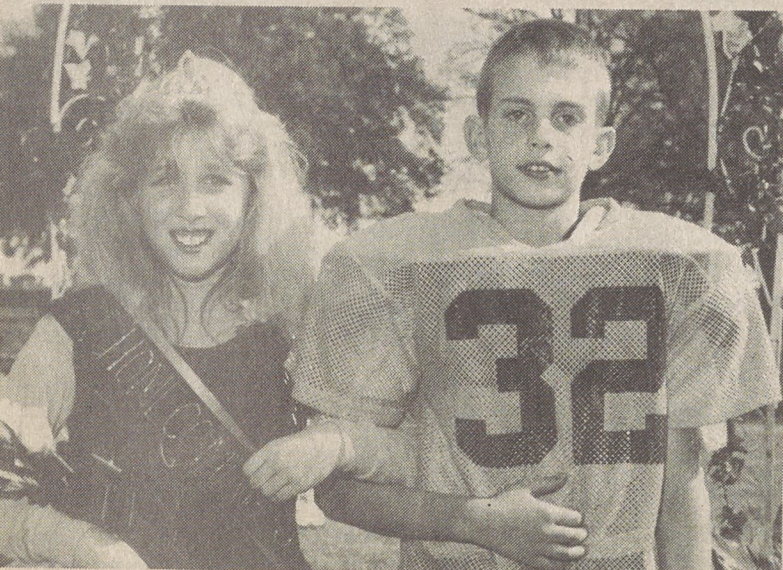




April Martin reigned as Pee Wee Optimist Queen and was escorted by Chris Chambers at the recent Optimist homecoming game between Kings Mountain and Forest City at City Stadium. Runner-up was Jessica Miller.



Junior Midget Optimist Queen was Ginger Owenby, escorted by Clark Stowe at the recent homecoming activities at City Stadium. Runner-up was Kim Murgita.



Nicole Matthews was crowned Junior Pee Wee Optimist Queen at recent homecoming activities held by the three Optimist teams in Kings Mountain and was escorted by Nick Benton. Runner-up was Christi Burgess.

### Duckpins edge closer to top

The Duckpins won three of four games from the Spades to move to within one game of first place in Mixed Duckpin Bowling League action Thursday night at Dilling Heating.

The Spades now have a 25-15 record to the Duckpins' 24-16 mark. The Tailenders are third at 16-24 and the Rednecks fourth at 15-25. Those two teams split Thursday night.

John Caveny and Jerome Grant led the way for the Duckpins. Caveny rolled a 133 line and 343 set and Grant added a 113-313. Allen Myers led the Spades with a 137-355.

The big scorer of the night, though, was Jack Barrett who rolled a 141 line and 396 set to lead the Rednecks to a split with the Tailenders. Jack's brother, Tommy Barrett, also had a big night with a 159-364. Bill Myers led the Tailenders with a 141 line and 351 set.

### Dilling bowls 420 in Tuesday league

John Dilling was in top form in Mixed Duckpin Bowling League action Tuesday night at Dilling Heating.

The veteran southpaw rolled single games of 154, 120 and 146 for a 420 set which led his team to three wins over co-leader Johnny Dye.

Lib Gault also had a big night for Dilling's team with a 123 line and 337 set. Dye led his group with a 159-375 and Jerry Dover added a 121-309.

In another match, Mark Midgette won three games over co-leader R.W. Hullender. Faye Mitchem led the winners with a 117 line and 301 set. Hullender had a 141-334 and Jack Barrett a 115-321 for the losers.

Dye and Hullender now have 22-18 marks, followed by Dilling at 20-20 and Midgette 16-24.

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## BASKETBALL

From Page 5-A

Shawn Grier and junior Kyle Sellers.

Leon Ross, a senior, and Jerry Black, a junior, return at the point guard. Senior Sheldon Thompson returns at wing along with junior Justin Jones.

