

I's set new attendance mark



Parnell surrounded by part of younger generation also receiving pleasure during game

Mooreville's Todd Parnell can't put his finger on just exactly what the reasons are that caused the minor league professional baseball team for which he serves as vice-president and general manager to set a new franchise attendance record this season.

There are too many of them. "I think there are a number of factors that play huge roles in what makes this team and this franchise appealing," assured Parnell, taking time for a well-earned breather during the course of the final night game of the season at which the old single-season record for fans was shattered. "Naturally, it's the baseball that we have to offer fans in this area. Also, the new parent organization (Chicago) White Sox have been great all season. I also believe that our new ownership, bringing on the likes of the late Dale Earnhardt, and the team's new name has had a lot to do with it. It's really been a combination of factors that has made this a memorable season for all of us associated with the team."

Unfortunately, unlike last year, it doesn't appear likely that the Kannapolis Intimidators, in their rookie season under that name and within the American League White Sox family, will extend it into the playoffs.

Despite having one of the best first-half records in all of organized ball, Kannapolis had the second-best record within its own Northern Division of the South Atlantic League. That meant it either had to win the second half pennant or hope for a repeat in the first-half champion and feature the best overall record of a non-midway division leader. After being swept by the current Northern Division champions in the final home series of the season, the Intimidators tackle tough odds in securing a playoff nod by spending the final eight days of the regular season on the road.

"We've had a very good year overall," revealed Parnell, who is also the one primarily in charge of lining up special promotions during every home game. "Unlucky for us, the team that won the first half had the best record in all of minor league ball. We just haven't gotten it going in the second half. Still, we've had the support all season long. Our fans deserve a lot of credit."

Going into the final home-stand of the regular season, the Intimidators had the chance of establishing new

Devils

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hs. We just don't know right now how we will respond under game conditions."

The Devils, ranked 14th in the Sweet 16 area high school poll, will again be relying upon their wishbone offense to steer the attack, one that featured a pair of 1,000-yard rushers who are both back in the fold again this season. Headlining that duo is senior Chris Winford, who ran for nearly 2,000 yards and scored 26 touchdowns last season. Classmate Lonnell Dunn provided cover with his 1,037 yards and 16 scores.

Defensively, the Devils return three starters among their 24 returning lettermen, a cast headed by third-year starter nose guard Mike Peters and safety Tony Cuthbertson.

Also boosting this year's squad are select graduates off last year's 10-10 junior varsity team, one that extended that program's winning streak to 27 games and improved an

Bowles

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kickoff team and punt teams. Specialty team play is also a point of emphasis for the Blue Devils during their recent stretch of successful seasons that reached its pinnacle point with a 13-2 record and the reaching of the state 3A class semifinals last year.

As a sophomore last year, Bowles was a member of the school's junior varsity team that fashioned a 10-0 record to win the Western Piedmont Conference championship. It allowed that program to stretch a current winning streak to 27 games and pushed the Little Devils' overall record dating back to the 1995 season to the stellar, 57-1 level.

He is looking forward to his first year as a member of the varsity team.

"The others guys and the coaches have really been great to me," assured Bowles. "They've been there when I've needed them. I've been leaving right from practice just about every day to go to the hospital to see how he's doing. If it wasn't for football, I'd probably leave right after school and have more time to worry about him. At least during practice, I've got something else to think about. This is a big week because it's our first game. We're all excited about it."

Mooreville kicks off its season in the endowment game against a Forestview team the Blue Devils first met during last year's opening round of the state playoffs. Senior High won that game, 35-19.

Game time is set for 7:30 p.m. Friday in what will account for Mooreville's first trip to the Gaston County school.

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