

Sports Year 1987 Brought More Championships

Sports year 1987 brought more championships and individual honors for Kings Mountain and its people.

During the calendar year, area school teams continued to dominate in junior and senior high circles, and Kings Mountain athletes on the amateur, collegiate and professional level excelled.

Kings Mountain Junior High continued to dominate the Western N.C. Junior High Athletic Association, winning championships in wrestling, boys basketball, baseball and golf.

Coach Phil Weathers' wrestlers won the Western crown for the 10th straight season and Chris Henson closed out his two-year career with the Patriots with a 24-0 record. KMHJ is the only school to win the Western Association since it was organized.

Gary Blake's boys basketball team had a balanced scoring attack and won the Western crown with a 10-0 record. Daniel Honeycutt, Ryan Hollifield and NuNu Ross were among the leaders.

Tommy Wease's baseball team won the Western title for the second straight year with a 13-0 record. Chris and Chad Plonk, Jon Reid, Chris Henson, and others led the way.

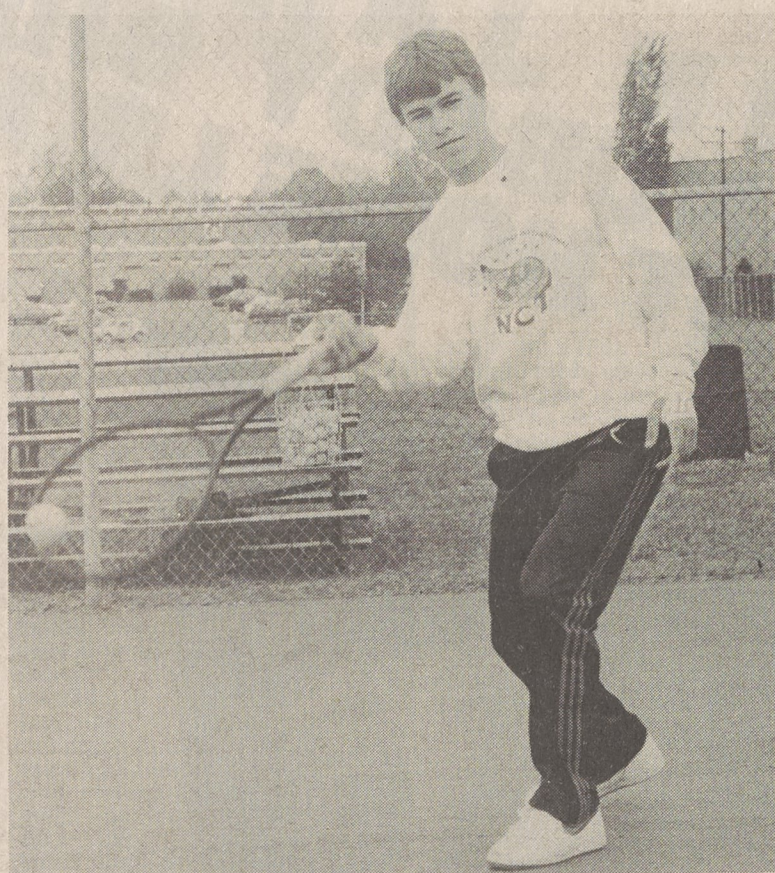
Coach Paul Bolt's Patriot golfers repeated as Western Association champions and had little competition in compiling a 7-0 regular season record and then walking away with the league tournament title. Matt Heavner, Robbie Wilson, Ryan Broadwell, and others led the attack.

The senior high continued its dominance of Southwestern 3-A Conference wrestling, but the Mountaineers also added some championship trophies in sports in which they had not previously been accustomed to winning.

Steve Moffitt's wrestlers won the SWC for the fifth time in seven years and Daron Hillman, John Turner, Tommy Chapman, Tony Parker and Danny Hamrick won individual SWC titles. Hillman finished second in the state and was named to the All-State team.

The Mountaineer golf team won its first SWC title in over 20 years. Coach Denny Hicks also had the SWC's individual champion in sophomore Brad Wilson. Other leaders of the team included Bo Ballard, Rusty Bumgardner, Phil Robbins, and John Van Dyke.

