



Photos by Gary Stewart

**TROPHY WINNERS** - Winners of football trophies at last week's KMHS fall sports banquet are pictured above. Seated are Timmy Elder, left, and Brad Jones, right. Standing, left to right, are Keith Pettis, Roderick Boyce, Neil Morris and Rocky Lutz.

**MOST OUTSTANDING** - Winners of most outstanding player trophies in fall sports at last week's KMHS banquet are pictured above. Left to right are Leigh Ann Odell, tennis; Carmelia Leach, volleyball; and John Foster, crosscountry. Not pictured, Robin Warlick, tennis.



## Stewart's Slants

By Gary Stewart

Add another in a long list of honors for former Kings Mountain High football standout Tracy Johnson of Kannapolis.

Johnson was named to the first team offense in the annual Charlotte Observer's All-Piedmont team which was announced last week.

He is joined on the offense by a couple of Red Raiders from South Point, quarterback Mark Young and tackle Scott Cooper. Making the first team defense were Tim Postell of South Point, Robert Robinson of Shelby and Terry Whisnant of Cherryville.

Named to the second team offense was junior running back Tonja Watson of South Point and lineman Sherwood Wade of Shelby, and selected to the second team defense were Barry London of Shelby, Don Moore of Crest and Chris Conner and Jo D. Franklin of Bessemer City.

Johnson, who played his sophomore and junior seasons at KMHS before moving to Kannapolis last winter, rushed for 734 yards in 100 carries in 10 regular season games. He scored 19 touchdowns and made 128 tackles from his linebacker position.

Johnson, who has been a North Carolina fan all of his life, says he has narrowed his college choices down to UNC and Clemson.

Johnson, who was All-Conference both years he played at Kings Mountain High, was earlier named to the North Carolina Shrine Bowl team. And, it's a sure bet he'll make All-South Piedmont Conference and All-State and will also probably be named to the East-West All-Star game next summer.

South Point's Young, a Shrine Bowl alternate who rushed for over 1,000 yards in 10 regular season games for the Red Raiders, says he has narrowed his college choices down to Clemson and N.C. State. Young is one of the best running quarterbacks I've seen in over 20 years of watching high school football, better even than Jeff Williams who led the Red Raiders to the State 3-A title in 1979. His graduation will be good news for South Point opponents but they'll have to put up with the Red Raiders' talented halfback, Tonja Watson, for another year.

**BRAGGIN' AND BLUSHIN'**, or looking back to the prep pigskin predictions I made before the 1984 season:

As for the little bit of braggin', I must remind my readers (both of them) that I am the only fearless prognosticator around that picked South Point to win the Southwestern 3-A Conference.

And, I must add, that I had the second and third place teams pegged pretty good, too, even though I picked Crest for second and Shelby for third.

Now, for the red-faced part:

Burns and Kings Mountain both made a monkey out of me. I picked the Mountaineers to finish fourth and said that Kings Mountain could even contend for the conference title if they adjusted quickly to their new wishbone offense. Well, the Mounties not only did not adjust to the offense, they abandoned it after two games for the old familiar I-formation and went on to finish in 10th place with a 1-9 record.

Now Burns, as I've been reminded by Winn Dixie manager Mark Beam who is an avid Bulldog fan, did not finish ninth as I predicted but fourth, and the Bulldogs gave South Point and Shelby some of their toughest competition. I knew on the opening night of the season when the Bulldogs beat the Mountaineers 23-23 that I'd made a big mistake.

I just wonder if Tommy Pruett (Burns assistant who used to be a KMHS assistant, still gets the Herald and tacked that prediction up on the locker room bulletin board! I remember several years ago, I picked East Gaston to finish sixth and Jerry Adams circled that prediction in red ink and put it on his locker room bulletin board and made all of his players look at it every day. The Warriors won the conference championship.

R-S Central, which like Burns played a lot of sophomores in 1983 and is now maturing, finished fifth after I said the Hilltoppers would be eighth. With many of their players returning next year, you can bet I'll pick Burns and R-S to finish much higher than eighth and ninth. With Crest and East Gaston leaving the SWC for the Southwestern 4-A Conference, Burns and R-S could rank right up there with Shelby in the race for the league title.

## Elder, Jones, Lutz Double Winners At KM Sports Fete

Football standouts Timmy Elder, Brad Jones and Rocky Lutz were double winners at the Kings Mountain High School Fall Sports Banquet Thursday night at the KMHS cafeteria.

The Mountaineer Booster's Club honored members of the football, crosscountry, girls tennis and girls volleyball teams at the first annual fall fete.

Elder won the coveted Dr. George Plonk Most Valuable Player Award and the most outstanding offensive player award; Jones took the John Gamble Scholastic Award and the Fred Plonk Blocking Trophy; and Lutz won the Hardees most outstanding defensive player and the BDF Construction Company Tackling Award.

Other football trophy winners were Neil Morris, Coaches Award; Roderick Boyce, American Legion Most Improved Back; and Keith Pettis, American Legion Most Improved Lineman.

Winning most outstanding player trophies in the other fall sports were Leigh Ann Odell and Robin Warlick, girls tennis; John Foster, crosscountry; and Carmelia Leach, girls volleyball.

Seniors receiving plaques for two or more years participation in a sport included:

**FOOTBALL:** Steve Falls, Keith Pettis, Theron Brown, Rocky Lutz, Neil Morris, John Grant, Kale Bagwell, Brad Jones, Shane Crawford, Eric Odoms, Timmy Elder, Doug Ramsey, Danny Moore and Robert Appling.

**CROSSCOUNTRY:** Paul Ware, Monte Huffstetler, John Foster, Junior Melton.

**VOLLEYBALL:** Lin Putnam, Lee Ann Gann, Carmelia Leach, Shannon Curry.

**TENNIS:** Leigh Ann Odell, Robin Warlick, Chris Huffstetler.

The trophy winners drew praise from the Mountaineer coaches who presented the awards.

