



**IN SKI TRIALS** - Thomas Putnam of Grover, pictured above at the Beech Mountain Ski Resort, will compete this weekend in the Junior Olympic Ski Trials in New York. Putnam is in his first year of organized ski racing and has made great strides in the sport.

## Putnam Will Compete In Ski Olympic Race

Thomas Putnam of Grover will compete in the Eastern Regional Junior II Qualifier for the Junior Olympics in Skiing at Bristol Mountain, N.Y., February 26-27.

The 15-year-old Kings Mountain High sophomore is the son of Susie and John Putnam of Grover. He is a member of the Beech Mountain Racing Team and the United States Ski Association and is coached by Scott Bontlier and John Fitzgerald. The top two racers in the Junior II division are to be accompanied by Fitzgerald to the competition.

Putnam, who is in his first year of organized ski racing, earlier this season competed in the Homestead Cup at Homestead, Va. He finished second in his division against racers from several states and race teams from Virginia and West Virginia.

He said he feels Southern

skiers have a good chance against their northern counterparts even though the Southern Division of the United States Ski Association is new and growing. "There will be some hot racers from the northern areas, but I look forward to the competition and the learning experience," he said.

The race will consist of two days, the first being the giant slalom and the second, slalom. Putnam said he feels more confident in the giant slalom course which is usually faster and more open. He feels hampered by the fact that he gets so little time on the snow.

Slalom requires the execution of many quick and precise turns, Putnam said. It is run on two different courses defined by "gates", pairs of red and blue colored poles. The competitors must pass between the poles of each pair, although in any order and direction. Gates are set in

combinations which further test a skier's skill and strategy. The total time for two runs counts, and racers are disqualified for failing to pass through all the gates. There is no penalty for hitting the poles of the gates.

The giant slalom, he said, is carried out in two runs, also, with total time counting, but the courses are run down the mountain over a faster and more open line. Often considered the most technically demanding event, giant slalom tests a racer's ability to maximum use of the terrain on the hill where the course is laid out. Skiers must pass through all of the gates. Giant Slalom gates consist of a pair of flags, or panels, each supported by two poles.

The Junior II qualifier is used to select 20 boys and 15 girls for the Junior II Olympics, which will be held in Killington, Vt., March 15-19.

## Mounties Whip Chase For SWC Tourney Title

Kings Mountain High's boys basketball team defeated Chase 81-49 Saturday night at East Rutherford High School to win their second straight Southwestern 3-A Conference tournament.

The Mountaineers, now 24-1 overall, were scheduled to play the Trojans again last night in the opening round of the District 7 3-A tournament at the KMHS gym.

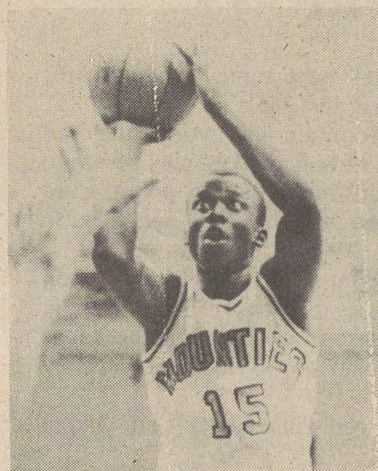
The victory was the 22nd straight for the Mounties, whose only loss was by one-point to R-S Central in the opening SWC game on December 1.

Chase, the seventh place finisher in regular season play, made it to the finals by upsetting both R-S Central and East Rutherford. By making it to the finals, the Trojans also qualified for the district event, getting the fifth seed which would have been awarded to fifth place finisher North Gaston.

The Mountaineers had little trouble in the finals. They ran to a 21-10 first quarter lead, and despite a cold second period, still maintained a comfortable 28-19 edge at halftime.

The Mounties came out in the third period with their guns blazing and built up a 57-35 lead going into the final quarter.

