



UNUSUAL

Pictured above is young Mike Lancaster of Hookerton, N. C. displaying a white raccoon his father reports he killed last Thanksgiving near Castalia. The youngster's father, E. J. Lancaster, refers to the animal as an albino raccoon and says Mike saw two "coons" in the same tree while hunting squirrels last fall. One had the usual markings and Lancaster says this one "was white as a kitten, not a dark hair on him". Mike will attend Snow Hill school this fall. He is an eighth grader. His father lives in Nash County near Castalia.

Williams Leads 15 Lettermen As Rams Get Ready For Opener

All-Conference Cliff Williams leads the list of 15 lettermen, including 13 starters, as the Franklinton Rams get down to business this week following a week of conditioning. Coach Jimmy C. O'Neal reports he is "looking enthusiastically toward the coming season."

"We have fifteen lettermen returning," says O'Neal. "And barring major injuries we expect to improve over last year's record." The Rams were 1-9 last year but injuries hampered early season performances.

O'Neal has 10 seniors back from previous wars and ten freshmen give promise to future years. There are four sophomores and four juniors on this year's squad.

The Rams lost quarterback Mack Beckham, halfbacks Freddie Coats and Dennis Carter and wingback Brooks Bennett to graduation. Jerry Simmons, 135-pound letterman and David Thompson, 180-pound junior, who missed last season with a broken leg sustained in early practice, are expected to handle the field general's post this year.

Williams, who was named All-Conference year before last as a center and last year as an end, will lead the backfield this year at one of the halfback slots. Tim Leonard and Bobby Kearney, both

seniors will probably finish out the backfield. They will expect help from Ronnie Dement, a sophomore and Stevie Pace, a freshman.

Donnie Beckham, Royal Pergerson and Warren Collins are returning ends and freshmen Danny Clopton and David Strickland will back them up.

Seniors Al Sandling and Stuart Eakes are back at the tackle posts. Eakes was All-Conference Honorable Mention at the position last year. Sandling is the heavyweight of the squad at 253 pounds. Buck Pearce, also an All-Conference Honorable Mention at tackle last year is returning. The sophomore weighs 217 pounds. Jasper Wilson is a freshman candidate for a tackle post.

Senior Bobby Ayscue and junior Danny Freddy are returning guards with sophomore Buddy Barefoot and freshmen George Russell, Tommy Honeycutt, Jeff Kearney and Gary Murray acting as reserves.

Seniors Everette Frye and Spencer Strickland are expected to see action at center with aid from freshman Mark Beckham.

The Rams open at home against the Gaston Rebels, Friday night, August 29. The Rebels downed Franklinton, 26-6 last November.

[SPORTS] In Our Opinion

By CLINT FULLER

High School athletes in this area of the state are ardent readers of Prep Clipboard, a regular News and Observer sports feature written by Grady Elmore. Elmore has covered prep sports for more years than either of us would like to mention and he has done an outstanding job.

It has always been our contention that before any brave soul is tempted to write on high school athletics, he should first visit a head shrinker. There has to be easier ways to make a living although, admittedly, there are few as enjoyable.

The biggest obstacle to proper coverage of high school sports is the lack of available information. In this Elmore and other daily writers share equally with the weekly and semi-weekly reporters. This absence of information often leads to errors and to some deserving players being left out of articles.

Since it is physically impossible for any one newspaper to cover personally every game and every team, the responsibility rests with the individual school. High school cannot, of course, be expected to match the colleges in treatment of press, radio and television reporters. Colleges distribute expensive booklets with all kinds of data on past and present squads.

High Schools could, however, prepare mimeographed copies of their rosters, lineups, player numbers and what records they have. These should and easily could be distributed to news media in their area as well as media in communities where future opponents are located.

The latest example of the pitfalls of covering high school teams was illustrated in Monday's mail. A "Former Franklinton High School Athlete"—who naturally, declined to sign his name—took us to task for not knowing that one Ram grider has transferred to a military school. We had absolutely no way of knowing this. He also said we omitted a boy named Henry Watkins, a "transfer from B. F. Person" who was on the Ram squad last year. Since his name never appeared on a single Ram roster, we had no way of knowing this either.

He also took issue with us for not "giving these fine athletes the recognition they deserve". Just who else he thinks has been recognizing the Franklinton program longer or more thoroughly than this writer since 1958, we don't know. Certainly not the letter writer. He couldn't even write his name.

We don't mind the criticism. We just don't think it's justified in this instance. We have since last week received some information from Coach Jimmy O'Neal and it is contained in an article elsewhere on this page. And incidentally, the boys were all mentioned in last week's article taken from information supplied last year.

Back to Elmore. In Sunday's Prep Clipboard, he picked Oxford Orphanage and Wakelon to battle for the newly formed Franklin Area Conference title. This brought on some head scratching in the Louisburg camp where the attitude this year could be described as cautiously optimistic. The Bulldogs are quiet publicly on Elmore's prediction, but privately, they are elated. They'd rather be the underdogs. And, the Franklinton Rams might have a question or two on the predictions. But, then such are the hazards of high school sports writing. We'll wipe up the blood, Grady.

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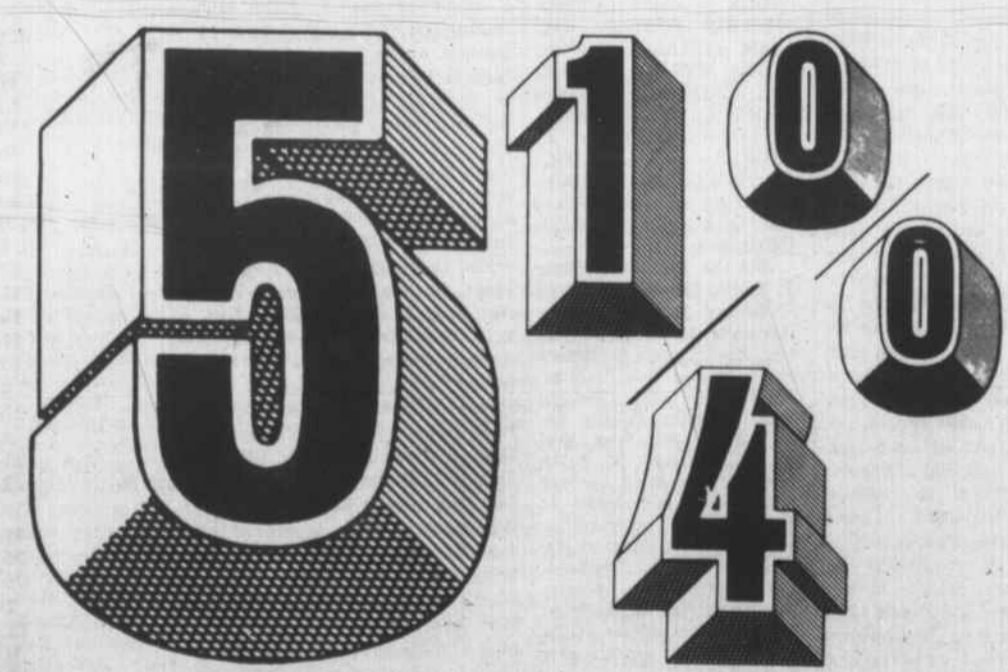
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