

Hard Work Pays Big Dividends For KM Tennis Star Tim Riddle

By GARY STEWART
Sports Editor

Tim Riddle made a decision at age 14 to give up all other sports and concentrate on becoming a good tennis player. Not only has he become a good one, but the best to ever come out of Kings Mountain High School.

Riddle, who recently ended a brilliant three-year prep career by finishing third in the state tournament, accomplished his feats through a lot of hard work.

The KMHS senior, who will probably continue his education and tennis career at Presbyterian College in Clinton, S. C., first became interested in tennis when he was in the sixth grade when he attended a clinic given by Sandy Mauney at the KMHS courts.

Since that time he has spent an average of five hours per day sharpening his game. His hard work led to a Western N. C. High Schools Activities Association championship a year ago and a second place ranking in North Carolina this year.

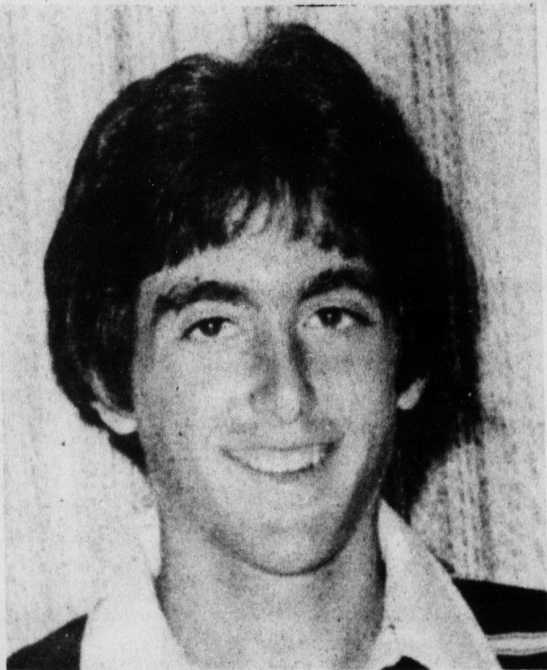
In three years at KMHS, Riddle lost only one conference match and that came his sophomore year. His junior and senior years, all of the matches he lost were to ranked players.

He will be remembered most for his accomplishments of his junior campaign, when he won the association crown and led the Mounties to the team championship, but he's probably a much better player now than then.

Making the switch from the 38-school WNCCHSAA to the 350-school North Carolina High School Athletic Association was a huge one.

"There was a lot more pressure involved in the state association," says Riddle, who has already hit the tournament trail since competing in the state prep tourney. "There were so many good players in the state association it was hard just to qualify for the tournaments."

Riddle finished second to Shelby's Andy Wilkison in the Southwestern Sec-



competitive tournaments last year.

"It gave me a lot of confidence," he said. "The four summer tournaments I won were ones I didn't really expect to do that well in and I think the confidence I built by winning the association was what helped me win them."

Riddle also credits his teammates at KMHS and the fans around Kings Mountain for helping him a lot.

"The guys on the team were good to work with me," he said, "and they've been behind me in everything I've tried to do. A lot of them came to the regional and state tournaments. And everybody in Kings Mountain has been behind me and made me feel good."

Riddle works hard on developing all aspects of his game and feels he doesn't have any particular strong points.

"I just always try to become more consistent and be equal in all aspects of the game," he says.

Summer tennis, he says, is far more competitive than prep tennis and he has a full slate of tournaments slated for the coming three months. He's already won the Shelby Junior Tournament and is going to Winston Salem next weekend and hopes to qualify for the Southern and National tournaments.

"There are so many good players playing in the summer tournaments," he says. "You always have to be on your toes. You can lose in the first round just as easily as in the finals. And North Carolina is one of the strongest tennis states in the nation."

Looking back on his high school career, Riddle says he's happy with what he accomplished and hopes he can continue to improve as he heads into the college ranks. After college, he said, he hopes to either pursue a touring professional career or serve as a club pro or coach.

"I consider myself real fortunate," he said, "and I just thank the good Lord for allowing me to reach some goals I wanted to reach."

tionals and second to eventual state champion Mark Dillon of Charlotte Myers Park in the Western Regionals before losing in the state semi-finals to the state's top-ranked 16 year old, Phil Raliford of Chapel Hill. Riddle advanced further than any other 3-A player in the state and single-handedly scored more points (three) than any other 3-A school in the tourney. Thus, if schools were classified in tennis, Riddle would have been the state 3-A champion.

