weekend, he was a featured participant in game opening ceremonies conducted prior to to a Kannapolis Intimidators minor league baseball game.

Mooresville resident Todd Parnell, the single-A Chicago White Sox affiliate's vice president and general manager, joined team manager Razor Shines in visiting McClain during the latter's hospital stay. It was during that visit when the invitation for McClain to engage in first-pitch ceremonies during a home game was extended. The former Moors player was able to accept the invitation and also viewed the game from a special seat.

While the medical fund was started by the Mooresville Moors during their opening-round playoff series, donations have continued to be received from a number of sources since. It was a project that drew attention from Mooresville resident Kerns, who is involved with a company that provides silver and gold putters to be donated for similar non-profit purposes.

The putter also features a graphite shaft and wound grip, each minute detail seen to directly by hand. Kerns, a member of the NCAA national golf championship team while attending Ohio State University, now spends his time making appearances at golfing charity events across the country while providing the putters for groups to use as similar fundraising drawing cards.

Upon receiving the putter for the medical fund, tickets for the drawing will be available from any Post 66 baseball committee member. Additional details surrounding the drawing will be released at a later date.

Contact is a first for Devils

Before engaging in the preseason's first of three scheduled football scrimmages, Mooresville head coach Mike Carter had to make sure his players, particularly the younger ones, were properly attired to do so.

That was the case as Saturday evening's gathering at familiar foe Bandys for a non-counting, controlled affair between the two former same-class and same-conference opponents also accounted for the Blue Devils' first full contact drills of this two-week-old practice season.

"We had to make sure everybody had all their pads," revealed Carter, embarking on his 13th season with the Devils, "and they had them on properly. For us, it was our first test with full contact. We had to take a little time off from practice last week because of the heat. We got done in three days what we normally can do in one day. It put us a little behind, but considering all that, it wasn't a bad first scrimmage for us."

That the scrimmage was able to take place was a plus for both teams. Most in the area had to delay weekend scrimmages for one of two weather-related reasons. It was either too hot, or too stormy.

"We saw some lightning off the distance right when we were about to get started," offered Carter. "But it turned a little cloudy, and it actually wound up being okay. I don't think we got a single drop of rain."

Carter found out what he expected all along at this stage of the season, that his defense, perhaps the strongest part of this year's team, appeared a little ahead of all other phases.

"Defensively," he praised, "we had a very good performance out of our first unit. They were aggressive, ran to the ball, and tackled well. I expected them to be a little ahead of other areas, and, for the most part, they were. Bandys is a team that we're very familiar with, so we kind of knew what to expect. Of course, they knew our game, too."

Still, Carter found some pleasure in his own crew's offensive efforts, too, particularly pleased with the option offense at various times.

"We ran the option pretty good most of the night," he declared. "We connected of a few passes, too. Some of the plays that are the backbone of our offense had a little trouble, but I attribute that more to Bandys' defense and knowledge of out game than I do to our own execution. The main thing we were after was getting our blocking assignments and techniques down pat. I expect to see a little more improvement in our next scrimmage in all areas."

On the negative side, the guests did suffer a couple of first-scrimmage injuries to some key players. The full extent of those injuries may not be known until later this week. It's possible that several involved could miss this week's scrimmage in order to help with recovery time.

As with all preseason scrimmages, no official score was kept, and neither team was able to work on specialty areas of their play under live-game situations.

Mooresville, looking to catch a break from late-summer heat this week, will return to the practice field in full gear in order to ready for its second scrimmage. The Devils will go back on the road to meet host Kings Mountain tomorrow (Thursday) night.

Mooresville's third and final preseason appearance, and only one tabled to take place at home, will be held Aug. 23 against Ledford. It will be held just over a week from the team's regular-season opener Aug. 31 at Forestview.

Martin

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game position behind home plate.

After a league-wide open date during which Martin used to work on his golf game, his crew was to return to the field with a four-game set in Asheville that also accounted for their final appearances in-state. After closing out the season Labor Day Weekend in Columbus, Ga., Martin will then await the start of the league playoffs.

Upset is a highlight for Talbert in tennis

Though she didn't win it all, Mooresville's Kathryn Talbert still made her stay in last weekend's United State Junior Tennis Under-12 Nationals memorable.

Talbert, who just recently turned 10 years of age and is playing in a division made up primarily of players on the older end of the scale, advanced through two rounds and finished ranked among the top 60 the group.

Highlighting her performance in the event held at Boca Raton, Fla. was the defeat of the age division's number-one ranked player from Arizona.

Talbert, a student in the Randy Pate Tennis Academy, was one of a number of junior players from Iredell County to compete in the USJT nationals held in various parts of the country for all ages.

The fifth-grader at Lakeshore Elementary School is the daughter of LouAnn and Denny Talbert.

Devils

Continued from page 1B

took place prior to the varsity affair, the Little Devils were handed a 7-3 loss.

Logging goals for the hosts, with one apiece, included Eugene Schneider, Alex Thunberg and Matthew Skidmore, all but the freshman latter sophomores.

Mooresville opens a three-game road trip with a visit to Newton-Conover this (Wednesday) evening and travels to face South Point Monday night.

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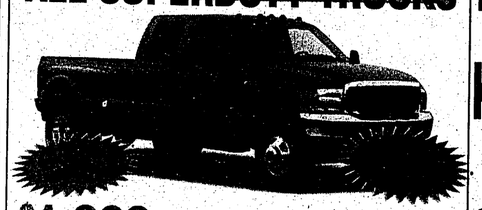

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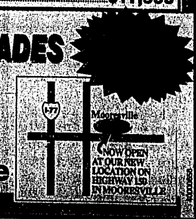
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