The KMHS boys' tennis team won its first-ever SWC title and became only the se-



BRYAN JONES

...All American In 1987

cond team to dethrone perennial SWC champion Shelby. Shelby has won every SWC title except this year's crown which was won by the Mounties, and the 1985 title won by South Point.

Junior Bryan Jones and sophomore Jeff Guy were leaders of Steve Lazenby's outfit. Both participated in the state tournament and Jones won the state singles crown. He was state player of the year and SWC player of the year for the third straight season. He was later named All-American.

KMHS also won its first-ever conference title in girls track. David Bolton of the Mountaineers was conference coach of the year and Tracy Ward, Jackie Plonk, Sciandra Robinson, and Angela and Adrienne Woods were among the team leaders.

The girls volleyball team finished second in the SWC by a single game after winning the league crown the past two seasons. Coach Dianna Bridges was named SWC coach of the year for the third straight season and KM's Jennifer Boheler was conference player of the year.

Other Mountaineer teams finished down the ladder in the SWC, but the boys basketball team rebounded from a fourth place regular season finish to win the Sectional Tournament championship. Coach Larry Sipe's charges defeated 20-game winner Northwest Cabarrus 60-57 in the championship game to advance to the Western Regionals at Hickory. They fell in the regional semi-

finals to Swannanoa Owen Aubrey Hollifield, who was a standout in football, basketball and track, and Regina Brown, who excelled in basketball and volleyball, were named KMHS athletes of the year.

*** Many former Mountaineer athletes excelled in the college ranks.

Lavar "BaBa" Curry led Belmont Abbey's Crusaders and District 26 in scoring, and many other former Mountaineer basketballers, including Darryl Crocker at Mars Hill, played on the collegiate level.

Rusty Bumgardner and Aubrey Hollifield inked football scholarships at Wake Forest University and Bumgardner broke into the starting lineup as a freshman. He helped lead the Deacons to a 7-4 record which was their best in over 40 years.

Two former Mountaineers competed on the professional

level during 1987.

Todd Cloninger, a lefthand pitcher, played his second year of professional baseball with the Winston-Salem team in the Class A Carolinas League. He was injured in

mid-season and had to undergo surgery but is still being regarded as a top prospect in the Chicago Cubs organization.

Kevin Mack was again the leading rusher for the

Cleveland Browns of the National Football League, who recently won their third straight division title. He was also selected to the Pro Bowl for the second time in three years.

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Sports Shorts

Fullback Tracy Johnson, who played two of his three seasons of high school football in Kings Mountain, scored three touchdowns and gained 88 yards rushing to help lead Clemson's Tigers to a 35-10 victory over Penn State in the Citrus Bowl on New Year's Day. It was the worst bowl defeat ever for the Nittany Lions, who were defending NCAA champions...

Frank Morehead, who coached one year at Kings Mountain Junior High, recently announced his resignation as head football coach at Cherryville High School...

A bold prediction: Shelby's Lions will dethrone R-S Central as Southwestern 3-A Conference basketball champions this year...Look for North Gaston's Wildcats to come on strong again in late-season. Hal White's five finished fifth in the regular season last year but then got hot and finished second in the state tournament...

Kings Mountain Junior High's basketballers, off the past 2½ weeks for Christmas, return to action Thursday at home against Burns. Girls action begins at 4 p.m. and the boys game starts around 5. Gary Blake's Patriots will be gunning for their 20th straight victory...

Shelby's Jim Taylor, who has coached two straight state 3-A championship clubs, was recently named North Carolina Coach of the Year by the Greensboro Daily News. Shelby's Clint Gwaltney and Tony Mauney and South Point's Brian Pate were named to the all-state teams...

Kings Mountain wrestling coach Steve Moffitt could be grooming another state champion. Chris Henson, a 130-pound sophomore, has the potential to become one of the best grapplers to come through the KM program, which is one of the best in North Carolina. Henson has already posted 11 straight wins and picked up two tournament most valuable player awards...

Kings Mountain native Tony Leigh has taken over as head girls basketball coach at Bessemer City High School after spending several seasons building one of the state's most powerful girls softball programs at Canton Pisgah. Leigh's ladies will battle Kings Mountain in final non-conference action Friday at 6:30 at the KMHS gym...

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