

Jones Is Optimistic

KMHS Grid Drills Begin Today



Photo By Gary Stewart

TENDING CHORES - Bill Cashion, former Kings Mountain High assistant football coach, will be spending these hot August afternoons working in his lawn and garden instead of attending Mountaineer football practices. Cashion resigned as KMHS line coach recently

after 16 seasons with the Mountaineers. He had earlier served as assistant coach and two years as head coach at Taylorsville High School. Cashion's shown here picking tomatoes as he recalled some of his experiences in the coaching ranks.

Kings Mountain High opens pre-season football practice this afternoon at John Gamble Stadium.

Coach Bob Jones and his assistants will put the Mountaineers through six days of conditioning drills before getting into heavy work a week from today.

The Mountaineers, who open their season on Sept. 3 against Crest, will be trying to improve on a 4-5-1 season of a year ago, their lone losing campaign in five years under Jones.

Jones is looking for a much-better season and feels the Mountaineers could possibly be a Southwestern Conference contender if some young players mature quickly.

The Mountaineers, though they have many returning players, lost some key players at key positions and Jones will be looking to rising sophomores to fill those posts.

"I feel like we have enough players back to form a good nucleus," Jones says, "but we still

need a lot of help. We lost most of our ends and defensive backs, and we won't have too much depth at running back."

The Mountaineers return quarterback Mike Bumgardner, who led the conference in touchdowns thrown last fall and should rank among the top signal-catchers in the state.

However, the remainder of the backfield was almost entirely wiped out by graduation. The Mounties return only two part-time starters, Kenny Bell and Richard Ross.

Up front, Jones lost several key players, including starting guards John Yarbrow and Nathaniel Smith, but the Mountaineers return several good prospects, including center Bruce Valentine, guards Kelly Land, Mark Moore, Tim Spicer and David Gordon and ends William Thompson and Dennis Putnam.

One of Jones' biggest problems will be replacing his most valuable player,

Chris Johnson, who was one of the league's best ends and defensive backs for three seasons.

"One thing that's working in our favor," Jones pointed out, "is that we'll have more time to get ready. We've been opening our season the last week of August."

In the beginning, the KM

defense will probably outshine the offense since Jones has nine players that started on defense last fall.

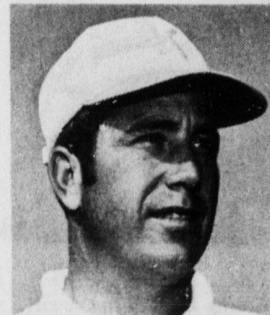
"Our defense showed a lot of improvement toward the end of last season," Jones noted. "At the first of the year, we couldn't win because we couldn't stop other teams from scoring."

But, Jones added, just because he has nine defensive starters returning doesn't mean those same players will automatically earn a position.

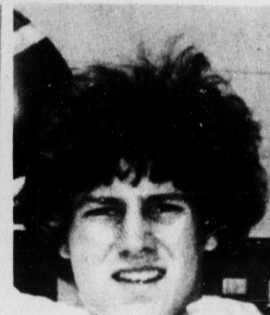
"Everything's wide open right now," he said. "We plan to give everybody an equal chance and we're going to try to play as many boys as we can. When you consider 11 players on offense, 11 on defense and 22 on the specialty teams, that takes in a lot of people."

Jones, whose best team at KMHS was 7-2-1 in '74, says this year's team has the potential of being the best he's had here, and feels a year from now the Mountaineers will be at their peak.

"We're real optimistic," he summed up. "Five or six of our returning players are some of the best players we've had since I've been here. If we get some of the young boys to come out we can have a good football team."



BOB JONES



MIKE BUMGARDNER



GARY STEWART

KM's Bill Cashion Will Be Missed In Coaching Ranks

When Kings Mountain High School opens its pre-season football practice this afternoon, a familiar face will be missing.

Bill Cashion, KMHS line coach for the past 16 seasons, resigned recently and will most likely be spending these hot August afternoons fishing and working in his yard and garden.

Although he still has a lot of good years left, you could say Cashion was the last of the "old coaching staff" at KMHS...the staff that led the school to some glory years in the late fifties and early sixties.

Recalling his years of coaching in between garden chores, Cashion said his happiest times in coaching were spent in 1963 and '64, when the Mounties put together back-to-back unbeaten seasons in winning a pair of Southwestern Conference titles.

"The thing I can miss when I compare athletes of the sixties and today," Cashion said, "is that today's athletes seem to have more ability but aren't nearly as dedicated." Cashion called Jimmy Medlin, a guard on the '63 Mountaineer team, "the most dedicated player I've ever worked with."

Cashion's football career, both as a player and coach, is familiar to most KMHS followers. He played a tough fullback for KM during the middle forties, and many of the older KM fans still recall the night in 1946 that Cashion scored the winning touchdown in a 6-0 victory over Shelby.

"Since we never won a championship when I was in high school," Cashion noted, "that had to be the highlight of my playing career."

After high school, Cashion went on to play college ball at Gardner-Webb and Newberry, then entered the coaching ranks in '55 as an assistant at Taylorsville High School.

After three years as assistant and two years as head coach at Taylorsville, Cashion had the opportunity to come back home in 1960 as line coach under the late John Gamble.

KMHS was already enjoying banner seasons under Gamble, Bill Bates and Don Parker, and Cashion was more than happy to join the bandwagon.

Cashion says two members of that staff, Parker, who was his coach in '44, and Gamble, who had to retire the following season because of multiple sclerosis, had the biggest influence on his coaching career.

Cashion said he's had no disappointments during his 16 years at KMHS and the decision to step down wasn't an easy one.

"I guess the main reason I'm leaving coaching," he says, "is that I'm getting older and I'm just not enjoying it as much as I used to. A coach needs to get out there and move with the players and as you get older it gets harder every year."

"I guess what I'll miss the most," he continued, "is the boys. As a coach, you're in contact with the finest boys in the school."

Cashion said quitting first entered his mind three or four years ago, but when each season rolled around he just had to try it one more year.

"It's going to be hard staying away from it," Cashion said, "but I'm looking forward to getting in a lot more fishing and working around the house."

For the next several weeks, however, Cashion's wife, Joyce, will probably be keeping an eye peeled from her grocery store across the street. For Bill might just be leaving those yard chores and slipping off to football practice.

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