

# FOOTBALL

From 1B

school scoring and rushing records until Mack and Hillman came along several years later.

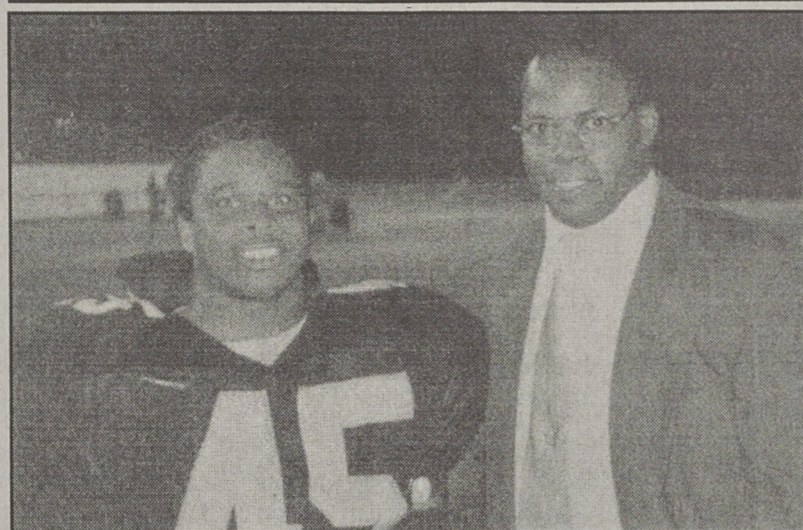
Baity was the starting fullback on KM's first-ever championship football team in 1955, and he gained over 1,000 yards in each of the next two seasons. In 1956 he helped lead the Mountaineers to the Western N.C. High Schools Activities Association Northwest-Southwest Conference championship, and in 1957 he accumulated 1,289 yards rushing and played in the Shrine Bowl. He went on to play four years at the University of South Carolina and gained a measure of fame by returning a Roman Gabriel pass 102 yards for a touchdown against N.C. State.

The quarterback of the All-Century team is Pat Murphy, who led the 1964 Mountaineers to the SWC championship and went on to set every passing record imaginable at Appalachian State University, where he was a two-time Little All-American.

Murphy passed for 960 yards and 16 touchdowns for the '64 Mountaineers, and during that day of power football that was quite an accomplishment. His single season record of 16 TD passes still stands, along with his records for pass completion percentage.

Murphy edged out another great quarterback, George Harris, who led the '55 team to its first-ever conference championship and went on to play on both offense and defense at Duke University.

With all that running talent in the backfield, it would be doubtful if Murphy would have



The three greatest running backs in KMHS history got together after 1999 Mountaineer games at Gamble Stadium. Top photo are Ken Baity, left, and Anthony Hillman. Lower photo are Hillman, left, and Kevin Mack.

to ever throw a pass, but if he did he would have two of the most exciting pass-catchers and runners in school history as his targets, Edwin Sherer off the talented 1985 team and the school's all-time leading pass receiver, Kendrick Bell off the championship 1998 team.

Paving the way for those talented backs on the first team line are five All-State selections, all of whom went on to excel on

the collegiate level.

Calvin Stephens was a Shrine Bowl selection at KMHS and was an all-star guard at the University of South Carolina. He played one year with the New England Patriots in the NFL.

Stephens' brother, Chuck Gordon, was a two-way All-Conference performer for the Mountaineers and is still the all-

time sack leader at Appalachian State University, where he was All-Southern.

Aubrey Hollifield, another Shrine Bowl star off the '86 KMHS team, was a three-year starter at Wake Forest University, and Julius Curry off the '98 team played in the East-West game and started last fall as a freshman at East Tennessee State University.

The center, Hubert McGinnis, was All-State on KM's 1964 team and also played in the East-West game. He started at center for four years on nationally-ranked teams at Lenoir-Rhyne College.

All players selected on the first three teams were All-Conference choices in high school, and many of them made other all-star teams and competed on the collegiate level.

