

# 'Some People Play Golf And Fish, I Run A Baseball League' - John Henry Moss

Kings Mountain Mayor John Henry Moss is in the news frequently these days, usually obtaining federal grants for the city, breaking ground for a new city project or cutting a ribbon to open a new store in the business district.

Everyone knows about the Mayor with the Midas touch.

Lost in the shadows of those accomplishments in recent times has been John Henry's baseball life, which many may have thought had died.

But Moss is still active in the sport, probably more so than ever.

Organizer and President of the Western Carolinas League, Moss recently reached the Pike's Peak of his baseball career. At the annual winter meeting in Honolulu, he was elected Vice President of the National Association of Baseball Leagues and Chairman of the Executive Committee.

In short, his new duties is to assist President Bobby Bragan in overseeing the 19 minor leagues in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Others on the Executive Committee are Joe Rhyne, President of the American Association, and Pat McKernan, President of the Eastern League.

Moss, needless to say, is happy with his selection by his peers.

"It's the highest position I've held in baseball to date," he said, "and I'm honored to be selected. I look forward to serving in this capacity."

More than the title, however, Moss is excited about being in a better position to better the game of baseball.

"I feel we can do many things to develop the game on a broader scale in addition to continuing to develop the respective leagues in the National Association," he says. "I feel we can support community recreational and scholastic programs from the tee leagues on up through Babe Ruth, Legion, high school and college baseball."



GARY STEWART

One of the ways Moss feels youth baseball can be improved is through better practice equipment and he's recently been involved in a study to urge the use of pitching machines in baseball and passing machines in football.

With the use of a pitching machine, Moss says, teams can get three times as much batting practice in a single session, simply because the use of a machine eliminates the wildness of a batting practice pitcher. Also, he said, the machine throws four pitches (fastball, curve, slider and knuckleball) and throws the corners of the plate as well as down the middle.

Promoting baseball is one of the things Moss loves best. In 1948 when he first organized the WCL, he was the youngest league president in the history of the game. After spending several years in the Detroit Tiger front office, he returned to Kings Mountain and re-organized the WCL in '59 and has been its president ever since.

As for any more personal goals, Moss says he has none. He looks on his recent appointment as head of the executive committee as the tops.

"Baseball for me is a hobby," he says. "Some people like to play golf and fish. I run a baseball league."

For the minor leagues in general and the WCL particularly, however, Moss has plenty of goals left to achieve.

He can foresee the WCL returning to an eight-team league in the near future as there is now considerable interest in Greenville, S. C., and Hickory, N. C. The only thing standing in the way of those cities is the lack of adequate facilities.

The minor leagues, he feels are still the best training ground for major league talent and Moss is proud of the fact that last year the 19 minor leagues drew more fans than in any year since 1954, 13,461,355.

Several years ago, you'll recall, some baseball people were urging the major league clubs to throw more support to college baseball in hopes of using the colleges as a training ground.

But, Moss said that idea didn't work and never will. "It was found lacking for two reasons," he says. "One, the colleges play a limited number of games, and, two, it's a four-year process."

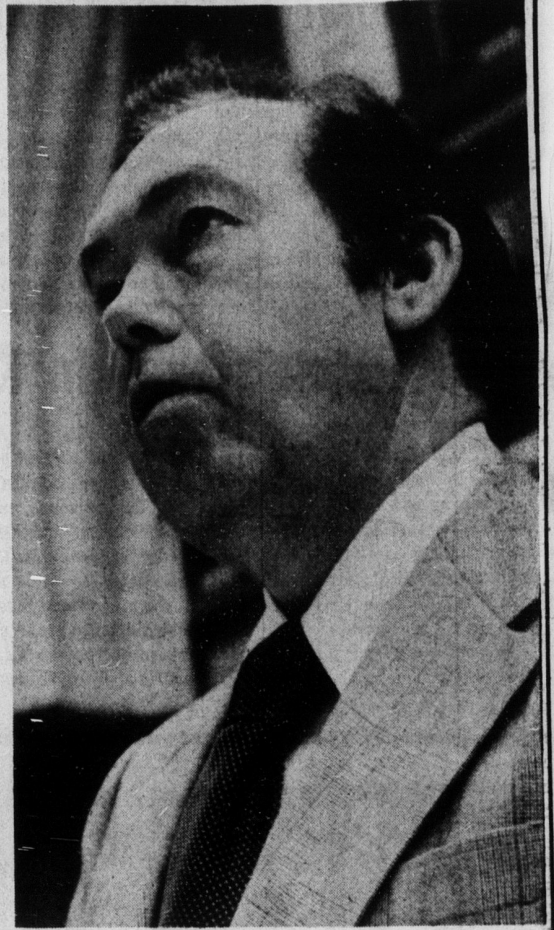
"A young man can come into a Class A league like the Western Carolinas League and in three years or less go to superstar status in the major leagues. It's difficult to go from college to the major leagues."

