

Mustang transfer making a big splash

By RANDY PETTITT
Chronicle Sports Editor

There is no doubt that Parkland's Shannon Stanback is a big fan of the Oakland A's.

The Mustang outfielder man used to live just five minutes away from the Oakland County Coliseum and admits it was a key to luring him to join the sport.

"I used to go watch them play," said Stanback, who moved to Winston-Salem from the California city last summer.

"It was great having a major league team so close by," he said.

Stanback, who spends most of his time leading off for the Mustangs and anchoring left field, says he almost quit the sport once.

"I had a hard time when I first started playing," he recalls.

"My first few days of practice weren't so good and I felt like quitting. But I kept striving and it turned out to be good for me."

Stanback's return to the Twin City with his mother last summer has turned out to be a nice acquisition for the Mustangs.

"He's really helped us a lot," said Fred Norman, the head coach of Parkland's varsity baseball team.

"Shanon is a super athlete. He's versatile, too. He played a lot of second and third base in California, but we needed his quickness in the outfield.

"We had him for football this year, too. He has good speed and a good attitude."

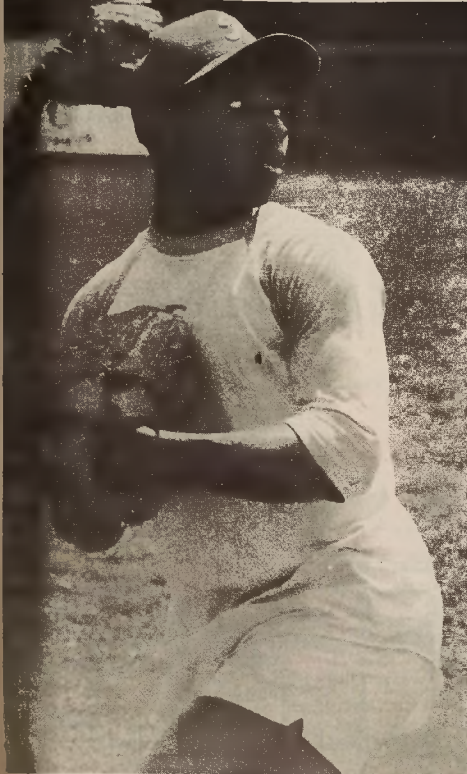
Stanback's average flirts around the .300 mark, but it is no big surprise as he was an all-city third baseman and batted .325 for Oakland's Castlemont High School last year.

"I'm striding too soon at the plate and it's causing me to lose power. I'm trying to be more patient up there."

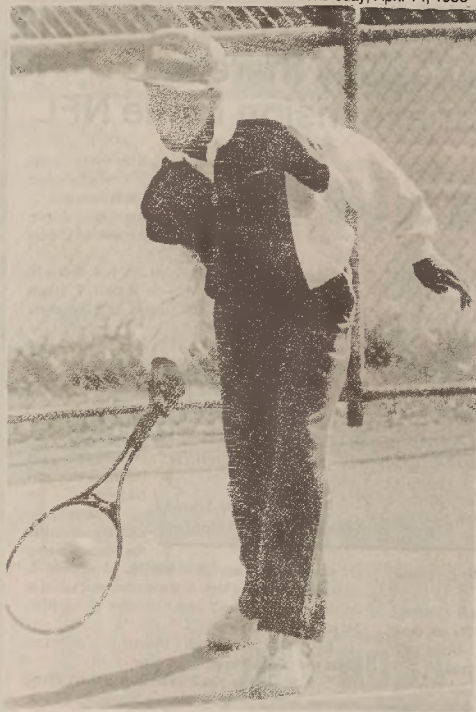
Surprisingly, he says that baseball in Forsyth County is much the same as it is in Oakland.

"I can't see any big difference—it's still the same baseball," he said.

"To me, it's about the same. Oakland was more of a baseball town and had more blacks playing. Everyone in Oakland just loved baseball. Here, it takes a back seat to football and basketball. But as far as the level of play, it's pretty much the same."



Shannon Stanback hopes Parkland can remain in the thick of things in the Central Piedmont Conference (photo by Randy Pettitt).



Danny Piggott is 7-0 at number five seed (photo by Randy Pettitt).

Up The Ladder

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win the conference.

"We're going to lose two seniors after the end of the season," said Thompkins of teammates Lee Crews, Gary Preston and Geoff Fulton.

"I don't know if we have the people to replace them just yet."

Thompkins, regarded as a serve and volley player, says he's trying to work on the baseline play.

"I won't sit back there and hit it all day," he said.

"But I do want people to respect my baseline game. I like to serve and volley, but sometimes it's nice to sort of feel out the other person before attacking the net."

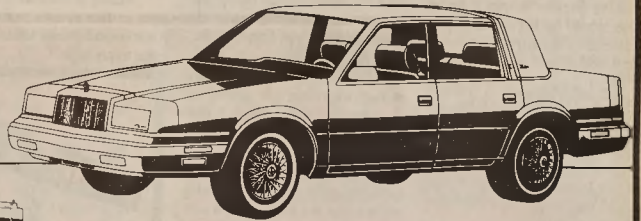
Thompkins says he's looking forward to an upcoming meeting with Greensboro Page.

"They are probably one of the teams to beat," he said.

"Glenn and Smith might be in it, too. I think we can be a legitimate threat for second and surprise."

But in one sense, the Yellow-jackets have already won something—a little respect.

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