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# SPORTS

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## KMHS Basketball Teams Will Be Young

### Coach Sipe Says Six Teams Capable Of Winning SWC Title

The 1988-89 men's basketball race in the Southwestern 3-A Conference could be one of the most balanced ever, says veteran KMHS coach Larry Sipe.

Sipe says at least six clubs, including his own Mountaineers, have a shot at winning the league title. He doesn't expect any one team to go undefeated.

Contenders, according to Sipe, include perennial champion R-S Central, Shelby, South Point, East Rutherford, North Gaston and the Mountaineers.

Of those six clubs, Kings Mountain is the least experienced. But Sipe has an outstanding crop of young players, including some sophomores who won 29 straight games over a 2½ year period at the junior high.

"One thing we're going to have to get quick is experience," says Sipe. "We have more talent than last year, when we were 15-10, but with only one full-time and one part-time starter back, we're very young. We should get better as the year progresses."

Sipe will get his first look at the Mountaineers in a game situation Tuesday when East Gaston comes to the KMHS gym for a scrimmage. Girls will scrimmage from 5-7 p.m. and the boys from 7-9 p.m. That will be the team's only scrimmage this year. Admission is one dollar.

Regular season action opens November 29 with KMHS hosting Clover in non-conference action. The Mounties host East Lincoln on December 2. Conference play begins on January 10 when defending champion R-S Central comes to the KMHS gym.

The only returnee from last year's fourth place KM five is senior guard Patrick Jones. The 5-8 point guard averaged nine points per game. Jeff Ross, 5-8, also saw a lot of action at guard and averaged seven points per contest.

The only other player with any varsity experience are 6-4 senior Tim Griffith.

Patrick Odoms, a 6-3 senior, played jayvee ball two years ago but did not play for the varsity last year. Sipe says he's probably the team's top athlete.

"He's a good jumper and good leaper," said Sipe. "He's probably going to be our leader on the inside."

The Mountaineers will be experienced in the backcourt with the return of Jones and Ross and the addition of 5-7 sophomore Darius Ross, who was the leading scorer on the junior high team the last two seasons. Sipe is breaking from tradition and carrying three sophomores on the varsity this year.

Sipe also has a good crop of juniors who compiled a 17-3 record in jayvee action last year. Those players include 6-3 forward Ryan Hollifield, 6-0 guard Daniel Honeycutt, 6-3 forward Quan Smith, 6-0 guard Petie McNeil and 5-8 guard Rodgerick McClain.

Another junior, 6-6 Darian Hager, is back in basketball after sitting out a couple seasons. He last played competitively in the ninth grade and missed last year because of foot surgery.

Other sophomores who'll help out inside are 6-3 Era Vaughn, who should be one of the team's top scorers and rebounders, and 6-5 Mark Byers, who Sipe says is "very aggressive and gets better every time he goes out to practice."

Size is something the Mounties will enjoy this year. For the past several seasons, they've had

very little height.

