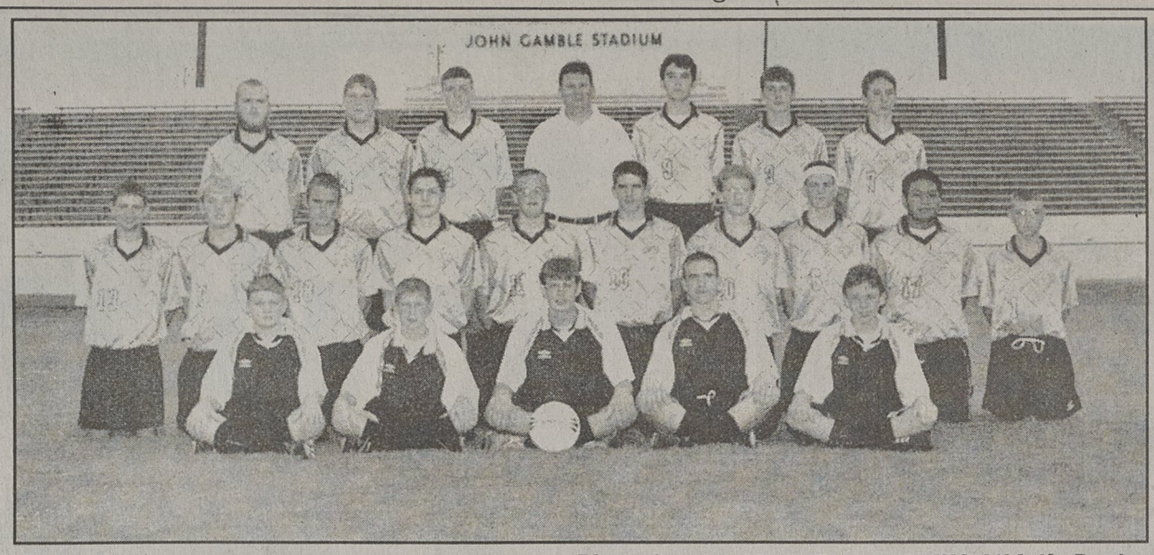

Kings Mountain High's 2000 men's soccer team is pictured above. Front row, left to right, Zach Howell, Randy Kies, Adam Maddox, Wesley Griffin, Adam Lopez. Second row, Justin Boheler, Justin Frye, Ross Ellis, Trent Hopper, Dilling Ingle, Pablo Peralta, Kevin Gondo, Jason West, Ricky Himphranphan, Matt Frazier. Back row, Drew Neisler, Ryan Lovelace, Mark Baity, Coach Stephen Fisher, Alex Canipe, Hunter Gaffney, Justin Roper.

Photo Courtesy SportPix and KMHS Athletic Dept.

Mountie kickers beat East Gaston

Kings Mountain High's men's soccer team opened its season last week with nonconference games against 4A opponents.

In their opener, the Mountaineers defeated East Gaston 3-1 on goals by Kevin Gonda, Justin Boheler and Ryan Lovelace.

Goalie Wesley Griffin had 24 saves.

"We played pretty good," noted Coach Steven Fisher. "We are much improved over what we'd shown last year. It was a good team effort. We played good, solid defense.

"It's good to start off the year with a win, especially after last season. The kids were really excited. The excitement in their faces was worth all the work we had to undergo to get better."

In their second game, the Mountaineers fell to country rival Crest 7-0. Crest jumped out to a 5-0 halftime lead.

"We didn't play as well as we'd like, but Crest is an extremely strong team," Fisher aid. "They're a perennial playoff team. But we learned a lot and we saw a good team play. We saw an improvement over last year when they beat us real bad. We're not satisfied with where we are, but at the same time we're seeing improvement. The kids know what they have to work on and what we have to do to play on the level of a Crest and those upper echelon teams.

"We've got 30 kids on the team this year and that's a vast improvement. We only had 14 players last year. Our numbers are up and we've got some good athletes. We're still in a situation where our soccer skill is limited, but the more they play the better they will become."

Mountaineers lose to Shelby

Kings Mountain High's soccer team gave one of the state's top-ranked teams all the competition it could stand for a half Monday night at John Gamble Stadium.

Shelby, ranked #6 in the Sweet 16 and #1 in 2A, had to break open a close game in the second half to win 5-1.

The young Mountaineers held the Lions to a 2-1 halftime score, thanks to a goal by Alex Canipe and good all-around play by Gray Howard, Warren Shirey and Jason West.

"We came out pretty strong in the second half," noted KM Coach Stephen Fisher. "But about halfway through the second half they put in their third goal and sort of sealed it, and late in the game we ran out of gas and they put in two more. They've just got the kids that have extremely good soccer and athletic ability."

Overall, though, Fisher said he was well-pleased with his team's performance.

"I told our kids they shouldn't be disappointed in the effort they gave," he said. "It's kind of a double-edged sword. We don't like to lose and don't want to accept it, but I was pleased with the way the kids are progressing and the improvement we've made over last year. Some of the things we're doing are starting to resemble playing quality soccer."

Kings Mountain is idle the rest of this week. The Mountaineers travel to Crest Monday and host Ashbrook Tuesday.

"We're asking our kids to play a little different soccer than most of them have been accustomed to playing in the recreation leagues," Fisher said. "They've been working hard in practice and it's good to see some improvement. We're moving in the right direction."

HAT race slated at Thunder Valley

The Hav-A-Tampa dirt track racing series will come to Thunder Valley Speedway in Lawndale on September 1.

Kings Mountain native Freddy Smith, now driving out of Knoxville, TN, and all of the other top-name HAT series drivers will be competing in the $10,000 to win, 60-lap main event.

Pro wrestling set at National Guard

The Professional Wrestling Federation will be at the Kings Mountain National Guard Armory Saturday, August 26 at 8 p.m.

Advance tickets are on sale for $8 at Essics Sporting Goods and The Armory. Tickets at the door are $10.

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