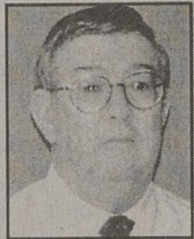


Ex-Mountaineers eye big year in collegiate ranks

Several former Kings Mountain High football players were reporting to college campuses for the start of football practice this week.



Gary Stewart

Editor

Frank Hopper, a member of the 1998 KMHS Western Championship team, will be starting for the third straight season as a defensive lineman at East Tennessee State University.

The 6-2, 265-pound junior has shown steady improvement, as has the entire Buccanear team, over the past two seasons. Hopper made 36 tackles last year, including five for losses of 25 yards, and 3.5 sacks for minus 22 yards. He also forced three fumbles.

The Bucs, who were 6-5 last year, have a host of starters returning as well as some top notch JUCO transfers. They're expecting to challenge for the Southern Conference championship.

They face a rugged schedule, though, which includes an opening season game at Pittsburgh. Local fans can make a short drive and see Hopper in action at Furman on October 20 at 2 p.m., and at Wofford on November 3 at 1:30.

Also joining the team at ET-SU this year will be freshman linebacker Lamar Beam of

Crest.

■ Four former Mountaineers will help lead the Mars Hill Lions into action this fall.

Junior Andy Leigh, one of Hopper's teammates on that '98 KM outfit, will be starting at left guard for the third year in a row. Leigh should be a candidate for All-Conference honors in the SAC-8 this fall.

Sophomore Joe Williamson, yet another member of that '98 KM eleven, came out of the spring as the starting wide receiver and he has worked hard over the summer to be able to hold that position.

Two other Mountaineers - freshmen linemen Kenny Moore and Jarvarous Wilson - plan to walk-on at Mars Hill.

■ Kings Mountain's Matt Ash is trying to make the team at Western Carolina University as a free safety.

Ash, an All-Conference quarterback the past two seasons at KMHS, received some scholarship help in athletics and academics, but has not yet made the Catamounts' roster.

According to his father, KMHS assistant coach Alfred Ash, the WCU coaching staff has indicated Ash could play as a freshman.

If he does, he'll join a host of local players on the team. Freddie Woodson, a 1999 Shrine Bowl player from Crest, is a red-shirt freshman wide receiver.

See Gary, 2B

BEATING THE HEAT

High schools take precautions to help gridders stay cool in hot weather

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

With football practices underway in North Carolina, different places have different ways of staying cool in the August weather.

The issue has become a larger one with school systems and football coaches after the heat-related deaths of Minnesota Vikings lineman Corey Stringer and University of Florida freshman Eraste Austin.

School systems, like football teams, are structured differently. Gaston County Schools, which has eight high schools employs a full-time athletics director. Kings Mountain District Schools, which has one high school, has it handle its own athletic program.

With the extra scrutiny now being placed on safe heat procedures, school officials said they have been taking heat-related precautions for years.

Kings Mountain head coach Dave Farquharson said he emphasizes conditioning in the summer so players will be ready for practice.

Farquharson and his assistants are not the only ones responsible for watching over the Mountaineers' football practices.

Kings Mountain athletics trainer Adam Elliot, who also monitors other fall sports practices, has the right stop football practice if he feels the team needs an extra water break, Farquharson said.

Farquharson said although the weather has been cool for practice, he is going to pay attention to the team's heat safety



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
Kings Mountain High offensive lineman Matt Wilson takes a water break during practice.

procedures before it warms up again.

"We'll follow the ones we have more closely," Farquharson said. "We really haven't had the searing heat

and humidity lately."

Telling students to practice, especially after the recent football player deaths, can be difficult.

"Anytime you have a college

athlete like the kid in Florida, and especially a professional athlete, it's hard to tell kids they have to run and do that stuff to stay in shape," Farquharson said.

The attitude toward staying hydrated has not always been the same as it is now.

Cherryville head coach Steve Wilson said when he was coming through high school, he went through a two to three hour practice with no water.

The water spigot runs throughout Cherryville's practice.

"We keep water running continuously," Wilson said. "Water is available to kids at practice from start to finish."

Although there are water breaks every 20 to 25 minutes, Wilson said water is available at any time.

Gaston County Schools athletics director Butch Adams said each school has a trainer or first responder.

Adams said pushing students too hard can do damage to them as well as not working them hard enough. "It's a fine line," Adams said. "You certainly have to train the students hard enough so they are in shape. You don't push them over the line where it does damage. You just have to monitor it and take all the safety precautions you can."

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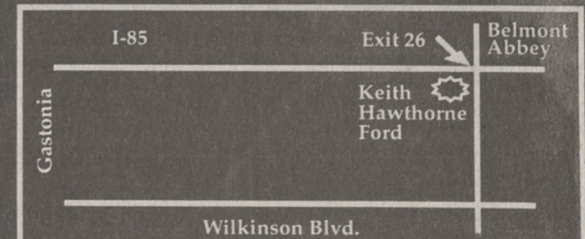
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