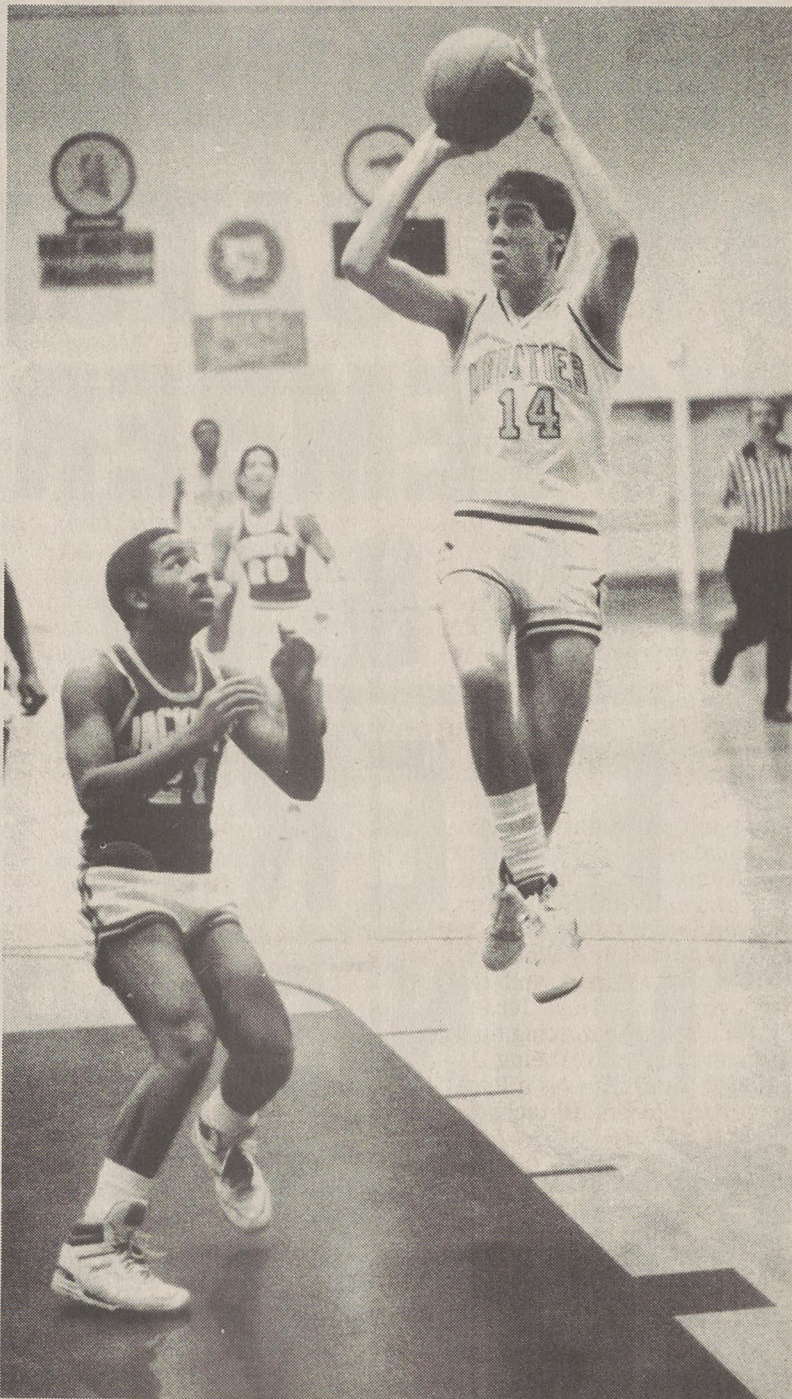
"We're going to try to play a little more of a power game on offense," he says. "This is the first time we've had kids in the 6-4 to 6-6 range, and we're going to run a stack offense and try to get the ball inside. We can really run some different combinations this year. We can run our regular offense with two guards, a 6-3 forward and a power forward, but we've also been experimenting with a quick lineup where I'm going with three guards outside and two big people inside. You may see us run a big offense, too, with some of the guys that are 6-3 and 6-5 up front."

If the Mountaineers have a weak spot, it's outside shooting. Sipe lost one of the league's top downtown threats in Cliff Meeks, who was All-Conference two years running. "That's one area we're going to have to become more consistent in," says Sipe.

Sipe hopes his young players can mature quickly during the December non-conference games and be ready when the tough conference actions begins in January.

"We're probably going to see the best balance this conference has had in several years," he said. "East Rutherford is going to have a front line (6-6, 6-5, and 6-6) that looks like a college team. South Point started sophomores last year and they're going to be experienced. They have a lot of good shooters. All of the other teams have a lot of experienced players coming back. Of the six teams that I see as contenders, we are the least experienced."

"But we have a good, young group," he went on. "We're going to have to be patient with them. It's a big step from jayvees to varsity and even a bigger step from junior high to varsity, but for us to be successful they're going to have to contribute."