"I think we had a tremendous year in the majors and minor leagues," he said of '77. "We're developing outstanding players and both leagues are very competitive. We're getting a good flow of talent from the minors... just look at the rookies of the year."

Moss takes great pride in the fact that almost one-third of the over 600 major league ballplayers are WCL products.

"A man could make a good living representing the free agents who are WCL graduates," Moss quipped. "We could take a long vacation with the percentage we could have made this year by representing Lyman Bostock and Richie Zask."

Probably the biggest honor Moss has achieved in baseball, though, is the close relationships he has enjoyed with the greats of the game. He can walk into any



John Henry Moss

minor or major league park in three countries and be recognized. He's on a first-name basis with people like Hank Aaron, Mickey Mantle, and Bob Feller, and the list goes on and on. Now, that's a hobby.

## Mountaineers Second In Tipoff Tourney

# Cagers Resume SWC Play Tonight At R-S Central

Kings Mountain High's cagers resume Southwestern 3-A Conference play tonight with a twinbill at R-S Central.

The KMHS girls, who have been idle since December 20 when they defeated East Rutherford, will carry a 4-2 SWC record into the contest and they're two games behind league-leading Burns (6-0).

The Mountaineers will carry a 3-3 SWC mark and 4-4 overall figure into tonight's game after a finishing second in last week's Cleveland County Tipoff Tournament.

KMHS fell to unbeaten Crest 77-63 in the championship game Thursday after knocking off host Shelby in the first round. Shelby defeated Burns 74-36 to claim third place.

The Mountaineers played the highly-rated Chargers on almost even terms for three quarters, but Ed Peeler's men used a full-court pressing defense and an excellent fast break offense to break the game open early in the fourth period.

Kings Mountain trailed by just 30-25 at halftime and 46-42 going into the fourth quarter, and the Mountaineers pulled to within two (46-44) after the fourth period tipoff, but the Chargers reeled off six unanswered points and broke

to a 59-49 lead with five minutes to play.

KM's Vernon Bell led all scorers with 22 points and Everette Burris added 14 but they were the only double-

digit scorers for John Blalock's charges.

The Mountaineers came from a 53-49 deficit in the final 30 seconds Wednesday night to defeat Shelby 56-53 and earn a

spot in the championship game against the Chargers.

Baskets by Timmy Adams and Jeff Prescott, who scored 16 and 10 points, respectively, to lead the KM effort, knotted

the score at 53-all and then a bucket by Vernon Bell, who had nine points, gave the Mountaineers the lead for good, 55-53. KM's final point came on a free throw by Bell,

The victory enabled the Mountaineers to break a three-game losing skid. It was also their second win of the season over the Golden Lions, who are off to one of their

worst starts in years. Kings Mountain trailed in the early stages but came back to lead by 25-21 at halftime and 41-35 going into the fourth quarter.

## G-W Plays The Abbey

### Wednesday In Charlotte Dome

A big college basketball doubleheader is slated Wednesday night at the Charlotte Coliseum.

Two of the top NAIA clubs, Gardner-Webb and Belmont Abbey, will get the action underway at 7 p. m. and the 9 p. m. nightcap will match two of the top teams in the Southern Conference, Davidson and Marshall.

