

Photo by Gary Stewart

GAME HERO — Kings Mountain's Carl Smith (15) shoots a 10-foot jump shot for the winning points in the Mountaineers' 69-67 Southwestern 3-A Conference victory over

defending state champion R-S Central Hilltoppers Tuesday night at the KMHS gym. The loss snapped a 43-game winning streak for the visiting R-S five.

Jayvees Defeat R-S, Run Record To 9-0

Kings Mountain High's jayvee basketballers ran their unbeaten record to 9-0 Tuesday afternoon at home with a 63-53 victory over previously unbeaten R-S Central.

The Little Mounties, making their first start since the holiday break, broke to a 30-20 halftime advantage and maintained a comfortable lead the rest of the way.

Three players scored in double figures for Coach Danny McDowell's club. Frank Parker led all scorers with 21 points, Avery Greir added 15 and David Hager 12. Grier had 15 rebounds and David Peeler dished out nine

assists.

"The guys really got themselves geared up for R-S," said McDowell. "We had a good transition game. The guards really pushed the ball up court."

A big key in the victory was KM's man-to-man defense in the first half, which McDowell termed "our best man to man defense of the year." R-S didn't shoot a foul shot during the first half.

Kings Mountain scored six unanswered points at the start of the second half to break the game open. The Mounties were

up by 45-31 going into the fourth quarter.

"Peeler, who was starting for the first time, played a solid floor game with nine assists, and the wing people, Parker and John Barnett, played their best defensive game together this season. Parker had a fine shooting night as well," said McDowell.

"David Hager had a good game scoring from inside," he went on, "and Grier did a super job off the board. He just dominated the boards."

"I was real pleased with the team's play," he went on. "This was the biggest win so far this year. I am very proud of these young men."

The Little Mountaineers travel to South Point Friday for a 4:30 game.

THE BOXSCORE

KM (63) — Parker 21, Grier 15, Hager 12, Barnett 8, Brown 4, Odems 3.

RS (53) — Patterson 18, Wilkerson 6, Camper 6, Carpenter 5, Hamilton 5, Davis 3, Logan 4, Gray 4.

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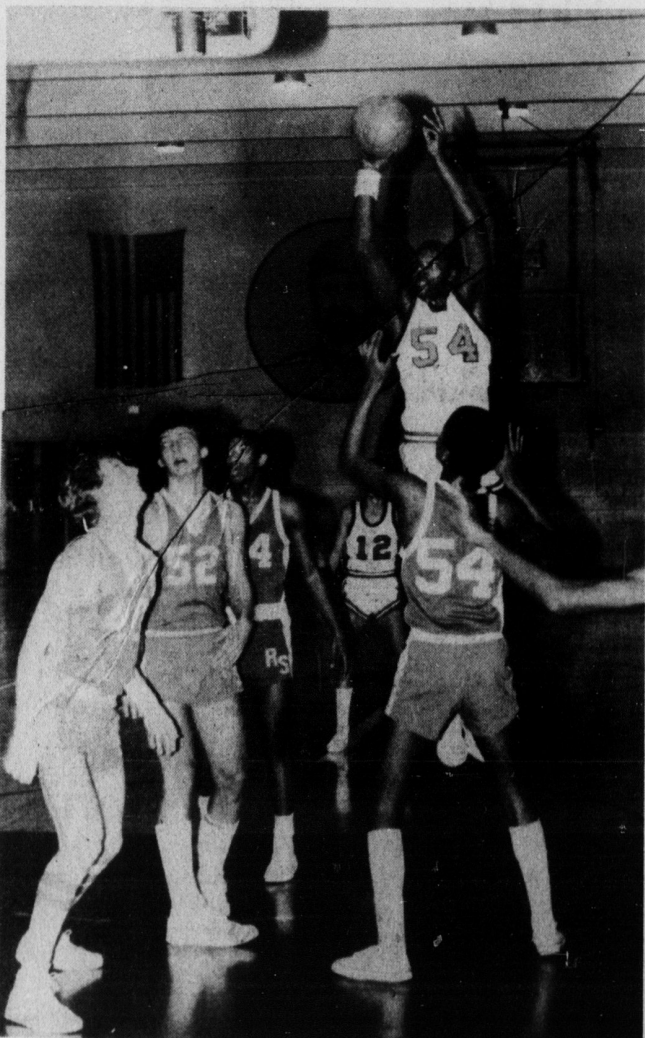


Photo by Gary Stewart

LEADS JVS — Avery Grier (54) goes up for two points in the Kings Mountain-R-S Central junior varsity basketball game Tuesday afternoon at the KMHS gym. The Little Mountaineers won 63-53 to run their season's record to 9-0.

69-67 SWC Thriller

Mountaineers Snap R-S Winning Streak

By GARY STEWART
Co-Editor

Coach John Blalock prayed for it.

Point guard Carl Smith never doubted it.

Visiting R-S Central fans probably never expected it.

But it happened.

Kings Mountain's Mountaineers, like a bunch of little Davids in a land of Goliaths, broke a 67-67 tie on Smith's last-second basket to defeat the Hilltoppers 69-67 Tuesday night at the KMHS gym and end the longest winning streak in North Carolina prep basketball.