"This is going to be the shortest team and the strongest schedule we've ever had," says Sipe. "We open up December 3 at Concord and then come home to play Hunter Huss. Butch Blalock (Former KM player and new Huss coach) is looking forward to bringing a team back to Kings Mountain. We hope we're not fodder that night."

The Mountaineers will battle Concord, Huss, Lincolnton and Clover twice each in non-conference action, and will also compete in an eight-team Shelby Star Christmas Tournament.

Sipe hopes a full-court press and a quick transition game will help make up for his team's lack of height.

"Without a proven inside scorer, we're going to have to get the ball in the open court to Williamson and Jones and try to score some easy buckets before the defense gets set up," he said. "But this is the style of basketball the kids like to play. We won't be ranked that highly in the conference so this ought to be a fun season. When I told the players we were going to push the ball up the floor they all got good smiles on their faces. That's how they like to play."

Sipe looks to Shelby to be the team to beat in the conference with Burns running a close second.

"Shelby will be real strong," he says. "They haven't had a real strong team since Chad Holbrook was a senior. They've been down about three years but George Hall has some good athletes this year. He has fine perimeter people and good inside players too."

"I'd have to pick Shelby first, then probably Burns because of their inside game. If Burns finds a guard or two to go with those big kids they'll be a strong contender."

After those two, Sipe predicts, the conference will be balanced. "It looks like there's a changing of the guard," he said. "Every team had big losses due to graduation."

Sipe will see his team under fire for the first time November 22 with a scrimmage at East Gaston.

The girls will scrimmage from 5-7 p.m. and the boys from 7-9 p.m. Kings Mountain's boys will host Independence of Charlotte in a scrimmage at 1 p.m. Sat., Nov. 23.

"Independence has a guard (Bill Canty) who has already committed to Wake Forest," Sipe said. "If the Kings Mountain folks want to see a future ACC player in action this is a good opportunity. These scrimmages are usually an exciting game. The players really get up and down the floor."

Coach Leigh had an unexpected surprise during the off-season when four players, including two who probably would have been starters, transferred to other schools. Now, he has only three players who saw action last year.

"We're going to be very young, I mean extremely young," he said. "We have 13 out for the varsity and 10 out for jayvees and only three of them are seniors."

Dawn Hardin and Toscha Tate, both seniors, and sophomore Amanda Halmess all started at times last season. They'll be counted on for leadership for the younger players like juniors Christy McCleary and Holly Goforth, sophomore Natalie Barnes, ninth grader Tamika Anderson, Rebecca Champion, Tonya Barnette, and others.

"Everybody with the exception of Dawn, Toscha and Amanda played on the JV team last year," Leigh said. "The JV team was successful so those girls are coming up here with a desire to win. They have good attitudes."

Leigh said he won't measure the success of this year's team by wins and losses, but by intensity and improvement.

"Last year we set a goal for 10 wins and we achieved that goal," he said. "We were real pleased with last year's performance. This year we're basically going to try to do the same thing, and that is get after it and try to improve."

"Our program is headed in the right direction," he added. "Our JV team went to summer camp with us

and they're looking pretty good. Next year we will be looking at 20 to 25 people on the varsity."

Leigh said the KM ladies won't be as big as they were last year, but may be quicker. "We don't have the Suzette Fecmster-type athlete inside, but these girls have a good attitude and a desire to win and they'll get after it."

Leigh will take his team to West Lincoln next Monday for a scrimmage, and then participate in the scrimmage on Friday of next week at East Gaston.

Looking to the conference race, Leigh predicts East Rutherford will be the team to beat.

"East is going to be very tough," he said. "They have most of their team coming back. North Gaston should be right up there too. We were hurt when two of our returning starters transferred. I was expecting four returning starters back this year, so that put a lot of burden

on our JV girls coming up. But they worked hard in the summer. We're going to make up for our lack of size and ability with hustle and desire."

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