The Davidson-Marshall contest will feature three of the Southern Conference's top five scorers. Davidson's John Gerdy (28.4) leads the SC and ranks fourth nationally. Chris Dodds (23.9) is third in the conference and 22nd nationally. Marshall (4-4

going into a Dec. 30 game against Detroit) counters with Carlos Gibson, a 22.6 scorer who is fifth in the conference and 40th in the NCAA. Before the Detroit game Gibson led the nation in free throw shooting and had made 44 straight over two seasons.

The opening game of the doubleheader matches two of the area's top NAIA schools. Gardner-Webb, led by forward Carl Martin and Lewis Young was 10-0 entering the Bulldogs own tournament Dec. 30-31. Abbey, keyed by senior forward Desmond Dennis, will take a 6-2 record into the doubleheader at the Coliseum.

Tickets for the doubleheader may be purchased at the Charlotte Coliseum or through the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce. They are priced at \$3, \$4 and \$5.

## Gamble Fourth In Golf

Kings Mountain's Johnny Gamble, a freshman at the University of North Carolina, finished fourth in the college division of the Riverbend Holiday, Classic Golf Tournament last Thursday.

Gamble fired a five over par 77 to finish seven strokes behind Gardner-Webb's Steve Sherman. Larry Penley of Dallas and Clemson won a sudden death playoff for second place over UNC-Charlotte's Chris Tucker after they tied at 76.

Several Kings Mountain golfers competed in the 15-17 year old division, including Darrell Austin, Herbie Beam, Darrell Forbes and Delk Haigler, but none of them placed.

# We're Fighting for Your Life

American Heart Association

## Famous last words

"It's just a little chest pain, it couldn't be anything serious."

"Two aspirin, an antacid, and in a couple of hours I'll be as good as new."

"This couldn't be anything to worry about, I'm as healthy as a horse."

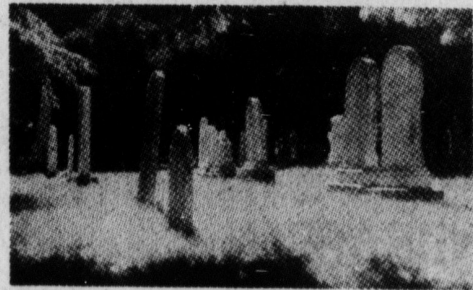
"If I went to the hospital and it wasn't a heart attack, they'd probably think I was some kind of nut."

"It's only indigestion."

"It's probably just tension."

"If the pain doesn't stop in the next hour, then I'll call the doctor."

"It's just a little heart burn, what else could it be?"



The facts are simple. And tragic. Many people who have a heart attack will deny it. They refuse to believe that something that serious could be happening to them.

They come up with all sorts of excuses and explanations. They worry about the embarrassment of being wrong. Half of them wait three hours or more before they try to get help. But by then, one out of two is past help. Because he's dead.

Don't let this happen to you. If you feel an uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the center of your chest (that may spread to your

shoulders, neck or arms) and if it lasts for two minutes or more, get help. For you could be having a heart attack.

Severe pain, dizziness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath may also occur but these signals are not always present. Sharp, stabbing twinges of pain are usually not signals of a heart attack.

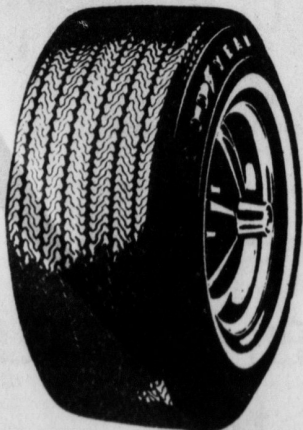
Don't delay. Call the emergency medical service immediately. If you can get to a hospital with emergency cardiac care faster in any other way, do so.

Recognize what's happening. Get help fast. Your life may depend on it.

American Heart Association. WE'RE FIGHTING FOR YOUR LIFE.

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