

# 1979 Record-Breaking Year For KM's Mack

The sports year 1979 in Kings Mountain will be remembered as one of near misses for the Kings Mountain High teams, another year of championships for the junior high and a record year for the Mountaineers' talented senior football player, Kevin Mack.

One conference loss kept the high school from winning five Southwestern 3-A Conference titles. The junior high added three more championship trophies to its collection and Mack set three KMHS rushing records and won a full athletic scholarship to Clemson University.

The KMHS teams that could have won or shared the SWC title with one more victory included the boys and girls tennis teams, baseball, wrestling and football.

Both tennis teams finished second to perennial SWC champion Shelby, the boys last spring and the girls in the fall. But the tennis program did win a prize of sorts when Coach Ed Guy was named co-winner of the girls tennis coach of the year award.

The wrestling team finished second to East Gaston in both the regular season and tournament. However, the Mountaineers went on to finish highest of any SWC team in the sectional and regional tournaments. Kings Mountain's second place finish in the conference was due to the fact that Coach Steve Moffitt's team had to forfeit three weight classes in every match, which put them behind 18 points.

The baseball team lost a best-of-three series with East Gaston for the SWC title and East Gaston, coached by former KMHS athletes Jerry Adams and Darrell Van Dyke, went on to play in the state championship series.

The Mountaineers and Warriors staged some of the best games in SWC history, and most of them boiled down to a pitcher's duel between Kings Mountain's talented junior southpaw, Tim Leach, and East Gaston's fastballing righthander, Freddy Petty. Petty won the SWC Player of the Year award and Leach finished second but KM Coach Barry Gibson edged out Adams in the coach of the year voting.

The Mountaineer gridder had the SWC title and a berth in the state playoffs in seemingly easy grasp when they led unbeaten South Point 12-8 with three minutes to play. But a 60-yard bomb from quarterback Jeff Williams to end Tim Rector gave the Raiders a 15-12 lead, then the Big Red defense intercepted a KM pass at the 10 to seal the championship. South Point went on to win the state title with a perfect 14-0 record.

Even though they lost the title game, the Mountaineers compiled an 8-2 record, their best since 1976, and produced one of the school's all-time great running backs in Mack.

The senior speedster set school records for most yards rushing in a single season (1,585), most yards rushing in a single game (287) and the longest scoring run from scrimmage (100 yards).

Mack was a unanimous selection to the All-Conference team and finished second to

## Basketball Tourney Set

The city parks and recreation department is sponsoring its first annual Christmas Invitational Basketball Tournament today through Saturday at the community center.

Action gets underway each day at 1 p.m. The event will feature some of the top teams in the Piedmont area, many of them featuring former college and professional stars.

Admission is free. Teams entered include the Gastonia Sonics, which features former Wake Forest star Tony Byers; China Grove Bullets, Charlotte PTL, The Gastonia Gang House Gang, featuring former college stars John Lynch of Lenoir Rhyne and Robert Earl Blue of UNC-Charlotte; Kings Mountain Parkdale, featuring former KMHS stars Vernon Bell and Timmy Adams; Daniel Construction of Shelby, featuring former pro player Steve Peeler and former Gardner-Webb standout Phil Cox; J&C Dyeing of Shelby and the Charlotte Sonics.

Williams in the player of the year balloting.

Mack gave Mountaineer fans a hint of what might come in football last spring when he began breaking the 10-second mark in the 100 yard dash. He got down to 9.72 and finished fifth in the state track meet at Raleigh. That fifth place finish represented the best ever for a KMHS cinderman.

The junior high added championships in boys varsity basketball and baseball and

junior varsity football to keep alive its string of having won league titles in every year of its existence. Ken Napier coached the basketball champions, Porter Griggs baseball and David Heffner football.

Most of the minor sports at the junior and senior high also enjoyed winning seasons, but missed out on the championships.

The KMHS volleyball team finished fourth in the SWC but produced both the player and

coach of the year. Junior standout Diane Williams won player of the year honors and joined teammate Debbie Appling on the all-conference team. Coach Kathy Brooks won coach of the year recognition.

The year 1979 was also a good one for former KM athletes now in the college ranks.

Chris Johnson closed out a good four-year football career at Gardner-Webb by setting a school record for pass interceptions. He finished his

career with 25 interceptions, beating the old school mark of 22 set by Gastonia's Richard Wofford.

Chuck Gordon, a KM sophomore at Appalachian, started at tackle for the Mountaineers, Kelly Land started on specialty teams at Lenoir Rhyne and Richard Ross was on the varsity squad at Wofford.

A former KMHS athlete, Mike Ware of Newberry, S.C., was an assistant coach on the South

Carolina Shrine Bowl team and helped the South Carolina all-stars post another victory over their North Carolina rivals.

Former KMHS basketball coach, Bobby Hussey, led Belmont Abbey to its second straight 20-win season and at the start of the current season led the Crusaders to the championship of the annual WBTV Carolina Classic. The Crusaders are presently undefeated and appear to be a strong shot to win the District 26 NAIA title.

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