

Golden Girls

Age isn't stopping these ladies from competing on softball field

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

They may be 60 and older but age isn't stopping the Golden Girls softball team.

The team, made up of women across Cleveland County, will compete in the state senior games Sept. 18.

The 16-member team

boasts three players with ties to Kings Mountain, Betty White, Hester Haynes and Helen Thrift.

"There is no need to get old till you have to," according to White.

Haynes, who has played ball since her early teens, says some teams thought she and other women her

age were too old for ball.

"I intimidated them. They were afraid they were going to hit me," Haynes said.

"I'm glad Sherrill Jenkins got us together."

Haynes is an example of staying active. She played badminton early Thursday and topped the day off with softball practice at the Zoar Baptist Church field.

"It makes you feel good," she said.

Haynes is a utility player, pitching, playing second base and anywhere else she is needed.

Like Haynes, White started her athletic career early. She was 10 when she first picked up the bat and ball.

"It gets in your blood and stays there," Haynes said.

Both are retired educators. Haynes was a physical education teacher and White a teacher's assistant.

Thrift, who plays short right field, started playing when her children were small. She had a long hiatus away from the ballfield. A few years ago, she drove past a field and wished she could play. Soon after, she ran into a Golden Girl who encouraged her to join the team.

"It was uncanny," she says of the serendipitous experience.

Unlike some of her teammates, Thrift hasn't retired. She works as a nurse.

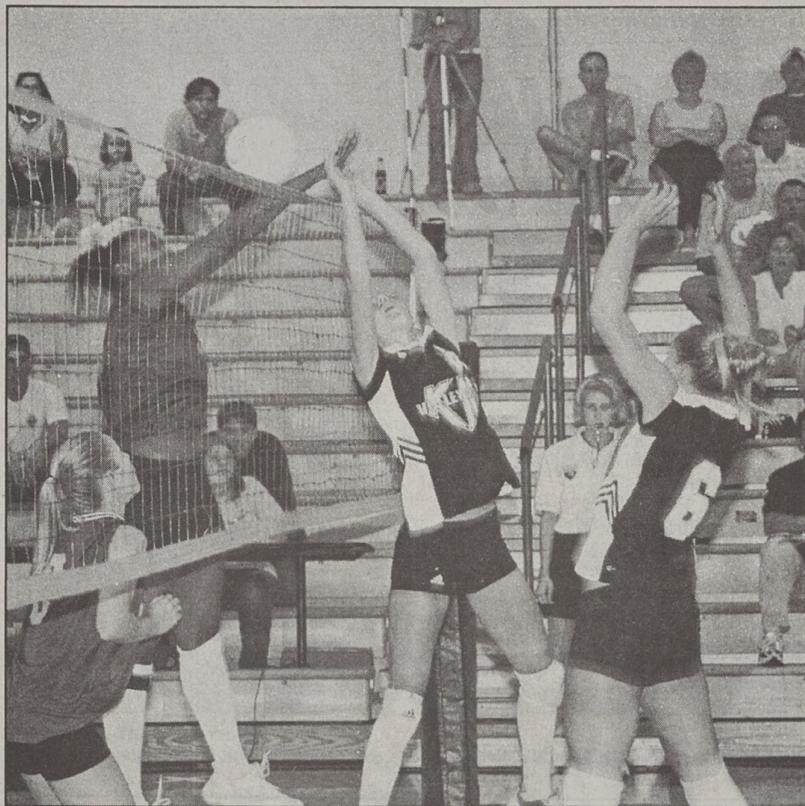
Many of the team members knew each other from way back, playing in church and recreation leagues. The friendship may be as important as the game itself, they say.

While friendship is a motivator, the women are all business on the field. They practice weekly through the season which begins in March. They will practice twice in one week if a holiday forces them to miss a practice. They're

See Golden, 10B



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD
Helen Thrift (left), Betty White and Hester Haynes play softball with the Golden Girls.



GARY STEWART / HERALD
Hickory (left) and Kings Mountain players battle along the net in Thursday's Southwestern Foothills Conference volleyball opener at KM's Donald L. Parker Gymnasium. Kings Mountain won.

KMHS spikers defeat Hickory in SWFH match

Kings Mountain High's women's volleyball team rebounded from a first-game loss to defeat Hickory 20-25, 25-20, 25-4, 25-17 in their first Southwestern Foothills 3A Conference match Thursday at Donald L. Parker Gymnasium.

The victory improved the Lady Mountaineers' overall record to 6-1. Several players had good all-around games for Suzanne Grayson's team.

Blair Heffner was perfect on 23 serves, including three aces. She also dished out 31 assists and had six digs and two blocks.

Jackie Jarvis was perfect on 10 serves and contributed seven digs, and Ashley McDaniel was 21-for-21 serving with four aces, and had five digs.

Alex Dawson was outstanding on the nets with 15 kills. She also had 14 digs and a block, and was 10-of-11 serving with one ace.

Ashton Teague was 17-for-17 serving with one ace, and contributed four kills, two blocks and six digs.

Lauren Horne was true on all eight of her serves, including two aces, and had a block and six digs.

Last week the Mountaineers defeated East Gaston 25-23, 25-6, 25-8 in a non-conference game.

Heffner was 6-for-6 serving and had two kills, 18 assists and six digs.

Kristyn Funderburke was 4-for-5 serving and had seven assists and three digs, and Jackie Jarvis was 7-for-7 serving

McDaniel was perfect on all 20 of her serves, including four aces, and she also had four digs.

Horne was 7-for-7 serving and had seven digs.

Teague was true on all 15 of her serves, including three aces. She also had three kills, three blocks and seven digs.

Dawson had nine kills and a block, eight digs and was 8-for-8 serving.

Kala Buchanan had three kills and a dig.

Kings Mountain has an important SWFH date with R-S Central Thursday at home. JV action begins at 4:30 and varsity action will begin around 5:30.



KM's Ashton Teague (6) sets up Alex Dawson (11) for kill.



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