Elder, according to assistant football coach Bruce Clark, "was the guy we went to when the going got tough." He responded by leading the team in rushing with 774 yards, including a career high of 190 yards in KM's 21-0 victory over East Rutherford.

Elder was a two-year starter for the Mountaineers. He was one of the top defensive players on last year's 6-4 team before being moved to the offensive backfield this year.

"He was the most dependable player we had," said assistant coach Gary Brigman. "When we needed a tough yard, we always gave it to him on a fullback trap. He always gave a hundred percent."

Jones, a two-year starter at center, was one of the team's most consistent players. He graded out in every ballgame. "I know from experience that line people don't get any credit," said Coach Clark. "But Brad hung in there all year and now he's getting the recognition he deserved."

"It's wonderful to excel in athletics, but it's also wonderful to excel in the classroom," noted

Principal Ronnie Wilson who presented the John Gamble Scholastic Award to Jones, who carried a 3.4 grade point average during the football season. Jones is also the number one tennis player for the Mountaineers and is involved in many extra-curricular activities. He serves as President of the Senior Class and is active in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Lutz, also a two-year starter, served as defensive captain and was the defensive unit's leader all year long. He led the team in tackles with 104 in nine games, recovered one fumble, caused another and had one quarterback sack.

"I admire him very much," commented Coach Clark. "We got really close as a player and coach. He's the type player that you say is too small to play football, but he gave everything he had every play of the game. He is a true asset to the Kings Mountain High School athletic program."

Coach Chuck Gordon praised Pettis for his good attitude. "He was the type of person that when you pointed out a mistake to him, he'd say 'I'll get it right the next time' and he'd go out there the next time and work hard on doing it right. By the end of the year he was one of our best defensive players."

Coach John Goforth, offensive coordinator for the Mountaineers, said he was very pleased with Boyce's progress during the season and looks forward to his return next year. He was the only junior among the trophy

winners, and will bring next year's Mountaineers the experience at quarterback that is necessary for success on the gridiron.

Head Coach Denny Hicks called Morris "a unique individual who always does everything you ask him to do."

Leach was a three-year performer in volleyball and was a key factor in Coach Diana Bridges' 11-5 record and third place finish in the Southwestern 3-A Conference in her first year as coach. "She will be very hard to replace," Mrs. Bridges said.

Foster, a two-year starter in crosscountry, won over half of the meets the Mountaineers participated in this fall and was named to the All-Conference team. "He's a real dedicated person," said Coach Steve Lazenby. "He trained hard and competed in a lot of off-season runs to prepare himself for the season."

Odell and Warlick had spectacular senior tennis seasons to lead the KM ladies to an 11-2 season and second place finish in the SWC in Coach Suzy Holtzclaw's first year. In addition to compiling outstanding individual records, they competed in doubles play and finished second in the strong Sectional Tournament field at Shelby. En route to that finish they knocked off the top-seeded team. They advanced to the Regional Tournament in Hickory and came within one victory of making the State Tournament field.

"They played beautifully all season," Coach Holtzclaw said.

## Predicting Long Year For Wake

How does Coach Carl Tacy manage to keep Wake Forest consistently competitive in the ACC? Wake can rarely get a top student-athlete if Duke wants him, can never get an All-American prospect over Carolina, and cannot compete for the good athlete/borderline student that often goes to State.

Last year, nevertheless, Wake got into the final eight in the nation, tying for third in the ACC and beating DePaul before finally losing to Houston in the NCAA playoffs.

This year, the effects of not having a home court, of practicing in an on-campus "high school" gym, and of not having the full quota of players (11 are currently on the roster) will be obvious in the win-loss column.

If Wake can eek out a victory over UNC in mid-December and get wins in their comparatively easy non-conference games, they may be able to keep their confidence—a great equalizer in sports—and play beyond their ability for awhile.

Assistant Coach Mark Friedinger is one who tries to bolster confidence. He's an optimist. He points to the team's unsurpassed forward, Kenny Green, a proven, star point-maker. He cites the ball handling go-power of tiny "Mugsy" Bogues and the overall ability of off-guard Delaney Rudd. He concentrates on the good things that can happen, and in practice he is encouraging and upbeat.

Striking a balance, and being more of a criticizer (teams need both) the other assistant, Ernie Nestor, showed his sense of desperation on the practice floor, one time screaming, almost pleading, with Delaney Rudd—"Get in his face, pressure him, get him."

Coaches realize, better than players, what they are up against. The players don't see the other schools practicing. They get their confidence and their sense of progress from their intra-squad scrimmages. And at Wake, there just isn't the competition.

Carl Tacy remains calm and philosophical, determined to do his best and hope for a banner recruiting year, but I think he would be justified



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in demonstrating the sense of desperation he must inevitably feel. It is more than simply the recent loss of forward Todd May, who had star potential but hasn't been counted on because of his recurring injuries. Even if he does return to the team, it is doubtful he will be able to play at full strength.

Throughout the practice I saw, jackhammers filled the gym with noise as workmen vibrated on the roof. It had to be distracting, but I get the feeling that Tacy isn't the big boss at Wake (or sports are not so highly elevated in the academic community) such that he can go ranting and raving to some higher authority. He takes the less than ideal conditions in stride—it's part of the deal at Wake—and he makes the best of it. The practice was limited anyway. The team is already ailing, beat up so to speak, and in need of a rest—and it is only mid-November. When Delaney Rudd seemed once to badly twist an ankle on a layup, the gym got quiet. (Even the jackhammers stopped, I think.) Wake can't afford to lose anyone to injury.

If the players truly understood what they are facing, I wonder if