Although he was disappointed he did not win the state, because he had set that as his main goal for his senior year, Riddle was pleased with the way he played his senior year.

"I accomplished a lot my junior year," he noted, "and it was hard to back it up. I wish I could have done better but there were a lot of tough players."

Riddle was accustomed to competitive tennis before he reached high school age. After getting his taste of the sport through Mauney's clinics here, he took lessons for sometime from Shelby pro Jaime Amaya and began playing in tournaments across North Carolina.

He played in enough events to gain the 17th

ranking among 16 year olds and by the time he turned 17 his game had progressed so much he climbed to the number two ranking among 18 years olds. Dillon is the top-ranked 18 year old.

"The thing I like about tennis," he says, "is that it's an individual sport. You go as far as you want to go. The rest of the team can't win for you and the coach can't win for you. You determine how far you go."

"I had played baseball until I was 14 years old," he recalled. "But I decided at that time that since tennis was an individual sport I could do more with it than baseball."

Several persons have played a major role in Riddle's success. He credits Thorny Strang, pro at Cleveland Country Club in Shelby, with helping him develop his game during the past two years, his coach, Ed Guy, with helping him cope with his individual problems, and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Riddle, for supporting him and helping him build his confidence.

He says his most enjoyable moments in high school came with winning the association, and says winning that crown helped him win four highly-



TIM RIDDLE...Closes out brilliant prep career,

Gardner-Webb Golfers Seek Third NAA Crown

BOILING SPRINGS — Defending NAAIA golf champions Gardner-Webb College will have the opportunity to make it three in a row as they travel to Huntsville, Texas for the 1978 national tournament.

The Bulldogs, winners of the last two national championships, received an invitation this year as the first alternate after finishing second to Elon in the District 26 golf tournament in April.

"We are very fortunate to be able to participate in this year's tournament," comments golf coach Dr. Garland Allen. "When we lost the services of two of our better golfers after Christmas, I had no idea we would finish as high as second in our district. But the other guys took up the slack and we've been invited back to the nationals."

Two-time All America Jimmy Franklin from Morganton, N. C., and Wayne Myers of Charlotte,


N. C., a member of both national championship teams, head up the Bulldogs chances at a third consecutive national championship.

Both Franklin and Myers were named Golf MVP's at the recent Bulldog All Sports Banquet.

Rounding out the team for 1978 are Murray White, a freshman from High Point, N. C. Byron Auton, a freshman from Lenoir, N. C., and Alan Shuford, a freshman from Shelby, N. C.

Coach Allen added, "We hope to finish as high as possible in the team championship and we have in Jimmy and Wayne the caliber of players necessary to capture the individual title. Jimmy finished second in last year's individual race."

Sam Houston State, runners-up to Gardner-Webb in last year's tournament, will host the championship at their home course in Huntsville, Texas, June 6-9.



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L-Rhyme Slates Sessions

HICKORY — Five sports camps will be offered to area youngsters this summer by Lenoir-Rhyme College, it was announced today by Dr. Keith M. Ochs of the athletic department.

In addition to the traditional football and basketball offerings, Dr. Ochs said, the college will conduct two new all-sports sessions in July.

The first Lenoir-Rhyme camp, boys' basketball, will operate June 12-16. Girls' basketball will follow, June 19-23, and football is slated June 26-30. The camps will emphasize conditioning and fundamentals.

Each of the sessions is open to youngsters 9-18 years of age and will meet from 9 a. m.-4:30 daily.

The all-sports camps are designed to sharpen skills and promote enjoyment of individual and group sports. They will include tennis, golf, archery, volleyball and badminton.

Open to youngsters 8-14 years of age, the camps will be conducted July 10-14 and July 17-21. They will meet from 8 a. m.-5 p. m. daily.


The Lenoir-Rhyme camps will be staffed by Lenoir-Rhyme coaches and players, as well as outstanding visiting instructors. Summer campers will use all athletic facilities of the college, as well as the Voigt R. Cromer Center.

The cost of each camp, which includes lunch, use of equipment, insurance and a camp t-shirt, will be \$40 per camper.

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