



FOOTBALL PRACTICE - Assistant coach Bruce Clark watches closely as some of his players go through conditioning drills Tuesday at Kings Mountain High's annual mini camp. The Mountaineers will continue camp through next Thursday. They officially open pre-season practice July 31.

KMHS Gridders Taking Part In Annual Camp

Around 40 Kings Mountain High football prospects are braving the hot weather and participating in a mini camp at KMHS.

Head Coach Denny Hicks said the camp will run through next Thursday. After that, the coaching staff will go to Greensboro for the annual North Carolina High School Athletic Association Coaches Clinic and the players will take a rest before officially beginning pre-season practice on July 31.

The mini camp has been held for years here, but the coaching staff has taken a different approach over the last five seasons. Rather than having the players eat, sleep and actually live at school during the camp, they've let the players stay at home and just come to school for an hour and a half a day, during which time they go through conditioning drills for 45 minutes and teaching for 45 minutes.

"Most schools go for about five

weeks in the summer and require the players to be there four of those weeks," said Hicks. "We used to do the same, but in 1985 we felt like we were totally dominating the kids' summer. Football's a tough game and hard to play, but it's supposed to be fun, too. So, in 1985, we started asking them to just commit two weeks and we feel like the success we had in 1985 and 1986 proved it's a justifiable way of doing it. We feel like we can get a lot done during that time and families can plan their vacations around it and the players don't have to commit their whole summer to football. If they come in dedicated, we can get in what we need to in two weeks."

The camp is running from 6:30 to 8 p.m. each night. Schools having summer practice are allowed only to have conditioning drills and teach their basic offenses and are not allowed to put on football gear

other than helmets and shoes.

"We just try to concentrate on offense and the kicking game," Hicks said. "We've had a very difficult time selling our kids on the importance of a kicking game, but there's no way to be successful without it. 1985 was a prime example. We won two of our first three games with the kicking game and that gave our offense and defense a chance to come around and we jelled into a real good football team. That was probably the only year we got out of the kicking game what we want to get out of it every year. We try to get in all the protection, coverage, a lot of kicking, snapping and holding. We never let up. Through August practices and on through the school year we work on it at least 20 minutes a day."

Hicks, who is beginning his seventh year as head coach at KMHS, See Camp, 7-A

Deadeye

Mike Huffman Excels In National Shooting Events

Shooting a high-powered rifle and winning out in state and national competitions is no red-neck sport. Ask Kings Mountain banker Mike Huffman, who says roughing it with 3,500 other shooters at Camp Perry on Lake Erie in Port Clinton, Ohio is an ideal vacation spot to relax and unwind. But, unless you're a sharpshooter like Huffman, it's not for you.

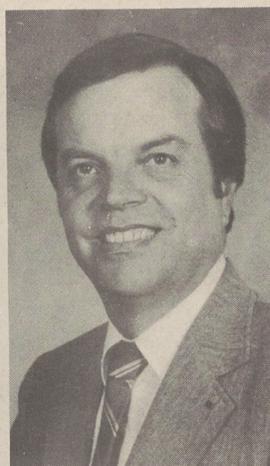
This summer Huffman may shoot in the national competition again. He's looking forward to the experience and getting in some practice on the firing range.

For five years Mike has competed in the high-powered rifle division of state and national contests and has shot on the Charlotte range at Pineville, at Tryon, and on military ranges such as Camp Butler, Camp Lejeune, Fort Gordon, Ga. and Oak Ridge, Tenn. and also at the FBI Academy range in Quantico, Va.

Huffman got into the sport by accident. Growing up on a small farm, he used to go rabbit and bird hunting with his late grandfather who was still deer hunting at age 83. Making a living and raising a family of two children took top priorities and it was only after his children were grown that he and his wife decided to take up the hunting sport and shooting hobby. Huffman fired a number of rounds with a friend competing with the Division of Civilian Marksmanship, qualified, and then purchased his first M-1 rifle at a bargain price.

