

# Mars Hill Cagers: Season Outlook

TO BY DAVID WACHTER

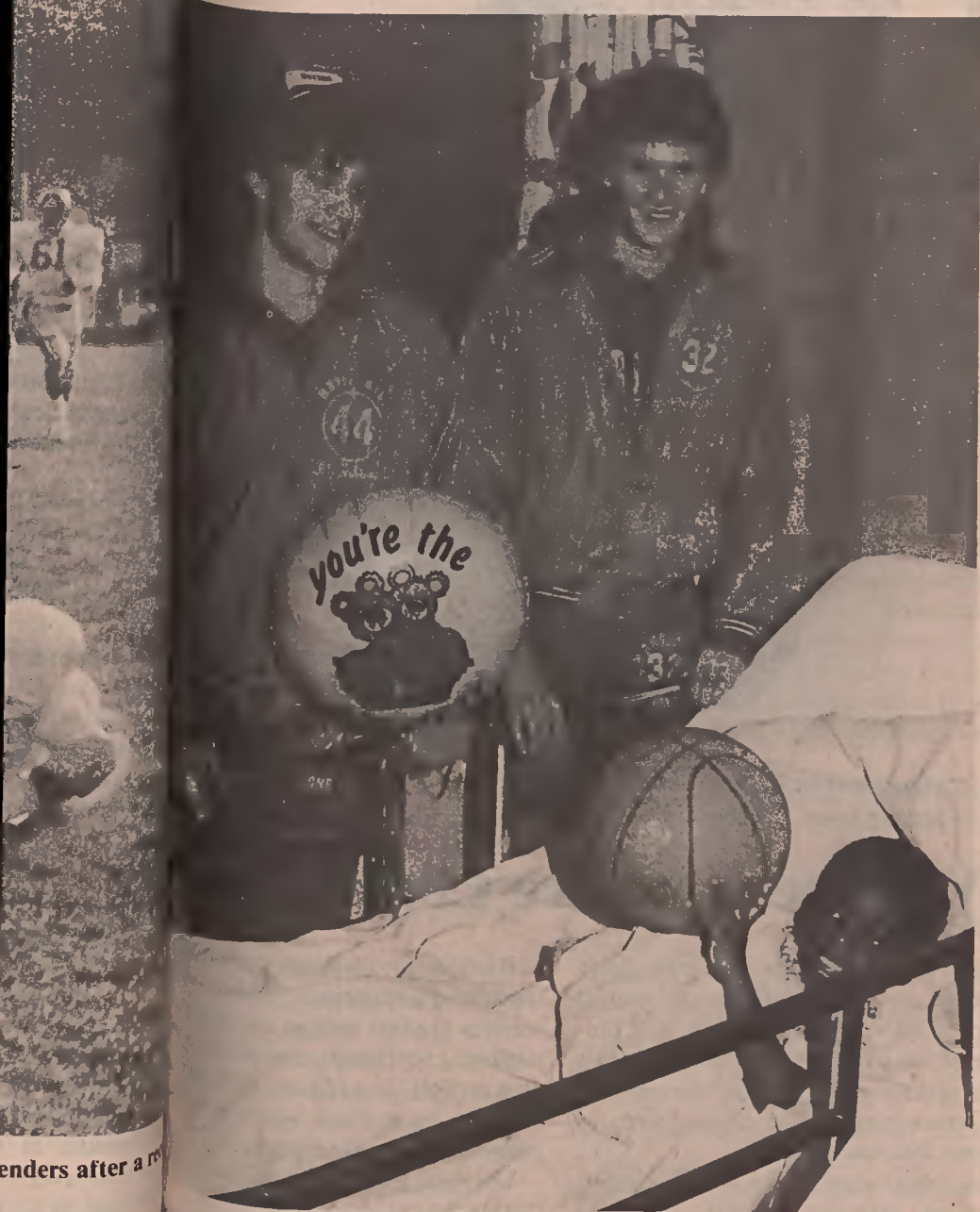


PHOTO BY DAVID WACHTER

...ng a community goodwill visit, Men's Basketball players Pete Baldini and Steve Donald bring a cheer to André, a patient in Memorial Mission Hospital in ...ville.

## Soccer Wrap-Up

...P KILEY  
... Mars Hill soccer team wrapped up their first season with losses to Limestone and Catawba college. The Lions traveled to Limestone for the second half of a back-to-back duel with the Lions lost 8-0. The first half was played well by both teams with the Lions scoring two goals. This was one of the better first half performances by the team all season. The offense, which has been plagued by position changes all season, was unable to score in either half. The second half proved to be fatal for the Lions as they gave up three quick goals. The 9-3 Disaster was the best, but it was in front of the Limestone goal during one of the goalie's kicks. The Lions' final game was against the Catawba. The Lions started enthusiastically, but were quickly shut down by a 13-0 final. The Lions had a few chances to score, but missed. However, he hopes the new wide shots left them empty for freshmen.

With eight returning lettermen and some highly talented recruits, the 1983 - 84 season promises to be an exciting one for the Lions. Third year head coach Bob Ronai looks for his team to challenge the best in the nation.

The Lions will play their first game against defending NAIA national champs, the Cougars of the College of Charleston. And, if that isn't enough, the Lions will take on USC-Spartanburg (1981-82 NAIA nation champions) and Western Carolina (one of the leading contenders in the NCAA Southern Conference), not to mention the tough competition among the independents of District 26.

Ronai is a firm believer in the theory that to get quality players, you must play the quality teams and a look at the upcoming schedule proves that he and his cagers are not taking the easy way out in the rebuilding process.

Last year's squad, virtually all rookies, challenged the best of the teams on their schedule. Although the final record was 9-20, it does not give justice to the success of the team. The Lions were young and inexperienced in clutch situations and, therefore, six games were lost by less than four points (all in the last third of the season). The Lions improved steadily throughout the season. The last half of the season, almost every game was taken to the wire with a total of eleven games lost in overtime or last second shots. Considering the fact that three to four freshmen were nearly always on the court and the Lions were plagued with injury and sickness, their record could have easily been 20-9.

One of the Lions' strengths this year will be their depth. Ronai's recruiting ef-

orts have been fruitful. He started his recruiting for the 1983 - 84 season in July of 1982. His first priority was to bring in experienced players to complement his young team. Ronai's recruiting style has not only brought experienced players for the present season, but when questioned about some of the freshmen, Ronai stated, "Some of the freshmen will develop their skills this year in hopes of contributing more effectively down the road." This year's new faces include four junior college transfers, each of whom can give the Lions immediate help in different areas. Two freshmen are coming in with probably the most potential of any recruits to come to Mars Hill in a long time. "We feel our recruiting class has filled a need in our program and with our program and with our returning lettermen, we should continue to improve. But, improvement will only come as a result of the dedication of our players. Realistically, we are still, at least, a good year away from being considered contenders," stated Ronai.

So far this year, the Lions have faced Carson-Newman during the scrimmages, each team winning three halves each. The Lions have also been spreading good will and smiles across the faces of the elderly and sick when they visit area hospitals and nursing homes. The visits have brought happiness to children in the pediatrics wards especially, as the children love the idea of "Real Basketball Players" coming just to see them.

The Team has worked hard this year and hopes of student support are the concerns of both the basketball team and the Mars Hill community. Please get involved, this will be a year of excitement and fun!



PHOTO BY DAVID WACHTER

Lion fullback Jeff Morgan readies himself for the duel of the feet as a Catawba forward tries to score on goalie Kirk Palmer.