

College Recruiters Interested In KM Players

With the high school and college football seasons rapidly coming to a close, the college recruiters soon will begin beating paths to the doors of the high school standouts in hopes of getting their signatures on a grant-in-aid.

Several colleges have expressed an interest in some of Kings Mountain High's top grid performers.

Of the 10 senior members of the squad, three have already been sought out by Wofford College and there's a good chance the Terriers will have a Kings Mountain flavor next season.

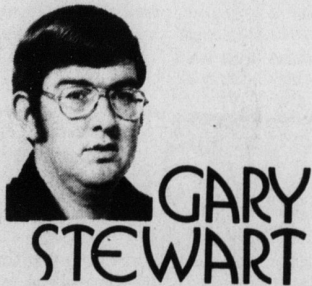
Wofford's high on quarterback Mike Bumgarner, halfback Richard Ross and safety William Thompson. Bumgarner, a three-year starter at quarterback for the Mountaineers, is hoping instead for an appointment to West Point.

"I think there's a good chance he'll get the appointment," says Coach Bobby Jones of the Mountaineers, "and if he gets it, he's hoping to play football there."

If things work out, Bumgarner could be throwing passes for former Davidson coach, Homer Smith, one of the best in the nation in coaching quarterbacks.

Four juniors at KMHS are already getting their names mentioned to college recruiters and were recently invited to Chapel Hill for a University of North Carolina game. Of course, the recruiters can't approach those players personally until after their senior year.

Those four standouts who are sure to get a major college grant include linebackers Bruce Valentine and Scott Ellis, guard Kelly Land and tackle David Gordon. They're four of the top college prospects turned out at KMHS in many years.



GARY STEWART

With the playoffs nearing completion, the All-Conference teams will soon be announced, and you can bet many deserving players will be omitted. Chances are, some deserving KMHS players will be left off the All-SWC team.

These would be my nominations for All-SWC from KMHS:

—Linebackers Bruce Valentine and Scott Ellis, the best two linebackers in the league and the mainstays of the KM defense which held five of its first six opponents to under 100 yards total offense.

—David Gordon, a two-way performer at tackle, one of the league's better blockers and a defensive terror.

—Quarterback Mike Bumgarner, one of the league's better passers, but one who didn't have the best receivers in the world. But, more important, he was a great field general who gave up personal glory for the good of the team, and it paid off with an 8-2 record.

—Tailback Kenny Bell, KM's bread-and-butter runner who was the number two rusher in the SWC.

Tim Spicer, one of KM's best defensive players and one of the most underrated players in the SWC.

—Defensive back Richard Ross, a good cornerback and one of the league's best runners in the second half of the season.

—Linebacker-fullback David Ray Robinson, just a sophomore but one of the best all-round players in the league.

—Offensive tackle Mark Moore, one of the league's best blockers and one of the most dedicated football players you'll ever see.

—Guard Kelly Land, the son of a preacherman but an all-out defensive terror during the 48 minutes of a football game.

And, along with the All-Conference teams, the SWC coaches choose the coach and player of the year. Picking the player of the year will be tough, because there weren't that many people that stood out over the rest, but choosing the league's top coach should be easy.

That honor should go to John Keeter of Chase, who took a team that wasn't picked to be even a winner to a share of the SWC title. But not to be overlooked were some accomplishments of several others, including:

Bobby Jones of Kings Mountain, whose team made the biggest improvement of any in the league, going from a 4-5-1 record in '75 to an 8-2 mark this year. The Mountaineers weren't regarded as a contender, either, but they led the league for the first six weeks and were in the running for the league title throughout the season.

Ron Hendrix, R-S Central, another coach who took a lowly-regarded team and turned it into a winner. And his team solved a tie-breaking vote for first place by upsetting South Point 26-20 in the

season's finale and giving the title to Shelby and Chase.

Gerald Allen, the Shelby mentor, who did his usual good job of leading the Lions to another title. Shelby had only four players back from last year's team but Allen took a bunch of sophomores and juniors and built them into a champion.

Richard Powell, Cherryville, who took a small but spirited Cherryville team and came out with a 5-5 record. Anytime Cherryville goes 5-5 in a league as tough as the SWC, the coaching staff has done a remarkable job.

And, player of the year:

Several players come to mind, but, as previously mentioned, none stood head and shoulders above the rest. There were several great players in the SWC, but consider some of these (starting with KMHS products):

Bruce Valentine and Kelly Land, for reasons already mentioned.

