



JUNIOR HIGH CAGERS - Here's the Kings Mountain Junior High basketball team, which finished its season last week with a 12-1 record and shared the Western N.C. Association title with Crest. Front row, left to right, Raynard Roberts, Travis Crocker, Lenny Rayford, Gus Degree, Jerral Smith, Jerry Jordan and Jimmy Currence. Back row, manager Darren McClain, Gary Carroll, Mike Curry, Joe McClain, Claude Harris, John Young, Mike Woods, Aubrey Hollifield, and managers Phillip Greene and Eddie Scruggs.

Hard Work Pays Off For Junior High Cagers

John Wooden, the legendary former UCLA basketball coach, once said, "it's amazing how much can be accomplished when no one cares who gets the credit."

That philosophy paid off with a championship basketball season this year for the Kings Mountain Junior High boys team, which ended its regular season last week with a 12-1 record.

The Patriots shared the Western N.C. Junior High Athletic Association title with Crest, a team it split two regular season games with.

Coach Greg Richardson expected, and got, a team effort in which no individual player was

regarded as being the "star" of the team.

In fact, Richardson and the team agreed before the season opened that they would not report any scores to local newspapers to insure that no individuals played for self-glory rather than the good of the team.

Richardson made a point of playing all 14 of his players in every game and stressed the fundamentals to prepare them for high school ball next year.

"We had great size at all positions, good quickness and excellent ballhandling," said Richardson as he watched his team go through preparations for last Thursday's season finale

against West McDowell. "Our only weakness was that some of our second line players don't have basketball knowledge."

Richardson and the Patriots started preparing for this championship season last year. He played many eighth graders a year ago and finished with a 7-5 record.

"We had six returnees from last year, so we had a lot of experience," Richardson said. "And a lot of them are involved in the Boys Club basketball programs. I give Danny McDowell of the Boys Club as much credit as anyone in developing these kids."

Six of Richardson's players attended basketball camps last year and won their age division championship at the Davidson College Basketball Camp, which is directed by former Kings Mountain High Coach Bobby Hussey. "That camp did a lot for the development of these players," Richardson said.

Richardson's starters were Aubrey Hollifield, the team's leading rebounder, Travis Crocker, Jerry Jordan, the leading scorer, Lenny Rayford and Mike Curry. Other members of the team were Jerry Currence, Gary Carroll, Gus Degree, John Young, Raynard Roberts, Mike Woods, Claude Harris, Jerral Smith and Joe McClain. Managers were Darren McClain, Phillip Greene and Eddie Scruggs and scorekeeper was Jill Bowden.

Most of the Patriot games were blowouts. The team scored over 80 points on six occasions and topped the 90-mark twice in victories over Chase. "We could have scored over 100 points eight times if we'd wanted to," Richardson said. "But I wanted to teach them some class. You don't kick someone when they're down."

The Patriots had only two close games, a one-point victory over East McDowell and an eight-point win over Burns. The two Crest games were one-sided, with the Patriots winning 82-57 the first time around and Crest winning 82-60 in the second meeting. The Patriots had two starters out when they lost to the Dragons.

"We scored most of our points on defense," said Richardson. "We play a good, pressure man to man defense, which most junior highs don't teach. We don't teach offense. I figure my job is to get them ready for high school."

Richardson feels the Kings Mountain High program will benefit the next three seasons from the success of his players on the junior high and Boys Club level.

"If they continue the type things we've tried to coach them, their future will be unlimited," he said. "I see a lot of them with college potential, both academically and athletically. They work hard, are very coachable and exercise real good self-discipline."

The only disappointment to this championship season was that the Patriots were labeled "co-champions" with Crest.

KMHS Baseball Team Plays Ashbrook Friday

Kings Mountain High's baseballers open their 1984 season Friday at 3:30 p.m. with a non-conference game at Ashbrook High School in Gastonia.

The Mountaineers, trying to improve on a 3-13 record of a year ago, will be making their debut under new coach David Heffner, a former Shelby High and Gardner-Webb College standout. Heffner is coming off six successful seasons as head coach at Kings Mountain Junior High, where he turned out two conference champions.