Making All-Conference prior to 1954 was a great accomplishment because KMHS was a member of the Western Conference which included 18 schools in this end of the state, and only one person was chosen at each All-Conference position.

Only offenses were chosen because, until the last five years most Kings Mountain players played both offense and defense. Because of that, there are a few instances where players who played only on defense were selected to line positions.

Because the game has changed so much over the years, ends and receivers are listed as one combined position in an effort to include more people who were blocking ends in the more traditional power running system.

All-Decade teams are included separately to honor some of the athletes of the pre-1950s era when statistics weren't as available.

# GEORGE

From 1B

high schools, which had been a part of the Cleveland County School System.

Integration brought the greats from Compact High School, which had excelled in basketball for years in the North Carolina High School Athletic Conference.

Had it not been for integration, all of the players on the first team All-Century men's basketball team would have played at Compact.

Heading the list is 6-5 center George Adams, who actually played three years at Compact before playing two at Kings Mountain. Adams played for the Cobras as an eighth, ninth and tenth grader before coming to KMHS in the fall of 1966.

Adams was a two-time All-Conference selection, and his senior year was All-State, All-American and started in the East-West All-Star Game.

In just two seasons here, he scored 1,086 points in leading the Mountaineers to consecutive records of 20-1 and 25-1. His senior year he averaged 25.6 points and over 20 rebounds per game. The only time Adams was held under double figures in high school was his junior year when York, SC, went into a deep freeze at the KMHS gym. The halftime score was 4-2, and KMHS ended up winning 22-13. Adams scored nine points.

His single game high of 38 points came in a 72-59 win over Shelby, but had Adams played in a system where one player was featured he could have scored as many points as he liked. More often than not, the five starters in those two years played just a little over a half a game. They would go in and run up a big score and then turn the game over to the reserves.

Adams continued his basketball greatness in the collegiate and pro ranks. He was a three-time All-American at Gardner-Webb University, where he still holds 15 scoring and rebound records and hit 64.2 percent of his field goals over a four-year period.

Adams played several years with the San Diego Conquistadors in the American Basketball Association and was in line to participate on the 1972 U.S. Olympic basketball team but an injury forced him to return to Kings Mountain.

The other members of the All-Century first team are Adams' 1968 teammate Otis Cole, 1975 star Butch Blalock, 1985 star Lavar Curry, and 1982 star Carl Smith.

All four of them excelled not only at KMHS but also in the collegiate ranks.

Cole, who was a sophomore when Adams was a senior in 1968, was a three-time All-

Conference selection at KMHS. In 1970, he led the Mountaineers to a 23-1 overall record, made All-State, All-American and participated in the East-West All-Star Game and completed his high school career with 1,291 points.

Cole played for Florida State's Seminoles, where he led his freshman team in scoring and then started for three straight years on the varsity. Cole's sophomore year the Seminoles lost the NCAA championship game to UCLA.

Although he didn't play on a championship game here, Butch Blalock lit up all the scoreboards in the SWC. During a three-year varsity career he scored 1,370 points, was All-Conference and All-State.

In 1974 Blalock scored 780 points and averaged 32.5 points per game for the Mountaineers, marking the first time in Southwestern 3A Conference history that a player had averaged over 30 points per game. He also set a school scoring record with 46 points in a single game.

He went on to star at Spartanburg Methodist College and now coaches at Hunter Huss High School in Gastonia.

The other two members of the first team - Lavar Curry and Carl Smith - were great point guards who were amazing shooters and ball handlers, and were outstanding assist men.

Smith led the 1981 and 1982 teams to the Southwestern 3A Conference championship and an overall record of 52-5. He was a two-time SWC Player of the Year and played in the East-West Game.

He went on to star at the University of Massachusetts, where he broke the assist record of the incomparable Doctor J, Julius Irving.

Curry scored 1,287 points during his prep career at KMHS and went on to star at Belmont Abbey College, where he was All-District.