"I had never bit the bullet in this sport before but after I bought my gun I got the bug and I've been active since," he said. "Shooting is not like golf and football and it's no red-neck sport. You have to like it to perfect it and you have to keep practicing," he laughed.

Huffman has shot with groups as few as 20 and as large as 80 in local and state competitions and in groups as large as 2800-3500 in the nationals. For those interested in how the shooters are rated a marksman scores 84% and below, a sharpshooter scores 84-99.9%, a master scores 94-96.99% and a



MIKE HUFFMAN

high master scores 97% and up. There are less than 40 high masters in the U. S. and most are military shooters, said Huffman who is acquainted with eight of them.

Shooters come from all walks of life and that's why Huffman has continued in a sport, which does not come easy, requires intense concentration and is expensive.

"I've made friends from almost every profession and business," said Huffman, who ranks the camaraderie tremendous. He has shot on the N. C. State High-Powered Rifle team for five years and prefers team shooting to shooting solo.

Most vacations the Huffmans take together are outdoors- on the shooting range or hunting. Mike laughs when he recalls how his wife got interested in pistol shooting. "I liked outdoors sports so much and we wanted some time together," he said. Shirley also started deer hunting with him, but unlike her husband, she has never killed an animal. She prefers hunting groundhog or woodchuck. For ten years Mike has hunted bear and wolf in Canada and brought home the results of his hobby which are mounted for friends to see when they visit the Huffman home.

Huffman said that most people have an inept fear of guns but suggests that the younger a person is the better he or she will progress as a marksman. "Our eyes get worse as we age and sight is a prerequisite for success in this sport," he said, as well as consistency and repeatability. A shooter has also to learn how to make adjustments to the wind and be willing to work hard. Getting up at 3 a.m. to go to a meet in the eastern part of the state or living with 3500 other shooters in an old WWII POW camp in converted 14x14 huts and no air-conditioning might not be the perfect vacation spot for some. A shooter must also be in good physical shape.

Camp Perry has four rifle ranges and at times as many as 1,050 people are firing on the range at the same time. "Our weapons have to be on safety and bolt locked and we get no second chances," he said. "We follow all safety procedures or we go home," he added. Shooting in 103 degree temperatures in hot weather is another factor that good shooters learn to deal with. They also wear leather jackets, which also contribute to the heat. Windburn and sunburn are other factors the shooters must cope with during hot weather. Walking a half-mile from the bunkhouse to the range and carrying your equipment keeps them in shape. A shooter may spend half his time at camp in the pits marking targets. "You have no trouble sleeping after the first day on the firing range," says Huffman.

Trophies and ribbons are awarded in the national competition but the best part of the event for Mike is that the participant is actually competing against himself. "I get a great deal of satisfaction and last year scored among the President's Top 100 civilians and shot in six-man team matches. He missed the master's last year by five points.

"There's more to this sport than just picking up a gun and firing it," says Huffman. It takes awhile to perfect the sport. Most matches are won by 1-3 points and many shoot-

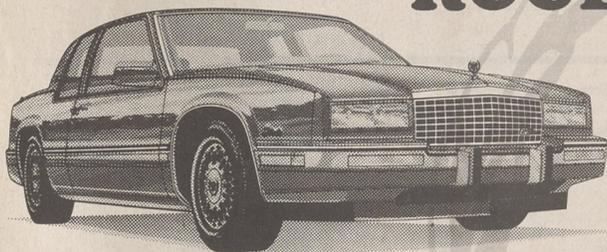
See Huffman, 9-A

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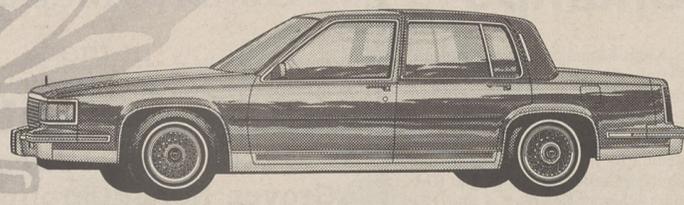
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