Heffner has been drilling his youngsters on baseball fundamentals for several weeks, and the recent warm weather has given him several good opportunities to practice his team outside.

"Our hitting and pitching looks to be improved," he said, "and defensively, we should be in good shape. As to how well we'll do in the Southwestern Conference, it's hard to say. I don't know a lot about most of the teams, but I do know Shelby, Crest, South Point and Chase

will be tough."

The Mountaineers will again be competing in the Eastern Division of the split Southwestern 3-A Conference. Other teams in the East are Shelby, South Point, North Gaston and East Gaston. The Western Division includes Crest, Burns, Chase, East Rutherford and R-S Central. Teams play division teams twice each and non-division teams once each. The top two finishers in each division advance to the SWC playoffs in May to determine who will represent the conference in the state tournament.

Kings Mountain has 12 lettermen and 13 players back from last year's team, and Heffner hopes the experience will pay

off. In addition to gaining valuable experience in the SWC last year, many of the Mountaineers competed in legion and Babe Ruth ball last summer.

Heffner will use Friday's game as well as four other upcoming non-conference games to get a look at all of his players. He hopes to come up with a solid lineup before March 20, when the Mounties open conference play at R-S Central.

The Mountaineers will play their first home game next Tuesday at 4 p.m. against Ashbrook. The team will play its first seven games during the afternoon and will switch to a night schedule on March 27, when it plays Chase on the road.

SPORTS

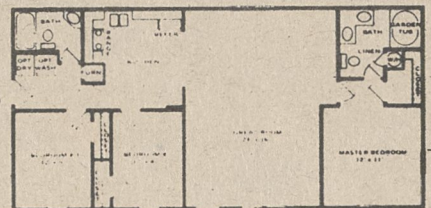
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Spring 100 To Open Racing Season At Concord

CONCORD, N.C.—The March 10-11, season-opening Spring 100 at Concord Speedway is expected to feature a greatly varied field of cars, being the final race at Concord in which the exotic "flying wedge" cars can compete without a weight penalty.

Speedway owner Henry Lee Furr, in an effort to rejuvenate fan interest in dirt track racing will initiate a new set of rules at the four-tenths-mile dirt track after the Spring 100 to encourage drivers to run the new, Stock-appearing racers, similar in appearance to those on the NASCAR circuit.

Despite the fact that the Spring 100 will be run under 1983 rules, Furr is still offering incentives for the drivers to compete in the new stock-appearing cars.

If the winner of the March 11, 100-lap Late Model Sportsman feature is driving one of the new cars, he'll pick up a \$1,000 bonus. If one of the flying wedges takes the checkered flag, the top finisher among the stock-appearing cars gets a \$500 bonus.

Similar bonuses of \$500 and

\$250 will be posted for the 25-lap Semi Modified feature.

Features are on tap also for the Hobby and Super Stock divisions, with qualifying for all four divisions set March 10.

The Springs 100 traditionally brings one of the best fields of the season to Concord Speedway, and this year's event is expected to be no exception.

In 1983, Jeff Purvis of Clarksville, TN, won the Springs 100, after Donnie Moran, a 19-year-old Ohioan sat on the pole.

Other drivers who usually compete in the Spring 100 include Hayward Plyler, Jack Pennington, Freedy Smith, Mike Duvall, Doug Osteen and Larry Moore.

Beginning with regular weekly racing programs, which will start the first weekend in April, the new rules will be instated, making the non-stock-appearing cars carry a 200-pound penalty.

Also beginning that weekend will be the battle for the track point championships, which are also being initiated by Furr this year.

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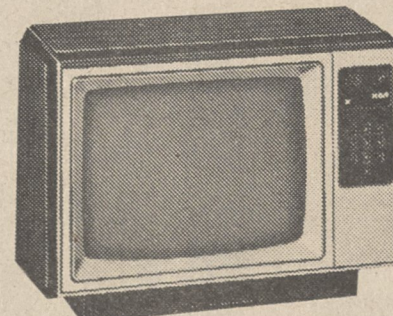
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