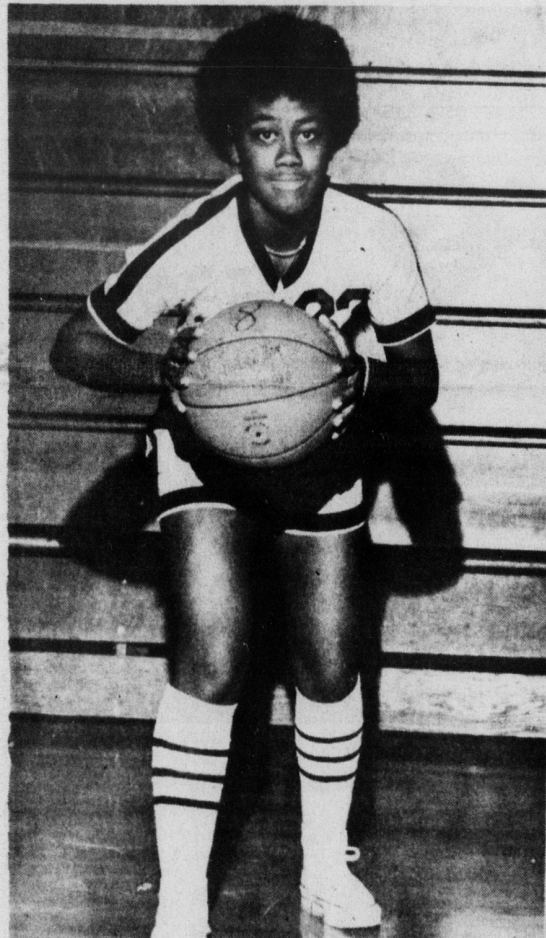
Alan Stroud of Chase, a quarterback who took over for the injured Ron Weathers after the Trojans' 8-7 loss to Kings Mountain, and led the Chase team to eight straight victories and a share of the league title.

Keith Crenshaw, Chase running back and the SWC's leading rusher with over 1,000 yards.

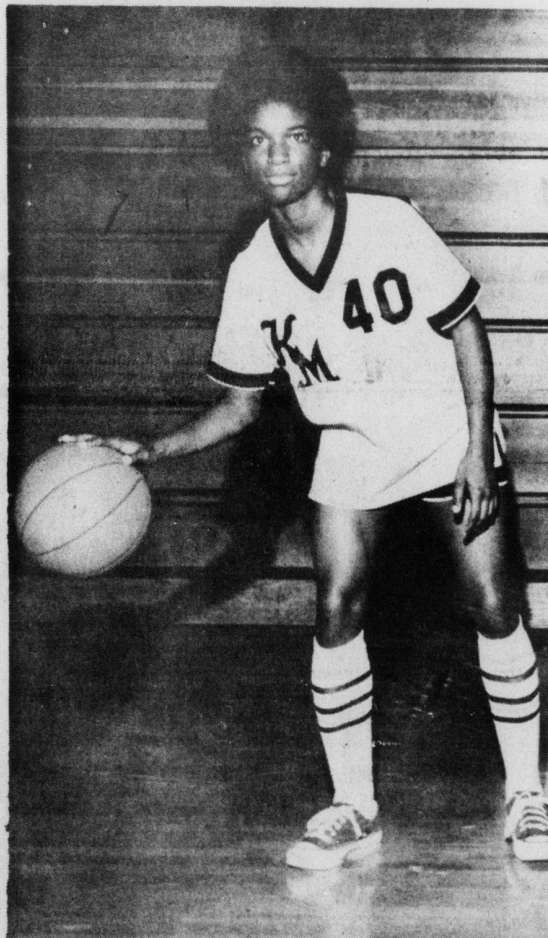
Quarterback Robert Kirkpatrick and halfback Anthony Webber of Shelby, who picked the Lions up after two early-season defeats and led them to another SWC crown.

Mitch Painter of South Point, like Valentine and Land, one of the top defensive players in the league.

Steve Buff of Cherryville, a halfback on both offense and defense, the league's top punter with a 42-yard per kick average.



EYE OPENER — These two Kings Mountain High returning starters are eyeing Monday night's scrimmage with Clover and Wednesday's Southwestern Conference home opener against R-S Central. At left is junior Gayla Roberts, the number two scorer a year



ago, and right is senior Susan Mitchem, who is starting for the Mountaineers for the fourth year in a row. Mitchem has led the team in scoring since her sophomore year.

Cagers Eye Openers

SPORTS

Wednesday, November 24, 1976

Kings Mountain High basketball coaches, Kathy Brooks and John Blalock, will get a chance to see their cagers in game conditions Monday night when they travel to Clover for a scrimmage with the Blue Eagles.

Both KMHS clubs have been practicing a month for their Southwestern Conference opener next Wednesday night against R-S Central. That twinbill, beginning at 6:30, is set for the KMHS gym.

Both local coaches are in their first year as head mentors here. Mrs. Brooks coached last year at Alleghany High School in Sparta and Blalock, who was head coach at Compact for several years, was the KMHS jayvee coach.

Both teams have several returning starters off teams that posted winning records a year ago, so chances for winning seasons appear good.

The Mountaineers will sport one of the league's top performers in senior Susan Mitchem, who has been the KMHS scoring leader since her sophomore season. She was also the team's most valuable player last year.

Mrs. Brooks' main problem will be replacing last year's senior leaders, Cheryl Lutz and Elizabeth Eaker. But some of last year's reserves and some promising sophomores up from the junior high team look like they're capable of filling the need.

