



Kevin Millwood and wife, Rena, at park dedication ceremony.

Bessemer honors Millwood

BY TODD HAGANS

Bessemer City rolled out the red carpet over the weekend to honor Kevin Millwood, the hometown boy turned Atlanta Braves pitcher.

Before a large crowd Friday afternoon, the city officially renamed Washington Park in honor of Millwood who just completed his second full season with the Major League team. Millwood was also presented the official key to the city by mayor Amber Parker, and Sen. David Hoyle (D-Gaston) passed along Gov. Jim Hunt's regards with the presentation of the Laurel Wreath Award.

Prior to the unveiling of the park's new sign bearing Millwood's name, a full slate of distinguished guests shared kind remarks and personal accolades.

Referring to Millwood as "one of Bessemer City's shining sons," Parker said that Millwood's knack for the diamond sport is one of his natural gifts - a gift that should not be confined just to Bessemer City.

Parker pointed out that Millwood got his baseball start on the Washington field while playing baseball for local kid teams. He even pitched his junior high squad to the county championship on the Washington field.

"Even at that time, people recognized his ability to handle the baseball," said Parker.

Hoyle said he recalled seeing Millwood's name in the newspaper headlines some seven or eight years ago while Millwood played for Bessemer City Legion Post 243, but at that time, never knew how big of a baseball star Millwood would become.

Hoyle applauded Millwood's loyalty to his hometown, citing that when sportscasters say Millwood's is from Gastonia, he is always quick to say that he is from Bessemer City.

In a letter from Gov. Hunt, Hunt called the renaming of Washington Park a "fitting tribute on the impact you have had on your hometown."

Hoyle presented Millwood with the Laurel Wreath Award, the state's highest honor which recognizes those individuals who have become athletic ambassadors.

The Gaston senator also congratulated Millwood on his third place finish for the prestigious Cy Young Award, and for helping propel the Braves to their fifth World Series this decade.

"This Laurel Wreath Award from the Governor we know is not the Cy Young Award, but we know the Cy Young Award is coming," said Hoyle, to a boisterous round of applause.

Former mayor and county commissioner Bill Wise also commended Millwood on being a role model for young people, and even admitted that he has watched more professional baseball this season than in years past.

Millwood's former baseball coach and BCHS athletic director Mike Mahaffey used words such as 'respectful,' 'well-mannered,' 'caring' and 'thoughtful' when describing Millwood.

Mahaffey said that when an overwhelming number of youngsters registered for the annual Yellow Jacket baseball camp this year, he suggested that Millwood pre-sign baseballs instead of going through with the traditional autograph session at the end of the camp's first day.

See Millwood, 2B

Mountaineers hope to make title run in balanced SWC 3A

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

The Southwestern 3A Conference men's basketball race could be the high school equivalent of the ACC this season.

All seven teams in the league should be much-improved over last year, with any of the seven capable of winning the league championship.

Figured to be in that mix are Larry Sipe's Kings Mountain Mountaineers, who failed to qualify for the state playoffs last year after winning the conference championship the year before.

Sipe lost only one senior, KeLee Thompson, off last year's outfit and with eight talented players returning he hopes to showcase a fast-breaking offense and full-court pressing defense that is two-deep at every position.

"All six of our practices since the end of the football season have been highly competitive," says the veteran KM mentor. "After the exams we're going to have nine lettermen. Last year

we were so inexperienced. We only had two kids with any varsity experience. Now we've gone from a very inexperienced team to a very experienced team."

Leading the list of prospects is 6-5, 350-pound junior center Qwenshon Goode. He's the top returning scorer with an 11.1 average.

"He gives us a lot of strength on the inside," said Sipe. "Sometimes stamina hurts Qwenshon late in the game, but I've noticed these last six practices that he runs a whole lot better than he ever has. That's due to the conditioning program for football."

Sipe calls wing man Kevin Henderson, who averaged 10.6 points last year, his most prolific scorer. "He can find a way to get the ball to the rim," Coach Sipe said. "He's not an outstanding shooter, but he can find a way to get it through the defense and get it up to the hole. Sometimes his shot selection is a little problem, but being a senior I'm sure he's going to improve on that."

Senior Torrey Cureton returns

at the point guard and will be looked upon to organize the offenses and defenses.

