

SPORTS



Gary Stewart
Editor

Rusty comes home, Clark joins Wildcats

Short cuts from the world of football:

Start-up: The start of football practice Saturday has fans and players excited about the opening of the season, which is just two weeks away for some teams, and three for most.

Teams playing endowment games are allowed to open on Friday, August 21. There are 68 games slated that night, including Bessemer City at South Point and Forestview at East Gaston...

Coaching Moves: Kings Mountain High has added former player Rusty Bumgardner to its football coaching staff. Bumgardner will fill a teaching position at the Middle School which former Mountaineer JV baseball coach Scott Earley vacated to take a job in South Carolina...Diron Bell, who was a volunteer assistant at KMHS last season, has moved to Florida where he hopes to hook on with an Arena League football team...Former Mountaineer assistant Bruce Clark, who resigned after three seasons as head coach at Southern Guilford, will be an assistant at North Gaston, and taking Clark's place at Southern Guilford is Eugene Everhart, who did a magnificent job at Jamestown Ragsdale. Two years ago his Tigers played for the state 3A championship, and last year they lost out in the third round to Kings Mountain...

Up-and-comers: Although they probably won't be ready to contend for a championship yet, one of the most improved teams in this area will probably be East Gaston's Warriors. Coached by former KMHS and Burns assistant Tommy Pruett, the Warriors have 13 starters back from last year's team which was competitive against some of the top teams in the area...Hillsborough Orange, coached by former Crest Coach Mike Stewart, hopes to make some noise in the Pac 6 this year.

See Gary, 8A



Kings Mountain Mountaineers go through light workouts Monday at Gamble Stadium

Some Mountaineers could change positions

Kings Mountain's Mountaineers will wind up their six days of conditioning Friday and end Saturday's first day of heavy workouts with an intrasquad scrimmage at 6:30 p.m. at John Gamble Stadium.

Head Coach Ron Massey and his staff are working with 75 JV and varsity prospects every afternoon, and they're hoping that more freshmen will join the team by the end of the week.

With all of the "guessperts" pointing to Kings Mountain as the team to beat in the Southwestern 3A Conference, the veteran coach knows his players will have to play their best every Friday night.

The Mountaineers have nine starters back on offense from last year's team which went 10-5 overall and made it to the state semifinals, but the coaching staff will be moving some players around on defense to try to make up for the loss of some key players. Massey, who has used a two-platoon system to perfection his first three years here, may play a couple of players both ways this fall.

"It's still early, and we're still trying to evaluate a little bit more," Massey said. "It will probably be another week before we get a real feel of where we're at and the progress we're making."

Massey said some shifting of personnel is necessary because some players the coaches were counting on came out late and/or didn't do what was expected of them during the summer.

"Defensively, we're trying to put the best 11 out there and we may have to move some kids around to put them where we feel like we'll have a competitive defense," he said.

Offensively, he hinted that Mountaineer fans may see a change in philosophy this year because the team doesn't have the breakaway speed it had in his first three years here.

"We're trying to adapt our running game a little more to the type personnel we've got," he said. "We won't be as much of a big play team like we've been the last couple of years. We're going to be more of a sustained drive team."

That means, with the season opener with East

Gaston just three weeks away, the coaches will be looking to experienced players to play mistake-free football and provide leadership for the younger players.

"With the first six days in light equipment only, we're limited now," he said, "and with school starting Monday we're not allowed two-a-days. We're pressed to get prepared initially and we're having to overload the kids mentally to get to the point to where we can get everything in before we play. But I'm not really going to worry about that too much. We'll have enough in at the first of the season, and by the fourth or fifth game hopefully we'll be to the point that we have all the bugs out."

Massey said he'll use Saturday's scrimmage to evaluate some of the younger players that the coaches have some "question marks" on. "A lot of the older kids, we know what they can do," he said. "We don't know how much actual scrimmage time we'll use for them."