Making up the second All-Century team are Richard Gold, who came out of Grover to lead the 1964-65 Mountaineers to the SWC championship; Keith Layton, who averaged 18.3

points per game for the 1957-58 Mountaineers; Ken Mitchem, who was KMHS's first Black basketball player and helped Adams lead the Mountaineers to back-to-back championships in 1967 and '68 and went on to star at Pan American University in Texas; Charles Barnes, who helped Cole lead the 1970-71 team to the SWC title and went on to play at Appalachian State University; and Daniel Honeycutt, who led Larry Sipe's 1990 Mountaineers to the Western North Carolina championship and a berth in the state finals against Greenville Conley, and went on to star at Limestone College.

# WOMEN

From 1B

Picking all of these all-century teams has been fun and brought back a lot of memories for myself, and hopefully for readers too. I don't expect everyone to agree with the picks, no more than I agree with the annual All-Conference, All-State and Shrine Bowl teams.

But there was some criteria I followed. To be chosen, players either had to achieve a post-season honor such as All-Conference or All-State, or they had to play on a higher level of competition (college or pro). I didn't use that criteria in the All-Decade teams of the twenties and early thirties because there was no indication in information that I checked that Kings Mountain was associated with a conference at that time. In the late thirties through 1953 Kings Mountain was a member of the old Western Conference

and All-Conference teams listed just one player at each position on offense. There were a few players chosen from that era who did not make All-Conference, but the ones that didn't went on to play at a higher level.

I wouldn't attempt to name All-Century teams in what I call the "minor" sports, but here are my Athletes of the Century in those sports:

- Men's track - Kevin Mack and Kareem Marshall.
- Women's track - Jackie Houston.
- Volleyball - Regina Brown.
- Men's tennis - Bryan Jones.
- Women's tennis - Jackie Houston.
- Golf - Michael Jolly and Turk Falls.
- Softball - Priscilla Rickenbacker.
- Men's soccer - Sirimaha Rithiphong.
- Wrestling - Shon Byers.
- Cross Country - Chad Pearson.

Men's swimming - Dave Messenger.

Women's swimming - Elise Mayse.

My football teams and coaches of the century:

- 1920's - 1926 (6-0-4), S.A. Christenburg.
- 1930's - 1938 (6-3), Crowell Little).
- 1940's - 1946 (7-3), Clyde Canipe.
- 1950's - 1955 & '56 (10-1-1 and 10-0-1, respectively), Shu Carlton.
- 1960's - 1963 and '64, (9-0-1 and 10-1, respectively), Bill Bates.
- 1970's - 1979 (8-2), Dan Brooks.
- 1980's - 1985 and '86, 11-2 and 9-3 respectively), Denny Hicks.
- 1990's - 1996, '97 and '98), 9-1-1, 10-5 and 14-2, respectively), Ron Massey.

My basketball teams and coaches of the century:

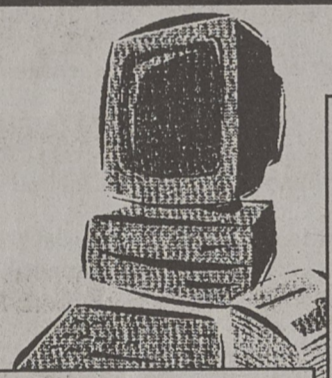
- 1940's - 1945 (15-0), Don Parker.
- 1960's - 1968 (25-1), Bob Hussey.
- 1970's - 1970 (23-1), Bob Hussey.

- 1980's - 1981 and '82, (combined record 52-5), John Blalock.
- 1990's - 1990 (29-3), Larry Sipe.

And, a little light humor to end the century, my KMHS football All-Nickname team:

- 1920's - Plato "Tater" Goforth.
- 1930's - George "Race Horse" Plonk.
- 1940's - Bill "Egghead" Cashion.
- 1950's - J.L. "Spook" Stewart.
- 1960's - Charles "Speedy" Ramsey.
- 1970's - Maurice "Jet" Jamerson.
- 1980's - Jerry "Peanut" Jordan.
- 1990's - Jerry "Booger" Black.

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