"We don't have to have scoring out of Torrey," says Sipe. "He just has to make sure that all five players are doing what they're supposed to do. He gets us organized on the fast break. The last six practices we've been able to run our trapping defense, our man to man, our matchup zone, and Torrey is the leader out there on the floor. We don't expect him to be a scorer but to cut down on turnovers and just direct us like he's supposed to."

Joe Williamson and Marcus Odoms return at the wing opposite Henderson. Williamson started about 75 percent of the time last season.

"Joe's probably the best athlete on the team," Sipe said. "He's our vocal leader. Odoms has really, really played well this preseason. He had a good summer in the summer league and a good week at camp. He has really improved. He's one of these kids that was cut from

See Sipe, 2B



Larry Sipe is beginning his 17th season as head men's basketball coach at Kings Mountain High School. The Mountaineers have a lot of talent, but so do all the other teams in the Southwest 3A Conference, so Sipe looks for a wide-open race.

Kevin Moss takes over girls program

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

He has no varsity head coaching experience, and he has only eight players - and no seniors - on his roster.

But what Kings Mountain High's new women's basketball coach Kevin Moss does have is a lot of energy and optimism.

"I am very excited about this season," Moss says. "If we can continue to work hard and im-

prove throughout the season, I believe we can put ourselves in a situation to make the playoffs and possibly win the conference."

Despite their youth, the Lady Mountaineers lose only one player that was still around at the end of last season. Kristie Brinkley was the team leader and one of its top scorers, and she has graduated and is now on the volleyball team at UNC-Asheville. Two underclassmen

left the team before the end of the season and have since transferred to another school.

But the eight ladies returning have shown a lot of promise and a good work ethic, and that's what has Moss excited.

Juniors Cheryln Cole, Ebony Moore and Anna Ramey all started at one time or another last season, as did sophomore Ashley Leigh. Junior Jeana Thomas and freshmen Katie Bennett, Shonda Cole and

Danniel Gill also expect to see a lot of playing time.

"The girls have worked really hard over the summer in preparing for the season," Moss says. "They participated in a team camp at UNC-Charlotte and a few of the players were involved on AAU teams."

"We are a young team with some very athletic players. Hopefully we will age some during the non-conference schedule and be ready to com-

pete in the conference."

The Mountaineers have a rugged non-conference schedule. They open at home on Wednesday, December 1 against Crest and also have games against Shelby and Charlotte Latin, as well as a North-South Tournament in Fort Mill, SC.

The conference schedule begins Tuesday, January 4 at R-5 Central.

Hillman and Ash lead way on offense, Rhodes top tackler for '99 Mounties

Even though he was bypassed by the North Carolina Shrine Bowl coaches, Kings Mountain High football sensation closed out one of the most brilliant careers in North Carolina prep history this year with his record-breaking third straight 1,000-yard rushing season.

In final statistics compiled this week, Hillman finished with 1,721 yards rushing and 162 points for his senior season - both adding to career records he established as a junior.

Hillman completed his three-year varsity career with 5,618 yards rushing and 396 points. His 162 points this season broke his single season mark of 156 points set last year.

Hillman was the only record-breaker on this year's team, but junior quarterback Matt Ash also established himself as the best running quarterback in KMHS history. Ash finished with 678 yards rushing in 97 carries - by far the most of any previous KMHS quarterback - and he also scored 72 points.

Ash also topped the 1,000 yard mark in total offense by completing 46-of-73 passes for



ASH



RHODES

461 yards, giving him a total offense figure of 1,139 yards. Ash threw only three interceptions.

Kings Mountain's defensive leader this year was linebacker Lee Rhodes, who had 127 tackles with a high of 22 in the 54-20 victory over East Rutherford.

Safety Torrey Cureton was second in tackles with 96, and linebacker Jeremy Harris was a close third with 91.

RUSHING

Hillman 223-1,721, Joe Williamson 3-305, Kelly Littlejohn 31-164, Matt Ash 97-678, Kenny Moore 41-357, Antonio McClain 34-324, Brian Houze 1-18, Aquino Reynolds 3-29.

PASSING

Matt Ash 46-77-3461. Kelly Littlejohn 5-13-0-96.