**VARSITY PROSPECT** - Ryan Hollifield, shown in action for Kings Mountain High's junior varsity basketball team last year, is one of many young players seeking a starting berth on the varsity this year. The KM teams scrimmage East Gaston Tuesday at the KMHS gym.

### New Girls Coach Funderburke Working On The Fundamentals

Kings Mountain High's girls basketball team will have a new coach and a new look this season.

The KM ladies, who won only three games last year and finished seventh in the eight-team Southwestern 3-A Conference, will be playing for Ronny Funderburke, who built a successful record over the past several years as boys jayvee coach. And Funderburke, an East Rutherford product, is stressing fundamentals which he hopes will make the KM five competitive in the near future.

Funderburke is blessed with some good, young talent. Most of his players are sophomores and he's carrying one freshman, Dawn Hardin. He feels that as those young players mature, the team will get stronger.

Joining Hardin on the varsity are returnees Adrienne Woods, Tessie Ruff, Carmen Smith, Sharon Melton, Angela Woods, and Velma Degree, along with seniors Cindy Gardner and Tracy Ward, and a host of sophs, including Tonya Gardner, Suzette Feemster, Nicole Barnes, Marveta Wilson, and Amy Carrigan, and junior Lynn Roseboro.

Adrienne Woods, Ruff and Smith were full-time starters last year and Melton started the first half of the season. Ward saw a lot of playing time as a sophomore two years ago but did not play last year.

"This year, I think we're going to have speed and size together," said Funderburke. "But these girls lack fundamental skills. We're using over half of our practice time just on the fundamentals. But I feel like they're improving already, and as long as they continue to concentrate and work on what we're teaching them, we'll be okay."

Susie Moore, a former KM player and a student at Gardner-Webb, is assisting Funderburke. "She's working with the guards and I'm working with the forwards and centers," Funderburke said. "She's really a big help."

Funderburke says he'll go mostly with a zone offense but will be a trapping zone team on defense.

"We'll have pressure on the ball all the time after it crosses half court," he said. "On offense, we're going to push the ball up the floor more."

Funderburke says fans shouldn't look for too much from his girls early in the season, but as the year progresses he feels like the team will move up in the standings.

"We probably won't start playing to our potential until about halfway through the season," he said. "But I feel like this team has the potential to finish in the top half of the conference race."

Funderburke sees R-S Central, Chase and North Gaston as the teams to beat in the SWC.

"I feel like our sophomores are going to play a lot," he said. "We



**CARMEN SMITH** ...Returning Starter

have a lot of talent coming up in the next few years. Kings Mountain is going to have better teams than in the past because of that talent. I'm not saying we'll win conference championships, but we'll be competitive."

The KM ladies open their regular season on November 29 at home against Clover. The girls and boys scrimmage East Gaston next Tuesday night at the KMHS gym.

#### THE SCHEDULE

**NOVEMBER**  
29 - Clover.  
**DECEMBER**  
2 - East Lincoln; 9 - at Clover; 16 - at East Lincoln; 20-21 - at Shelby Christmas Tournament;  
**JANUARY**  
3 - B. City; 6 - at B. City; 10 - R-S Central; 13 - N. Gaston; 17 - at Shelby; 20 - S. Point; 24 - Chase; 27 - at East Rutherford; 31 - at Burns.  
**FEBRUARY**  
3 - at R-S Central; 7 - at N. Gaston; 10 - Shelby; 14 - at S. Point; 17 - at Chase; 21 - East Rutherford; 24 - Burns. 27 - SWC tournament begins at Gardner-Webb.

### Weathers Gets 100th Win At KM

Phil Weathers reached a coaching milestone and his Kings Mountain Junior High wrestlers began what they hope to be another successful era Monday when the Patriots defeated Burns 72-18 in the opening Bi-County Conference wrestling match.

The Patriots won all 10 of the championships in the old Western N.C. Junior High Athletic Association. This is the first year of the Bi-County loop.

Monday's win was the 100th for Weathers, who is in his 10th season as Patriot coach.