Four players scored in double figures for Coach John Blalock's charges. Point guard Carl Smith, a shoo-in for his second straight SWC Player of the Year honor, led the way with 24 points. Terrence Blalock added 19, Frank Parker 12 and Demetrius Goode



**CARL SMITH**

11. Goode also dominated the boards with 11 rebounds.

Shelby's girls, regular season co-champions with R-S Central, edged East Rutherford 56-52 in overtime to win the girls title. East Rutherford, which also finished seventh in regular season play, also qualified for the district by pulling tourney upsets over North Gaston and R-S Central. They will be the fifth-seeded district team, knocking North Gaston from the field.

The Mounties had their toughest game of the tourney Friday night when they edged fourth-seeded Shelby by a 46-43 score.

Kings Mountain held the lead at the end of every period, but the Lions took the lead on several occasions and were in the game from the word go.

The game started out as if it would be a high-scoring affair,

with the Mounties holding an 18-16 edge after the first period. The Mounties still led 30-26 at intermission, but in the second half the offensive fireworks slowed down and both teams' defenses took charge.

Shelby assumed a 39-38 lead late in the third quarter but Smith's basket at the buzzer put KM on top 40-39 going into the final eight minutes.

Just minutes into the fourth period, the Mounties went up by 44-41 and immediately went into a spread offense. After a Shelby steal and layup by Tyrone Dillingham cut the margin to 44-43, the Lions elected to lay back until the final minute, when they began to foul in an effort to get the lead. But Frank Parker hit both ends of a one-and-one with 17 seconds to play to ice the victory.

Blalock led the KM scoring with 12 points and Smith added 11. Terrence Petty of Shelby led all scorers with 14.

### SHELBY GAME

K. Mtn. (46) - Blalock 12, Smith 11, Parker 8, Wray 8, Hager 4, Goode 2, Brown 1.

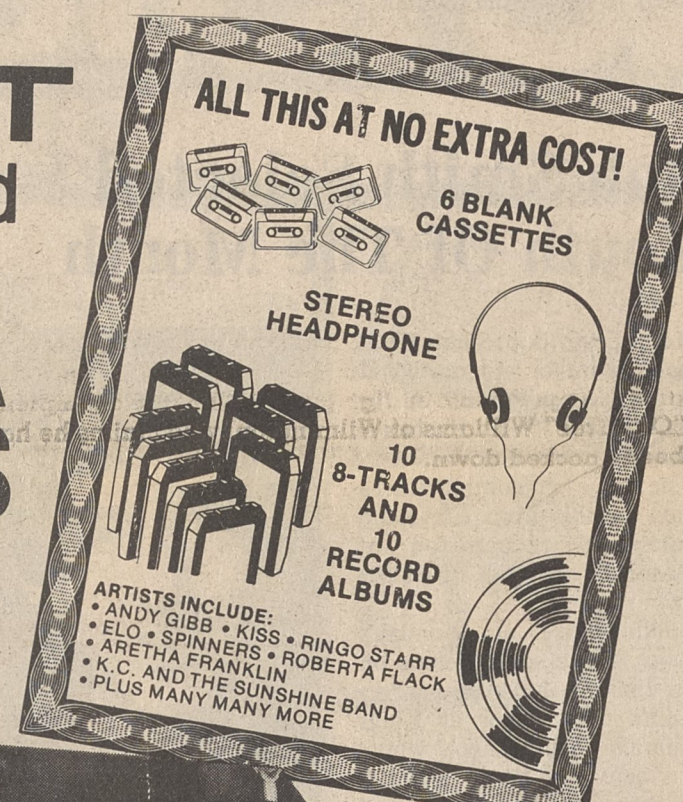
Shelby (43) - Dillingham 10, Smith 6, Lytle 5, Littlejohn 4, Petty 14, Young 4.

### TITLE GAME

K. Mtn. (81) - Smith 24, Blalock 19, Parker 12, Goode 11, Wray 9, Brown 2, Peeler 2, Floyd 2, Campbell 1.

Chase (49) - V. McDowell 11, Dover 10, K. McDowell 8, Greene 6, Dewberry 2.

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