



The 2001 Kings Mountain High School football team is pictured above. Front row, left to right, Tyler McDaniel, Devon Crocker, Brandon Pressley, Jacobi Oates, Montrell Banks, Steven Blanton, Adonis Matthews, Tyler Adams, LaDrecus Gingles, Tanner Putnam, Nicholas Curry, Mason Dixon. Second row, Brandon Roberts, Wesley Griffin, assistant coach Milton Rachels, sideline manager Donnie Mace, defensive coordinator Mark Latham, assistant coaches Matt Ash, Michael Wilbanks and Kenny Bridges, head coach Dave Farquharson, assistant coaches Jon Fleisher, Pat Beck, John Bumgardner and Tony Leigh, trainer Adam Elliott, manager Gary Martin, Donta Adams, and Cedric Hunter. Third row, Matt Wilson, Antonio Crocker, Orlando Curry, Chris Williamson, Ron Goode, Jonathon Dixon, Daniel Mason, Matt Varner, Matt Williams, Mike Mackins, Thomas Martin, Damon Armstrong, Chris Jolly, Johnny Gillard, Brandon Houze, Travis Clark and Michael Adams. Back row, Justin Branham, Aquino Simmons, Casey Hord, Renaldo Tate, Marvin Phillips, Justin Early, Dejuan Jones, Josh Gash, Jamarl Barrino, Cortney Smith, Daniel Hardin, and Adrian Parker.

Patience, Patience

Defense must play big until young KM offense jells

By GARY STEWART

A rash of injuries and turnovers in the coaching staff resulted in Kings Mountain's Mountaineers posting a disappointing 4-7 record in their final season in the Southwestern 3A Conference football race last fall.

One good thing that came about from so many injuries was that it gave a lot of sophomores and juniors an opportunity to get in some valuable playing time.

Second-year coach Dave Farquharson hopes that experience will result in more victories this year, and maybe even a shot at the State 3A playoffs.

Like most coaches in the new

Southwestern Foothills 3A, Farquharson looks to Crest, which is coming down from the Northwestern 4A Conference, which it dominated over the past eight years, to be the team to beat.

But, also like the other coaches, Farquharson feels the race for the conference's second playoff spot is wide open and his team has an opportunity to grab it.

The key for the Mountaineers will be how quickly some inexperienced personnel on offense can adapt to the system.

With 10 of 11 starters back, the KM defense should rank among the best in the conference. But Farquharson has only three starters back on offense.

"I think the key for us is to be able to capitalize on the opportunities that our defense gives us," he says. "We're going to have to be patient and try to have some ball control."

Although the offense is inexperienced, there is a lot of talent on that side of the ball.

Senior Renaldo Tate, who filled a back-up role to All-SWC quarterback Matt Ash the past two seasons, will start at quarterback. He's not as big, quick or flashy as Ash but Farquharson said he does have the potential to be a better passer and an overall good field general.

"Renaldo does a good job," Farquharson said. "Passing is a little bit more his forte. He's not

as big as Ash was, but he throws the ball well and reads the defenses well."

Chris Jolly may also see some action at quarterback, and will handle the punting duties.

One of the team's top threats will be junior running back Cortney Smith, who started the first four games last year before suffering a season-ending injury at Crest. He will play the slot. He has excellent speed and will be utilized as both a runner and pass receiver.

Brandon Houze, who also saw some spot starting duty last year, will be utilized at the slot along with newcomer Jamarl Barrino.

Aquino Simmons, who led the JV team in rushing as a

freshman but did not play last year, moves into the starting one-back position. He is cut out of the same mold as '98-99 star Anthony Hillman, the team's all-time leading rusher, and will provide most of the tough yards.

Tyler Adams leads the list of candidates at wide receiver, and Justin Branham, Devon Crocker and Brandon Roberts, a part-time starter last year, will also see a lot of playing time.

Josh Gash and Michael Mackins will be at tight end.

Anchoring the interior line are returning starters Matt Wilson and Jacobi Oates at guard. Johnny Gilliard, Matt Varner, Damon Armstrong and Tyler McDaniel have the inside track on the starting tackle positions.

"Offensively, we're going to be young," says Farquharson. "We had several people that played toward the end of the season but they're still learning. We only have about four people that started from the get-go."

"We'll definitely have to be more patient on offense than we've been in the past, at least until these young kids can develop into explosive ball carriers."

Defensively, the Mountaineers are solid. Except for one line position, last year's starters return intact.

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