

MT. TABOR

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it would be us and Morehead." Morehead, led by first-place finishes by Shanika Scales in the 100- and 200-meter dash, scored 62 points in the meet and finished third. Chapel Hill finished second with 73 points, but neither could seriously challenge Mount Tabor, which scored won going away with 91 points.

"The difference was our sprinters," Esposito said. "I had no idea that they would do as well. They

were challenged to a point, but they responded. They're all freshmen and sophomores so it was pleasing to see them come through in the individual races and relays."

After Maier got the Spartans off to a fast start by winning the discus, Freshman Jessica Rector leaped 5-2 in the high jump to place fourth and earn a berth in the state championship meet.

Angela Breeden and Tinay Ruffin followed with second and third place finishes, respectively,

in the 100 with times of 12.2 each.

Breeden and Ruffin then teamed together in the 800-meter relay team as the Spartans blew away the competition to win the championship. Mount Tabor's time of 1:43.8 was 1.5 seconds faster than second-place Greensboro Smith.

"Angela Breeden is the person who really changes the whole race for us," Esposito said.

Audrena Archie, the only upperclassman on the Spartans' sprint relay teams, qualified for a berth in the state championship in

the 300-meter hurdles by finishing fourth.

"Audrena is like the leader of that group," Esposito said. "She's been here longer than any of them and sets a good example for them with her hard work."

Two other Spartans qualified for the state meet. Allie Unger made it in two events. She placed third in the 1600-meter run and also fought from behind to place fourth in the 800. Elizabeth Pate took second in the 3200 in a time of 12:06.3.

Esposito said his team has a chance to do well at Saturday's state championship, but a state championship might be a stretch for his young team.

"I think the 4x200 and 4x100 teams have a shot," Esposito said. "I think Becky has matured a lot

and she has a good chance. There are two or three others who should place and if they do who knows what might happen.

"Really, I think we may a year away, but who knows. We just want to go down there and have fun and compete."

PENNINGTON

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Beckley, W.Va. He graduated from Concord College in Athens, W.Va., in 1987. At Concord, he played inter-collegiate baseball. He has been at Carver for the last seven years, where he has taught history.

During his tenure at Carver, he has served as an assistant in baseball, basketball and football. He was the Yellowjackets' head junior varsity baseball and football coach while serving as Coach Alfred Poe's



Mike Pennington

No. 1 assistant basketball coach. The Yellowjackets captured the North Piedmont 3-A Conference championship the last two seasons as well as their sectional basketball championships. Carver also made it to the finals of the 3-A Western Regional the last two years.

Pennington said he is grateful for his experiences at Carver.

"Carver was a great place for me to be an assistant coach," Pennington said. "I couldn't have been at a better place to prepare for a head coaching job. Coach Poe

gave me an opportunity to learn and do the things that I needed to become a head coach."

There were a lot of things that attracted Pennington to the Parkland job.

"Parkland's had a great tradition in the past under Coach (Tom) Muse and I don't see why it can't be restored," Pennington said. "Parkland has had a reputation for having good athletes and I'm looking forward to getting over there and getting started. I think there are some real good possibilities."

MAGIC

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didn't bring our 'A' game."

Allen believes that the Gibbons Invitational may have shown his team and his coaching staff the insight into the areas where the Magic need to improve before entering the arena of national AAU competition.

"It (The Bob Gibbons Reebok Invitational) exposed some flaws in our game," admitted Allen. "But they are not any flaws that we can't correct by the time nationals roll around."

The Kappa Magic has been, through the course of the year, a

couple of really good defenders," said Allen. "Each kid had certain strengths and I knew if they would just play to their strength then we would be all right."

That early prediction has held form, when the Magic play well it is as a balanced team. This past weekend the Magic got away from their strengths and allowed their opponents to dictate the tempo of their match-ups.

"What happened in this tournament is that individuals on our teams got personal challenges and some of our kids tried to meet that challenge and got away from our overall team concept," said

ments are won by the best teams," he said. "This last tournament was played under International rules and maybe favored teams with a couple of guys with exceptional skills."

Allen says that neither he nor his team is discouraged and recalls a similar performance from his team earlier in the season.

"I am not despondent about anything - I've lost four games before and the only way you don't lose is if you don't play," he said. "We went to Tennessee earlier this year to play a tournament. We lost three games, refocused and game back to win the State title."

Allen says he will use their recent defeats to spur his team once again, but thinks that he may be able to spare the rod this time around.

"The kids came out of there talking about how they were going to work out on their own to get ready for nationals," he said. The Kappa Magic will begin the process of learning from their last four games with practices that emphasize multiple roles for all of the players.

"Foul trouble and injuries have hurt us," said Allen. "If a kid can't play for whatever reason then everyone else has to step up. We go back to practice now and everyone has to know everyone else's role."

Allen does not believe that the entire tournament was negative. He singled out the exemplary play of several of his players including: Anthony Moore, Derrick Chisholm, David Hairston, Rasheed Wright, Jeremy Booth, Jasper Brown, John Pitts and Chris Jackson.

Allen took a lot of the responsibility for the teams sub par performance on himself.

"I feel like a lot of the blame goes to me for not having us better prepared," he said.

"We need to be prepared so it doesn't matter who we play. If we make them play our style of ball we can beat anyone."

The Kappa Magic will not leave the Bob Gibbons Invitational Tournament behind.



Kappa Magic head coach John Allen and his assistant Julius Walker hold the AAU 16-and-under North Carolina State trophy.



Chronicle J.V. Player of the Year, Anthony Moore (#12) anchors a Kappa Magic team that is getting ready for the 16-and-under AAU National Tournament.

team in the most basic sense of the word. Allen realized early in the season that he had a group of kids that excelled at different parts of the game and that if they were able to mesh together as a unit they would be a dangerous squad with excellent balance.

"We had a couple of kids who were good in rebounding, we had

Allen. "We don't play an individual talent game. When we play well, it is with a team game."

Allen believes that his team's balance is what they need to re-establish and that AAU tournaments like the upcoming Nationals are won by teams not by individual talents.

"I feel like that AAU tourna-

SMITH

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qualify to participate in the regionals.

"We had a fairly big team," Ratliff said. "They might not be the most gifted athletes, but they work really hard. That is important to us."

Smith finished the regular season in the Metro 4-A Conference with an undefeated record. The

Eagles didn't come up to the level they expected in the conference meet and finished third. Going into Saturday's regionals Ratliff expected his team to bounce back and it did, finishing third with 72 points. Durham Hillside, led by two first-place performances by Lamonte Pennington, won the championship with 81.5 points and Greensboro Dudley was third with 78.

With the number of performers

it has qualified for the state meet, Ratliff said he feels good about his team's chances. But even if it doesn't figure in the championship chase, he said the Eagles are continuing to build a tradition of excellence.

"We were conference regular season champions last year and this year," Ratliff said. "We had a chance to win the state championship last year and we have a chance to win it again this year."

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