"It was an exciting win for us, not just because it was my 100th coaching win but because, going into the match, it was hard to know how we'd wrestle. But overall I was really pleased with our performance."

The Patriots this year, like other Bi-County teams, are seventh and eighth graders.

"I noticed several things we need to work on," said Weathers. "But the thing that really pleased me was that I started four seventh graders and they did a



**PHIL WEATHERS**

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### Junior High Volleyball Team Splits Bi-County Openers

Kings Mountain Junior High's girls volleyball team won over Shelby and lost to Lincolnton in opening-season Bi-County Conference action Tuesday afternoon at the KMJH gym.

The Lady Patriots lost to Lincolnton 15-8 and 15-11 in their first match but rebounded to whip Shelby 15-13, 15-0.

Coach Candy Albergine takes her team to East Lincoln Thursday for a tri-match with East Lincoln and Shelby.

"Everybody played for us Tuesday and I was real impressed," said Coach Albergine. "We expect to see a lot of improvement over the course of the season."

## Be Eternally Grateful For Peach Basket

Peach baskets don't come in for much attention from sports writers or athletes these days. Yet, everyone who plays basketball, loves to watch the game or makes his living from it ought to be eternally grateful to that lowly fruit receptacle. And that includes everybody from the NBA commissioner to the guy who sells peanuts during the National Invitational Tournament (NIT) at Madison Square Garden. Not to mention NBA stars who arrive at the arena in Rolls Royces.

It would seem that peach baskets don't have much to do with a college education. But every sky-scraping high school senior who is slick enough with a basketball to catch the eye of a college recruiter owes his four-year full scholarship to that humble hamper. In fact, the very name of the game is derived from it. For, without peach baskets and an imaginative young YMCA physical instructor 93 years ago this month, there wouldn't be the game of basketball.

Though college football was well established around the end of the last century, the season was short. By Thanksgiving Day, the season was pretty well over, and there was no major indoor sport to take up the slack during the long winter months. Football-playing students at a college to train Christian workers, in Springfield, Massachusetts, found themselves bored with Indian clubs, tumbl-

ing and calisthenics in the winter of 1891. They craved action - a game offering challenge and competition. And which could be played indoors.

The challenge was taken up by young Jim Naismith, a McGill University graduate, who was a physical education instructor at the Springfield College. Naismith believed in teaching rather than preaching, using students' love of sports as a vehicle for his pedagogy. His approach to the problem was totally an intellectual exercise. Rather than attempting to adapt an existing game, Naismith sat at his desk and in one skull session, conceived the game of basketball, laid out the playing court specifications and wrote the rules of the game. On a day in December, 1891, Naismith carried into the gym the written-out structure and regulations of the game that would become known as basketball, and which have survived with little change to this day.

Naismith lacked only the hoops through which the ball was to be dropped. When the janitor hauled in two peach baskets, he not only solved the hoop problem, but gave the game its name. Naismith nailed the baskets to the walls at either end of the 35' x 50' gym, ten feet above the floor (still regulation height), formed teams and whistled the new game into full birth. One change that was made was the number of players on a team;

the first teams had nine players each, instead of the present five.

Since there was no game of basketball, obviously, there was no basketball, and the first games were played with soccer balls.

In the beginning, there were no backboards; the baskets were nailed directly to the walls and the bottoms were left in the peach baskets. Whenever a basket was scored, someone had to climb a ladder to retrieve the ball. Backboards were added to prevent overly enthusiastic rooters in the balcony from slapping the ball away from the basket when it was thrown up by a player from the opposing team. Scores in the early years seldom ran higher than the 20s; the 100-plus scores common in professional basketball today were undreamed of in early days.

The college for training Christian workers was, of course, the YMCA's Springfield College. Today, still a major YMCA college and a leading college for training physical education instructors, the Springfield college campus, fittingly, is the site of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. Young Jim went on to become Dr. James A. Naismith, specializing in physical medicine and moved on to the University of Kansas. The peach basket game he invented grew quickly into one of



Art By Joy Day

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