Gayla Roberts, a junior, returns to a starting spot and with Mitchem form one of the top 1-2 scoring punches in the SWC. Also returning is junior center Judy Henderson, who was the team's best rebounder and number three scorer last year.

Sherry Ingram, who started last year before being lost for the season because of an injury, has been sparking in early-season drills and Mrs. Brooks says she has also been impressed with the play of sophomores Angie Hickman and Priscilla Rickenbacker. Phyllis Mack, a part-time starter last year, has also looked good.

A pair of six-footers, Felicia Bristol and Deborah Hayes, should fill in well for Henderson under the boards.

"Everybody's real excited," says Coach Brooks, "and we're anxious to get the season started."

The Mountaineers return three starters from last year's team which finished second in the regular season SWC chase under Coach Allen Dixon.

William Thompson, who has been starting for the Mounties since his freshman season, should rank among the top scorers and rebounders in the league, but Coach Blalock is counting on several others to give KMHS a balanced attack.

One who has looked exceptionally well thus far has been 6-4 William Lock-

hart, a transfer from Crest. His presence was needed greatly under the boards.

Eddie Ingram, a returnee, should give the Mountaineers the outside scoring they need to keep the opposing defenses from double-teaming Thompson and Lockhart, and Coach Blalock says he's been amazed with the improvement of center Bobby Odoms, who was a part-time starter last winter.

Sophomores Glenn Ellis and Vernon Bell, who helped lead KM Junior High to an undefeated season and the Foothills Conference crown last season, have been impressive and will probably crack the starting unit. Alan Cloninger, Terry McClain, Jeff Prescott, and others, should give the Mounties adequate bench strength.

Blalock, who coached one state champion at Compact, has as his goal to return the Mountaineers to the success they enjoyed in the late 1960's and early 1970's, when they won three SWC titles in four years under Don Parker and Bobby Hussey. During those championship seasons the Mounties had records of 20-1, 25-1, and 23-1, once going to the Western N. C. High Schools Activities Association finals.

"We have a good nucleus," says Blalock. "I've been telling the players I want to win 20 games and play for the championship. I really believe we can do it."

The task won't be easy, however. Shelby, last year's champion, and Crest, which tied KM for second place, have most of their players returning and several other clubs are said to be much improved.

As for the girls race, North Gaston, which breezed through the SWC unbeaten and reached the WNCCHSAA finals before losing, has four of its starters back and is regarded as a shoo-in to repeat in '76-77.

Temperatures Rising

WINSTON-SALEM Re-member that television show of a few years ago called "Temperatures Rising?" It laughed itself out of the ratings and off the air but will be replaced this weekend by a new series that will sometimes be seen on television, sometimes not, with a plot that follows seven basketball coaches through the terror of an Atlantic Coast Conference season.

The first act unfolds this weekend against the backdrop of the Greensboro Coliseum when Wake Forest, Duke, North Carolina, and North Carolina State collide in a sweet fury known as the Big Four Tournament. All characters involved have serious questions about the timing of Act One.

In the past, the early part of the ACC basketball schedule has been devoted to tuning up for the post-Christmas rush, but not in 1976. The drama has been

orchestrated in such a manner that all watchers will have an early cardiac exercise before March and the ACC tournament. But for the coaches there are major questions about the script.

How do you get a finely tuned cast ready for such an opening? How important will be the Big Four be in establishing momentum, an early favorite in the race, or the ultimate outcome? How will rookies fare under such immediate exposure? How well prepared will the teams be? And will the critics expect midseason form?

No crystal ball, no ardent fan, no writer, no coach, and no player can answer these questions regardless of how heavily they may weigh on the minds of league mentors.

Some coaches are saying it's good to have the tourney early to get it out of the way. Others say it comes

the weekly deacon

BY PAT GAINEY

too early for untested teams. There are too many unsolved personnel questions says one coach. Another says it's an ideal baptism under fire for their players, especially newcomers.

In the final analysis the coaches are saying "We don't know what to expect." The tourney results do not figure into the regular season standings and that'll be a blessing for those who leave Thanksgiving weekend without glittering hardware. The winning coach most

assuredly will be hoping they have established an early psychological edge that could be a factor later in the season.

Regardless of how the tourney ends we will see the scheduled reappearance of that unique individual known as the ACC fan. For him the rivalries born long ago will return with fresh fuel for the fires. Through it all he will relish the sweet agony of yet another ACC season and that alone will make it Thanksgiving weekend times 16.

Somewhere next weekend there will be a happy coach, two who are concerned, and one who will perhaps head back to the drawing board. Still, the questions will linger for all and there will be no answers until the dust clears again at the Greensboro Coliseum on March 5. Have a happy, safe, and sane Thanksgiving weekend.



Photo By Gary Stewart

MIDGET QUEEN — Sonya Smith, left, is shown here being crowned Queen of the John Henry Moss Football Classic by Mayor Moss. Sonya will crown this

year's queen Saturday at Gamble Stadium during halftime of the midget game between Kings Mountain and Long Island, N. Y.