TUESDAY, MAY 25, 1954

Sports Review by Gerry Gardner

As this is the last issue of the paper, the column is dedicated to as review of the Blackbird' record-breaking '53-'54 year in sports.

The football team won 7 of 10 games and stood third in the conference standings. Fullback John Warren, end Smokey Lancaster and quarterback Bobby Patterson were consistently good performers. **Basketball Highlights of Year**

Basketball proved the highlight of the year as the Blackbirds won the Eastern AAA title and boasted a season of 16-2. Yet in compiling this marvelous record the Birds had definitely burned themselves out. In the state tourna-ment they were stopped cold, beaten by Raleigh and Greensboro. The Blackbirds were led by Smokey Lancaster and Dave Barnes. Both were named alleastern and Smokey was named all-state.

Baseball had a poor standing, as usual, but the Birds played well and finished second in conference standings. The excellent pitching of Harold Gilbert and the hard hitting of catcher Fred Harris sparked the Blackbird nine. Tennis Team Undefeated

Dwight Hinton and George Burton sparked a razzle-dazzle tennis team through an unbeaten season. Their most spectacular victory was in stopping Goldsboro, 7-2. It was the first loss in 66 matches for the Quakes and the first vic-tory over them by Rocky Mount since 1947.

Look above. It will be hard to find a team who can match these accomplishments-Not below third in conference standings in any the eight inning, at which time port — won Eastern AAA bas- the score was tied 2-2. After takketball title, champions of conference!-----This was simply our year. Who big inning-the ninth. knows? Maybe next year, too!

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THE BLACKBIRD, ROCKY MOUNT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL



Consistency, performance and good sportsmanship proved valuable to Fred Harris, Smokey Lancas-ter, and Johnny Warren. These three athletes were selected as the most valuable players of 1954 by The **Blackbird sports editors**

Fred Harris boasted the highest hitting average on the baseball team and saw action in every contest

Smokey Lancaster, who starred in three sports, was most outstanding in basketball. He was the team's highest scorer and was chosen all-eastern and all-state.

Johnny Warren was chosen for his splendid effort in football. He was all-eastern and the leading ground gainer.

Birds Defeat Caps, Plac Second

By overcoming the Raleigh Caps 6-2 and losing to Goldsborg game left in the season.

In the Raleigh game, Bobby Patterson started on the mound for the Birds but was releived by bert for Rocky Mount. The Birds Harold Gilbert in the bottom of ing over he retired the side, which -unbeaten in tennis! set the scene for Rocky Mount's

> In the ninth inning Bobby Patterson led off with a walk, Deans singled, Harold Gilbert sacrificed them to second and third, and Highsmith then flied out to left field scoring Patterson. Gordon Waters then walked and scored, along with Deans, on a deep fly to centerfield and a single by Bunny Bell.

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Caps Threaten In their half of the ninth the 4 by a score of 9-7, the Birds moved Caps threatened but couldn't into second place with only one score and the game ended with lost 9-7 in a battle of errors and

The winning pitcher was Gil- lier in the season.

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ROCKY MOUNT, N. C.

top hitter was Bell, who got 3 for

Meeting Goldsboro in their last game of the year, the Birds Raleigh holding the short end of blunders. Pitching for Rocky a 6-2 score. Mount was Bobby Patterson 5-2 in their game at Goldsboro ear-

Best Mark In Years

All in all, however, it was a successful season. The Blackbirds made their best marks in five years as they finished in second place in conference play.

eligible for one or two more years of playing, the baseball team looks a cinch to even better this year's highly successful season. Coach Cleetwood feels that all the boys singles honor too, but contestants played especially good ball and looks forward to good playing the singles and doubles divisions. next year.

Tennis Team Tops, State HS Champs After Six Years

After defeating their own teammates in the finals, Dwight Hinton and "Smokey" Joe Lancaster rolled to victory in the state tennis tournament to become North Carolina's high school doubles chan:pions.

Lancaster and Hinton wasted no time in racking up victories in High Point, Charlotte and Duham. The Lancaster-Hinton duo went on to whip the Quakes of Gold boro in the semi-finals, 6-2, 6-0.

In the first three rounds, Fred Ruben and Bobby Wimberly took wins o er Raleigh, Goldsboro and Kinston. In the semi-finals Meyers Park of Charlotte, the 'eam that upset a top-rated Whirlie team, clashed with the Birds. Charictte's finest came out sec-ond best as Ruben and Wimberly licked them, 6-2, 6-3.

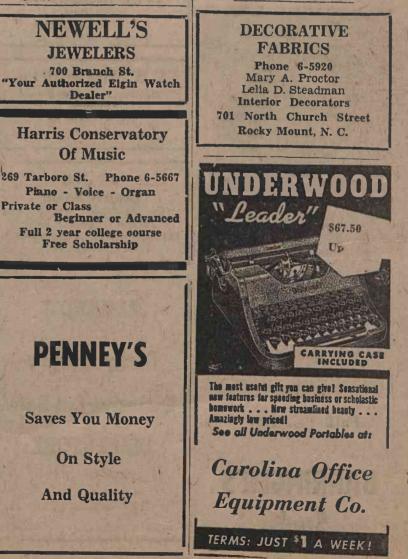
Team Mate Against Team Mate It was team mate against team mate in the final round of the tournament. Ruben and Wimber-ly won the first set, 7-5. The pace was gruelling as one Blackbird pair met another. The second set aw Lancaster and Hinton as winners in a close but decisive contest. The last leg of the tournament had come.

Lancaster, Hinton Win

Both teams wanted to win, both wanted to bring the doubles crown home, and both teams were good. They were experts in their field and the finest high school tennis players in the state. Dwight and "Smokey" were the winners when the final return was placed.

For the first time since 1943, Rocky Mount had won a tennis championship. The victories on the State College courts were a fitting end for an undefeated season.

George Burton was the only local entry in the singles. Al-With quite a few lettermen still though George put up a fine fight, he was eliminated from tourney play when a Southern Pines boy beat him, 7-5. 6-0. It is likely that the Blackbirds would have copped were not allowed to enter in both



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