

Consistency, work habits vital to success of Greensboro Smith track

By SAM DAVIS
The Chronicle Sports Editor

The key to having a successful program is developing good work habits. That, along with consistency, according to Larry Ratliff, Greensboro Smith's track coach, will allow high school athletes to be successful.

Ratliff, who is in his sixth year as the Golden Eagles' coach, believes that having the proper system in place is very important in the development of top-flight athletes.

At least that's the way it's been during Ratliff's tenure with the program.

The Golden Eagles boys track



William Lofters ran the second leg of Smith's winning 1600-meter relay team.

team validated Ratliff's philosophy at last Saturday's Mid West 4-A Regional Track Meet at Mount Tabor. Smith captured four individual championships and had a total of nine athletes to qualify for next weekend's State 4-A championship in Charlotte.

Brandon Isaac led the way for Smith win wins in both the 110- and 300-meter hurdles. Danny Campbell won the 400-meter dash and LaTron Morehead captured the championship in the triple jump.

From a team standpoint, the Golden Eagles captured the 1600-meter relay title and placed fourth in the 800-meter relay.

"The last few years we've done

fairly well," Ratliff said. "Again, I'm pleased with the performance today. Our kids pretty much did what we expected them to do. We really did well in the events that we thought we would do well in."

Morehead got off to his best leap of the year to win the triple jump at 47-6 1/2 to win the event by more than a foot. Kwan Skinner of Durham Jordan was a distant second at 46-3.

Morehead, who has been ranked in the top 10 in the state all season, is one of the few juniors who captured regional titles. Other top finishers for the Eagles were Malik Swinton, who ran on the 1600- and 800-meter relay teams, and Ricky Moore, a freshman,

who placed sixth in the shot put. "Coming in we thought he would really have a chance to win," Ratliff said. "He's been pretty consistent all season."

Isaac also blew away the competition. He covered the 110-meter hurdles in 14.3. David Ellis of Greensboro Dudley was the closest competitor at 15.1. Isaac's 300-meter showing was equally impressive. He posted a time of 39.3 to out-distance teammate Andrew Lofters, who was second at 40.6.

Campbell, who ran the 400-meter dash in 49.0 to take the championship also anchored the Golden Eagles' 1600-meter relay team. His closest competitor in the

400 was Ty Wilson of Reynolds, who finished at 50.0.

"We feel that any athlete that stays in our program for three to years will have a chance to compete for a state championship," Ratliff said. "We feel that they are going to have a chance to run for a state championship in an individual event or on a relay team. We tell them to stay in the program and this will be your reward at the end of your high school career. We feel that every senior should have that opportunity."

The Golden Eagles benefited from having a strong turnout for the team. The team started out with 42 athletes and ended the season

SEE SMITH ON B3

Young Spartans sprint to regional championship

The shower from a water cooler, filled with ice-cold water, couldn't wipe the smile from Coach Mike Esposito's face.

team. Becky Maier, who won the discus with a throw of 126-11, was the only individual champion. However, the team won the 400- and 800-meter relays. They



Press Box

His Mount Tabor girls track team had the cooler poised to douse Esposito and when the official announcement came that gave them the Mid West 4-A Regional Track championship, they dumped it squarely on his head.

Esposito, soaked from head-to-toe, was beaming as his young team approached him to receive its championship trophy.

"They did what they were capable of doing," Esposito said. "We did well in every event and placed in all the relays. That's a pretty good thing."

Unlike most teams in the field, the Spartans' girls didn't rely on individual finishes to spark the

also qualified for next week's 4-A State meet in the 1600- and 3200-meter relays with third place finishes. In addition to Maier, the Spartans had six others to qualify for individual berths in the state meet.

"It was a total team effort," Esposito said. "We scored in every track race but the 100-meter hurdles. That's the mark of a strong team."

Although he wore a deep smile on his face, Esposito said he wasn't really surprised to win the meet.

"We expected to," he said.

SEE MT. TABOR ON B3



Audrena Archie, the lone upperclassman on Mount Tabor's relay teams, also captured third place in the 300-meter hurdles.



North sprinter captures regional titles in 100, 200

By SAM DAVIS
The Chronicle Sports Editor

Montay Wilds got a measure of revenge in the Western 4-A Regional Track Meet at Mount Tabor last Saturday.

But it wasn't without controversy.

Wilds, a senior sprinter on North Forsyth's track team, finished first in the 100- and 200-meter dash. In both events he defeated runners from Dudley and avenged earlier losses. But in both, he also came close to having his chance at this weekend's state championship taken away.

Wilds cruised to victory in the 100 with a time of 10.4 to hold off Chris Justice of Dudley, who recorded a time of 10.5. As he

crossed the finish line, Wilds turned and said something in Justice's direction.

"It was just my way of letting off a little emotion," Wilds said. "I'm an emotional person and it was just my way of celebrating."

Wilds was warned that his "celebration" could be interpreted as taunting and might result in disqualification if it occurred again.

Later in the meet, after regrouping, Wilds captured first place in the 200-meter dash. This time he defeated Dudley's Marcus O'Neal with a time of 21.4. Again, as he crossed the finish line he turned toward the Dudley runner - but he didn't open his mouth.

A complaint was lodged against Wilds and he was initially disqualified from the event and O'Neal was



Montay Wilds of North Forsyth (right) takes a peek at Greensboro Dudley's Marcus O'Neal as he crosses the finish line of the 200-meter dash.

announced as the winner.

But after Tina Heafner, Wilds' coach, complained to the games committee, the ruling was overturned and Wilds was given the first-place finish and the berth in the

state meet that goes along with it.

That victory, combined with his finish in the 100 capped off an impressive performance for Wilds.

SEE NORTH ON B5

Pennington, Carver assistant, takes on task of rebuilding Mustangs basketball program

By SAM DAVIS
The Chronicle Sports Editor

When Parkland tips off its 1997-98 varsity basketball season the Mustangs will be playing for a new head coach.

Mike Pennington, who has served as an assistant coach at Carver for the last seven years, was named to head the Mustangs' program last week.

Pennington will replace Charles Schoederbeck, who resigned last year after less than two years on the job.

"It's just a great opportunity for me," Pennington said, during a recent interview. "It's hard to town down something that I've always dreamed about."

"I'm thankful that Mr. (James) Brandon (Parkland's principal) gave me a chance to become a head

coach," Pennington added. "I had to jump at it." Leaving Carver won't be easy for Pennington.

"I hate to leave Carver because I had built a lot of relationships with the coaches and players," Pennington said. "But I have to take advantage of the opportunity that's been given to me."

Pennington, 33, is a native of

SEE PENNINGTON ON B3

Team looking to regain Magic

By SAM DAVIS
The Chronicle Sports Editor

The Kappa Magic is North Carolina's AAU 16 and 18 team.

That title has made the team a marred name in the state. They have looked to win the title not only the basketball but also the hallway on their own.

The Magic got its first taste of what it is like to be the "number one" team this past weekend in

this past weekend may have been the best thing for his team as it prepares for the AAU Nationals in Greensboro, N.C., beginning June 12.

"This tournament was a wake-up call for me, our team and my assistant coach, Coach John Walker. It was even a wake-up call for our fans, the parents," admitted Allen. "We played against the best, but we

However, Kappa Magic head coach John Allen believes that

SEE NORTH ON B5