SCORING

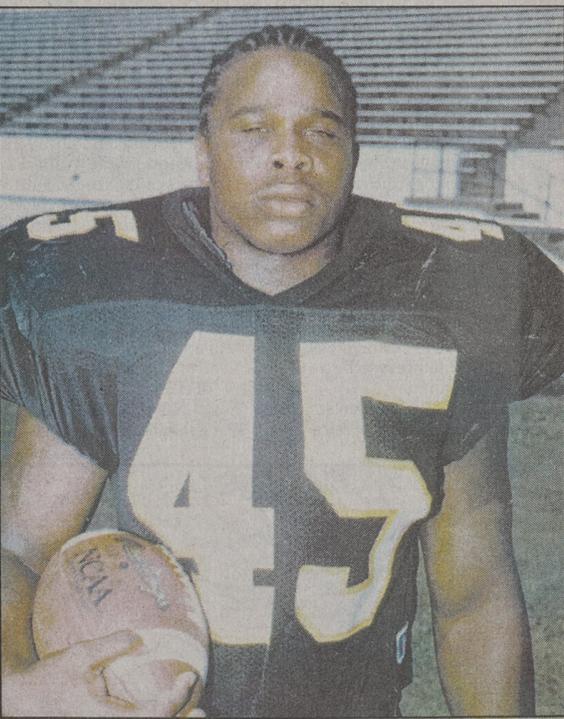
Hillman 162, Ash 72, Evan Osteen 51, Williamson 36, McClain 12, Jamar Moore 12, Dannie Wright 6, Stanley Whitesides 12, Torez Leach 2, Qwenshon Goode 2, Kenny Moore 6, Kelly Littlejohn 38, Cureton 6, Team 4 (2 safeties).

RECEIVING

Hillman 2-29, Williamson 7-62, Kelly Littlejohn 8-101, Kenny Moore 2-7, McClain 4-58, Wright 16-204, Torez Leach 12-100, Joe Leach 1-7

TACKLES

Karl Burch 41, Justin Early 19, Gerald Smith 31, Jason Feemster 26, Bryan Thornburg 24, Joe Williamson 38, Blake Bolin 1, Jason Jarvis 2, Tito Littlejohn 2, Lee Rhodes 127, Chris Hogue 21, Jeremy Harris 91, Dwayne Littlejohn 68, Shane Short 3, Torrey Cureton 96, Kelly Littlejohn 5, Stanley Whitesides 55, Antonio McClain 24, Bill Welsh 7, Antwan Adams 4, Chad Anderson 3, Charles Perry 6, Camal Roberts 4.



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
Anthony Hillman is the only player in KMHS history to gain 1,000 yards in each of his three varsity seasons.

KMHS swimmers open 11th season Monday

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain High enters its 11th year of swimming on November 29 when the Mountaineers host Asheville in a non-conference meet at Neisler Natatorium.

The first-year coach in charge of the program, Aaron Allen, as well as his volunteer assistant Paula Eckerd Moss, were members of the Mountaineers' first team in 1989, and Allen says they're anxious to get back into

the sport.

Allen, the school's athletic trainer, was an unofficial assistant and avid booster of the team last season. After the year, veteran head coach Sarah Mayse, who had worked in some capacity with the swim program since its inception, decided she needed a break and Allen was able to work out his trainer's schedule to allow him to take on the coaching responsibilities.

"It's hard to believe it's been 11 years since we started the

program here," says Allen. "I like coaching and it's good to get back to it."

As a senior in 1992, Allen swam on KM's state championship 400 meter relay team with Lindsay Suber, Benji Davis and David Messenger. As a team, the Mountaineers finished second in the state behind county-rival Shelby, but in 1993 and 1994 the Mountaineers won the state crowns.

At that time, Allen was a student at the University of North Carolina, and although he

wasn't on the swim team he helped with the swim program for three years to prepare for his career in athletic training.

Returning to Kings Mountain to launch his high school teaching and athletic training career, Allen was able to continue to stay close to the program as well as all the other sports the school offers.

Although he's not making any promises, Allen says he confident the KMHS team can be very competitive on the conference, regional and state level.

The key to competing as a team, he says, is having a lot of swimmers. He has 31 on his girls team, and he's optimistic about the Lady Mountaineers' chances of winning their third straight SWC championship.

"We have enough people back, and are deep enough that it's a realistic goal," he says.

Mollie Patterson and Wendy Neisler, the senior co-captains, and junior Laura Propst head a host of returning swimmers. Allen also has a lot of promis-

See Swim, 2B