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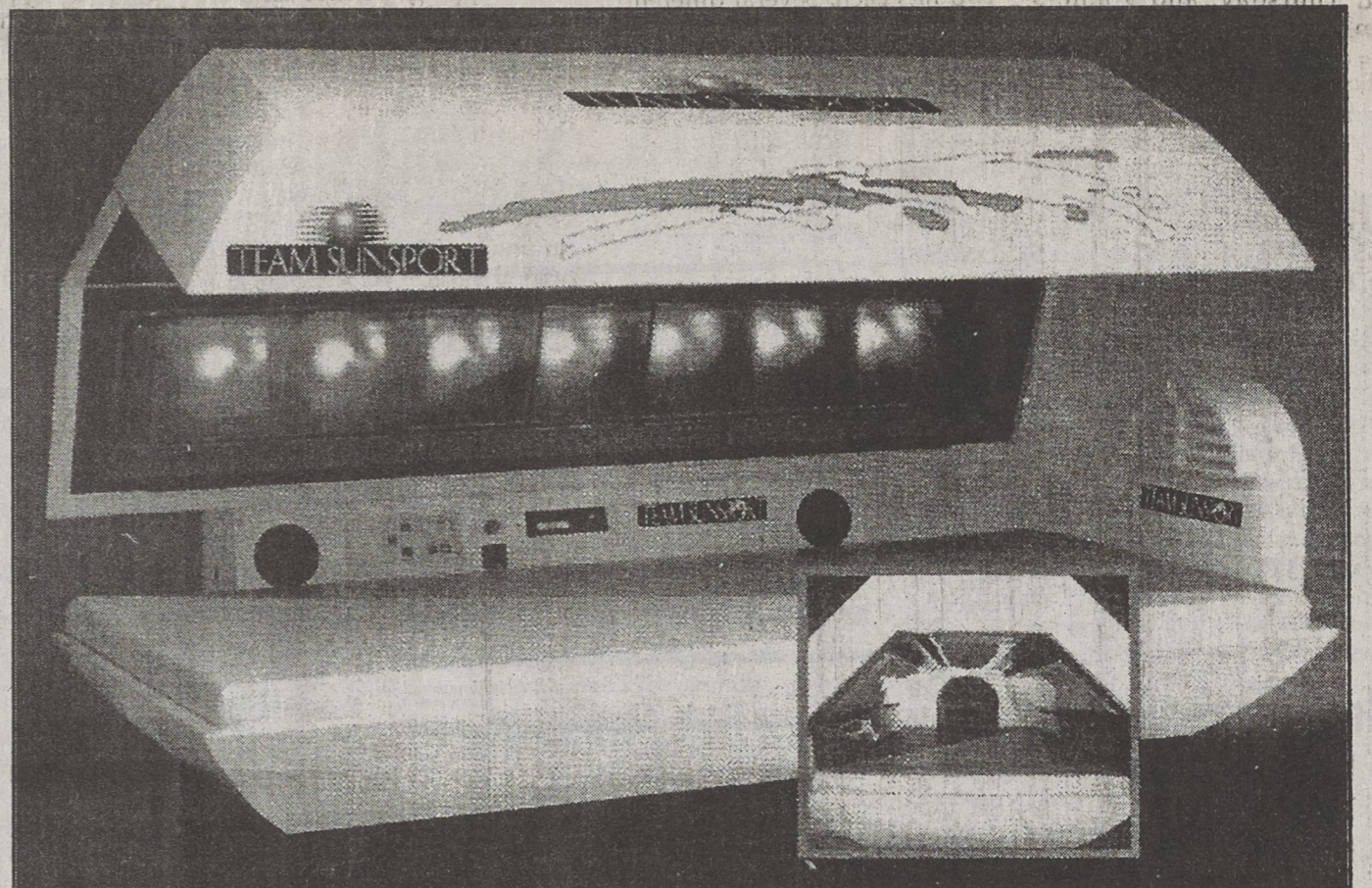
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