

East Gaston Had Best Overall Record In SWC

KM Native Adams Takes His Program To The Top



Adams, left, Van Dyke talk strategy...

By GARY STEWART
Sports Editor

Most coaches only dream about the kind of season Kings Mountain native Jerry Adams had with his East Gaston High Warriors during the 1978-79 school year.

Adams, who believes in a wide-open offense in both football and baseball, coached his gridders and diamondmen to Southwestern 3-A Conference titles and his school's entire athletic program won the SWC's All-Sports Trophy for having the best all-round record.

Adams and his talented assistant coach, Darrell Van Dyke, also a KM product, took their baseballers to the state 3-A finals, where they lost a best-of-three championship series to White Oak High of Jacksonville.

"We felt real good about getting out of the conference," said Adams, a former All-State lineman at KMHS and Western Carolina. "We felt all along that we were playing in one of the strongest conferences in the state and as we moved through the playoffs that became very evident."

The Warriors defeated Mooresville, T. C. Roberson and South Stokes to reach the state finals. They had a final record of 18-8. Five of those losses were to SWC teams, including two to Kings Mountain.

"After being defeated by White Oak," he added, "we still felt the best team we played was Kings Mountain. I'm not saying that because of being from

Kings Mountain, but because it's a fact. We lost 5-3 and 4-2 to White Oak but with a few breaks we could have come back home state champions.

"We still feel good about being number two in the state," he went on. "When two good teams meet, the one that gets the breaks will win, and White Oak got the breaks."

"The series we had with Kings Mountain was the best one I've ever seen or coached," he went on. "Defensively, we were well matched. Offensively, I thought we hit the ball a little better. Both of us had good pitching in Freddy Petty for us and Tim Leach for Kings Mountain, and I think our Wayne Kinley is going to rank in their category before he's through. I feel like David Ray Robinson of the Mountaineers was also a good pitcher. He did an excellent job every time he pitched against us."

"I think the type of series we had is good for baseball," he went on. "All of the kids know each other, and all of them are good athletes. Kings Mountain was a well-coached team. Barry Gibson does a good job and I have a lot of respect for him."

East Gaston won the SWC championship series against the Mounties, two games to one, coming from three runs down to win the title game 7-5. The two teams split a pair of one-run decisions in regular seasonplay.

"How I feel about our season is beyond any imagination," said Adams. "Coach Van Dyke helped



JERRY ADAMS

been in the SWC for seven years after Stanley and Mt. Holly, two perennial powers in the old 2-A Gaston County Conference, and the football title last fall was their first SWC title in a major sport.

Most of the credit for the program's improvement belongs to Adams, who took over the program after several years as an assistant coach in South Carolina and a brief stint as head coach at Bessemer City. Adams installed new systems which took a few years to perfect but now has the athletic program on a solid foundation, as evidenced by the school's winning the All-Sports Trophy.

me a lot. He'll be taking over as head coach next year and I think he'll make a great coach. He's very energetic and knowledgeable and eager to learn."

Winning championships is a new feeling for East Gaston. The Warriors have

"We won the trophy by one point (over KMHS and Shelby)," recalled Adams, "so we're not going to be satisfied. We're going to try to keep improving our program. If we sit around and be satisfied, it'll be right back where it was."

The Southwest Conference is very competitive."

Adams will have little time to rest, as he is already planning for the beginning of fall football practice.

"If you plan on competing," he says, "you have to put a lot of time in. The athletes do it, so you have to do it yourself," he says.

Adams says three things contribute to a successful athletic program.

"First," he says, "it takes a dedicated coaching staff that works well together. I feel like we have that at East Gaston. Secondly, you have to have an atmosphere where the athletes have confidence in the coaches and in themselves, and I feel like we have this. And thirdly, you have to have good material, and I feel like we have this."

All of that could be bad news for East Gaston foes for years to come.

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A Busman's Holiday: Sports And Pictures

What does a sports writer-photographer do on his vacation? Take a busman's holiday, of course, and attend sporting events and take pictures.

My wet vacation began two weeks ago when I attended the first two rounds of the Kemper Open, where I got soaked on Thursday and tried out a new 135 millimeter lens on my almost new Olympus OM-1 camera Friday.

I attended most of the Kemper Opens at Quail Hollow Country Club in Charlotte but I believe this last one was the best ever. I saw some of the best golf I've ever seen and had the best time because I went with friends instead of going specifically to cover it.

Dub Blalock, Garrison Goforth, Bill Sellers and I had the privilege of following Craig Stadler on his record-breaking round of 10-under-par 62 in Thursday's opening round, and we stayed at the 18th green to see Jerry McGee come along 30 minutes later and break Stadler's mark with a 61. McGee went on to win the \$83,000 first prize.

Blalock, Ken Cloninger, Lyn Valentine, Chuck Austin, Ronnie Wilson and I followed Masters champion Fuzzy Zoeller on Friday and had a ball listening to his quips. He'll soon make golf fans forget Lee Trevino and Chi Chi Rodriguez.

I guess the two things I learned most at the Kemper were that Garrison Goforth and I can't get under the same umbrella (we got soaked Thursday) and Dub Blalock will walk your legs off. My feet and legs are still sore!

The second part of my busman's holiday took the family to the mountains of North Carolina, where we never saw the sun shine (and got soaked again) but had a ball. We took over four rolls of film even though it was so rainy and foggy you couldn't see more than about 30 feet ahead of you.

All the years I've gone to nearby Chimney Rock I had never realized the true beauty of it until this time. My wife, Mary Jo, and I took our two little ones, five-year-old Leigh Anne and two-year-old Dee, walking on the nature trail for the first time. Other than braving the rain, our biggest task was keeping the independent Dee (who didn't want to be led) from tumbling down the side of the mountain.

A note to anyone thinking of going to Chimney Rock for a day. Don't hang around the Rock and gift shops. Walk that nature trail and be sure to go to the waterfall at the top of the mountain. It takes almost two hours to walk there and back, but it's worth every aching step of it. It's one of the most beautiful things in God's creation. And be sure you take a camera and about 10 rolls of film. I snapped up most of my film before I ever got there and was sorry I didn't save plenty.

The kicker to the whole vacation came last Saturday when we met my wife's sister, Joye Spencer, her husband, Ed, and their daughter, Julie, in Taylorsville for a trip to the Land of Oz, where we'd promised for months to take our children.



GARY STEWART

We left early Saturday morning so we'd have all day, drove through Banner Elk and were taking our turn up to the top of the mountain to Oz when Ed noticed a sign on the side of the road which read "Land of Oz, opening June 28."

The embarrassing thing was that all four of the adults had discount coupons that had the same information on them, but none of us had bothered to read them.

So, we started back down the mountain and stopped off at Tweetsie, where we rode rides in the rain, took another in a long list of countless rides on the Tweetsie railroad and listened to the ageless Fred Kirby sing "Every Time It Rains, It Rains Pennies From Heaven." With the admission price at Tweetsie, though, it rains dollars.



Photo by Gary Stewart

Kemper Open champion Jerry McGee...