For R-S Central, the defending state 3-A champions, the defeat ended a 43-game winning streak and was only its fifth loss in 72 outings in three years under Coach Stacy Lail.

For the Mountaineers, who have faltered the last 10 years after once being the king of Southwestern 3-A Conference basketball, the victory returned them to the throne.

The Mountaineers, now 7-0 in SWC and 10-1 overall, today are alone at the top of the 10-team circuit. R-S Central, whose last defeat came to Shelby in the district tournament two years ago, fell to second place with a 6-1 conference record and 11-1 overall figure.

The game, witnessed by a standing-room-only crowd of over 1,300, was championship-calibre from the opening tipoff. Neither team was able to break the game open, even though the Hilltoppers ran up a seven-point advantage in the third period and the Mounties went up by as many as six in the fourth period.

Kings Mountain scored the first four points of the second half following a 33-33 halftime tie to go up by 37-33, but R-S scored 10 unanswered points to assume the lead.

The Mounties didn't lead again until the 5:50 mark of the fourth period when reserve Paul Ingram hit a bucket to make the score 57-55. Demetrius Goode hit a driving layup from the baseline to widen the gap to 59-55 and Smith hit two foul shots with 5:08 left to make it 61-55.

Kings Mountain operated from the four-corners offense the entire fourth period and it looked like the keep-away ballhandling of Smith and Ingram had the Hilltoppers too confused to mount a comeback.

But they struck quickly following two straight KMHS turnovers and following a tap-in

SPORTS

by 6-6 center Chris Michaels at the 3:11 mark, were back within two at 63-61.

The KM lead stayed at two to four points until the final minute. With 49 seconds left, the Hilltoppers' Troy Harris stole the ball from Smith at halfcourt and dished off an assist to Rimpson Duffy, who scored a layup to tie it at 67-all.

Coach Blalock then mapped his final strategy.

"We called timeout," he said, "and I told them to hold the ball and call time again with 20 seconds left." That, they did.

"Then," added the veteran mentor, "I told them to hold the ball down to the seven-second mark, and for Smith to drive the lane and try to pick up a foul. If he didn't get the foul, I wanted him to either shoot the ball, or pass it off to Gerald Byers or Terrence Blalock for the final shot."

Smith carried the plan out to perfection. With seven seconds left, he drove the lane. When he didn't draw the foul, he stopped 10 feet shy of the goal and popped in a jumper as the final seconds ticked off the clock.

"I had been scared to death all day long," said Coach Blalock, "but Smith said all along we were going to beat them. He never doubted it one second."

Smith was the big gun all night long for the Mounties, and it was fitting that he should sink the winning basket. His 21 points were high for both teams. Byers added 16 and Blalock and Goode 11 each for the Mounties. Chris Michaels led the Hilltoppers with 17.

"We had been praying for this victory since November," said Blalock. "I prayed that we'd both be undefeated when we met, and that the gym would be packed."

"I'm just as proud as I can be for the kids," he went on. "They are the ones that made it happen. It's been on their minds since November and they've worked hard in practice every day."

"I consider this the biggest win since I've been here," he continued. "The fans were behind us and the players really came out to play. We didn't rebound as

well as we wanted to. We would really be tough if we could rebound better."

Even though the tall and talented Michaels led the R-S attack with 17, he was defended well by Blalock and Ingram, and eventually fouled out with 1:23 to play. Blalock held the All-Conference star to just six points in the first half.

"That was a big key to us," said Blalock. "We wanted to make him throw the ball long, and Terrence and Paul did a good job on him. But everybody did a super job."

Kings Mountain's girls weren't as fortunate in the opener and lost their seventh game in 11 outings, 57-48.

The Lady Hilltoppers led from the outset and placed three players in double figures. Vera Young led the way with 18, Christine Logan added 17 and Lori Lynch 14. Sheryl Goode scored 17 and Diane Williams 13 for Kings Mountain.

The big difference came at the foul line, where R-S hit 17 of 30 attempts and Kings Mountain managed only 8 of 20.

"That's the best girls team I've seen all year," said KM Coach David Brinkley after the game. "The foul shooting was the difference."

The Mountinettes did mount a mild comeback in the fourth quarter after trailing by 44-33 after three periods. They managed to trim the margin to eight.

The two KMHS teams travel to South Point Friday for a SWC twinbill and close out first round play at home Tuesday night against Crest.

GIRLS GAME

RS (57) — Burnett 2, Logan 17, Young 18, Lynch 14, Siegel 2, Logan 2, Rogers 2.

KM (48) — Goode 17, Williams 13, Hamrick 4, Bolton 6, Curry 6, Stowe 2.

BOYS GAME

RS (67) — Harris 6, Cash 10, Miller 4, Davis 2, Duffy 11, Smith 15, Michaels 17, Logan 2.

KM (69) — Byers 16, Smith 21, Goode 11, Blalock 11, Ingram 4, Roseboro 2, Brown 2, Hager 2.



Photo by Gary Stewart

CALLING THE SHOTS — Kings Mountain High assistant coach Danny Ray McDowell, standing, yells instructions to the Mountaineers as head coach John Blalock, kneeling, watches

the action in Tuesday's game with R-S Central at the KMHS gym. Blalock called the 69-67 win the biggest of his career.