

SPORTSLIGHTS

by Sara Jane Collier

Amid wolf-whistles and other such comments, the team trots out to the court for pre-game warm-ups. Resplendent in their spanking new gold and blue uniforms, these Gryphons appear to be the quintessence of basketball excellence. Their faces are set in somber expressions, showing determination to do this job right. Then, suddenly, someone gets the warm-up pattern confused and the team resorts to fits of giggles, completely forgetting their purpose of this court, aware only to the fact that this sure is a crazy way to spend a Thursday night.

Well, folks, here they are. The newly - founded Rocky Mount Senior High Girl's Basketball Team. Strike one up for Women's Lib!

When it was announced last year that Senior High would have a girl's team, everyone laughed. Now, as the girls step out onto the court with only a head full of ambition, desire to have some legal fun, and squeaky new tennis shoes, that noise has dropped to an occasional chuckle. Never mind the fact that most of them have had no previous experience in organized basketball. Never mind that it took a week for everyone to learn to run figure 8's correctly. These girls

combine ability and desire to mold together into a strong unit that should win many games this first season.

Head mentor of this team is Miss Judy Bradshaw, an unyielding young teacher determined to get the best out of her team. Miss Bradshaw has coached other girl's teams at Edwards. Obviously a positive attitude is the only manner in which success can be achieved, and Miss Bradshaw has that positive attitude.

The Gryphons squad consists of 12 dedicated girls, all who are talented and willing to play. Standouts on the team are Thelma Battle, a high-scoring, good rebounding forward; Joy Bradley, a small guard who serves as "quarterback in setting up the plays and can shoot the bomb from the outside; Linda Jones, center, a strong rebounder and good inside shooter; Annette Armstrong, a sharp-shooting forward with fantastic moves under the basket; and Helen Williams, guard, who worries opponents to death with her pressing defense. On the bench are capable substitutes, Renee Holcomb, Linda Williams, Wanda Grey, Terre Kilpatrick, Allison Sellers, Corbi Bulluck, and Suzanne Smithson.



The 1974 Girl's basketball team (Photo by Kent Murray)

Winning the Coach Hicks Way

What's the recipe for a successful high school basketball team? According to Gryphon chef Richard Hicks, you take one of the best high school prospects in the country, mix with a silky-smooth forward and a strong-rebounding center, add standing room only crowds, top it all off with a generous portion of positive attitude - and PRESTO! - an exciting team that will stop at nothing short of a state championship.

The personable young coach of this fine Gryphon basketball team is Coach Richard Hicks. A methodical man whose vocabulary consists of only positive words, Coach Hicks sets out not only to build a winner, but to develop a fine group of young men. During a game, the dapperly attired coach sits quietly on the edge of his chair, carefully studying the action on the court before him. Coach Hicks never loses his

cool (of course, we don't know what goes on inside the locker room) and his calm appearance makes a Gryphon fan secure in that somehow, the Gryphs will pull through.

Despite the coolness of Coach Hicks, there is one word which best describes this Gryphon team - EXCITEMENT. This team is well-renowned for their "cardiac finishes" which gives the fans the highest thrills attainable.

One can't speak of excitement without talking about The Man-Phil Ford. What more can be said about this All-American than WOW. Understandably, many opponents double team Phil to try to turn him off, but when this is the case, Phil just rifles off a beautiful pass to a perfectly positioned teammate. This guy is easily the greatest thing to come along for RMSH athletics in a very long time.

Jeff Collins generates

excitement in quite a different way. Jess possesses shots that look like they came straight out of Sports Illustrated Guide to Basketball. He gets on the outside corner, sets up and - swish! A picture - perfect shot with a touch soft as butter.

The strongest rebounder on this team is Thomas Lancaster, who at 6'4" has fulfilled the pivot position very well. Thomas rates very high in the scoring department, too, and has developed into a very fine player in all aspects of the game.

Explosive "Boo Boo" Alston reminds one of a cross between Monte Towe and George Karl. What the 5'7" guard lacks in height he makes up in heart - as proved by his leaping over benches in single bound, falling into the crowd, then popping quickly back up, ready for action.

Joe Jones, one of those guys you can't help but like, has really come on strong this year. Joe, alias "Kangaroo Kid" has great leaping ability and can really "ski". Joe's nerves of steel make him a good shooter in the clutch.

On the bench ready for action are capable substitutes ready to fill the void when needed. Coach Hicks never hesitates to call on Doug Henley, Jimmy Weeks, Jarvis Moore, John Fish, Gerry Felton, Don Johnson, and sophomore sensation Charles Lewis.

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