

Kings Mountain's Derrick Smith drives to the basket in recent game with Fred T. Foard at Donald L. Parker Gymnasium. The Mountaineers return to Southwestern Foothills Conference play Friday night when they host Burns. Crest comes to KMHS next Tuesday.

GARY STEWART / HERALD

Byers top sports story of past year

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

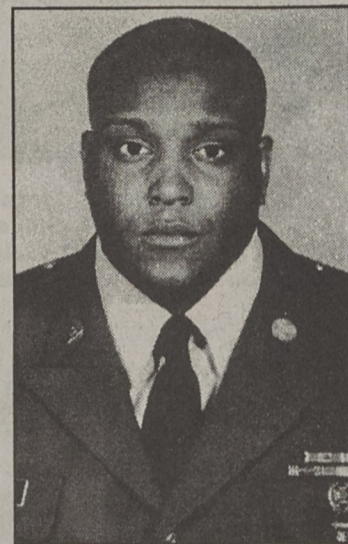
Choosing Kings Mountain's top sports story of the year 2003 was easy, because it was the top story of 2002 and many years before that, and could be the top story for years to come.

Dremiel "Shon" Byers, former Kings Mountain High athlete, continued to make the news, not just here but around the world during the year 2003.

Byers, a U.S. Army world class wrestler, won his second U.S. championship in May. That came on the heels of his championship in the World Greco-Roman Tournament in the fall of 2002.

Byers, who wrestles out of Colorado Springs, CO, is currently ranked the #1 heavyweight in the world. This spring he will have a shot at qualifying for the U.S. Olympic team. Winning the Olympics has been his #1 goal since joining the Armed Forces world class wrestling program.

Because of his success on the mat, during the past year Byers and three other world class athletes had their pictures and biographies printed on a Cheerios cereal box. Byers is the only Kings Mountain athlete to ever achieve that honor.



DREMIEL BYERS

Dremiel Byers and three other former Mountaineer athletes were inducted into the Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame at its annual ceremony in May at the H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life and Conference Center.

Byers was joined by former Mountaineer baseball star Barry Gibson and former football standouts Mike Ware and Aubrey Hollifield.

The Hall of Fame presented its first-ever Meritorious Service Awards to local umpire Pressley Anderson and the late Paul Lancaster, who was a longtime supporter of baseball and other youth sports in the Kings Mountain area.

4 - John Dilling.

Kings Mountain's John Dilling was inducted into the National Duckpin Bowling Congress Hall of Fame at its annual ceremony in May.

Dilling has been bowling in Kings Mountain leagues since the early 1950s and has been a member of several national championship teams.

When the old Mountain Lanes Bowling Center was torn down during the Kings Mountain redevelopment project in the 1970s, Dilling and other bowlers salvaged the lanes and pin-setting machines and re-installed them in the basement of Dilling's heating and cooling business, where local mixed leagues still compete on Tuesday and Thursday nights.

5 - Swimming.

Kings Mountain High's men's swimmers had one of their most productive years since winning back-to-back state championships in the early 1990s.

Coach Aaron Allen's team won the Cleveland County and the Western Regional Championships, and their senior diver Sedrick Young won the State Championship for the second year.

See Top Ten, 7A

The other top ten local sports stories of the year.

2 - Shonda Cole.

The sensational Kings Mountain High volleyball and basketball player capped off her four-year prep career by breaking the school basketball scoring record and being named the best high school women's volleyball player in the state of North Carolina.



COLE

Cole was named Gatorade Volleyball Player of the Year for the second straight season.

In basketball, she broke Tameeka Anderson's long-standing school scoring record of 1,235 points.

She was named Kings Mountain High's Female Athlete of the Year, and earned a full volleyball scholarship to the University of South Carolina, where she started as a freshman.

3 - Hall of Fame.

The above-mentioned

Missed free throws costly in 2 OT loss to Patriots

Independence scored the first five points in the second overtime and went on to defeat Kings Mountain 82-77 in the first round of the Big I Holiday Tournament Monday at East Mecklenburg High School in Charlotte.

But Kings Mountain coach Danny McDowell said the game should have been over way before then - with Kings Mountain winning.

The Mountaineers had a chance to win the game at the foul line with eight seconds left in regulation, and again with six seconds left in the first overtime, but failed to connect.

"We just didn't take care of business," he said.

Kings Mountain came from 14 points down in the fourth quarter to force the first overtime on a 3-pointer at the buzzer by Ta Tae Roebuck.

But with eight seconds remaining and the Mountaineers trailing by one point, they went to the foul line for two foul shots and missed them both. The Patriots took possession and KM was forced to foul. The Patriots hit both to go up by three, making Roebuck's last-second 3-pointer a necessity.

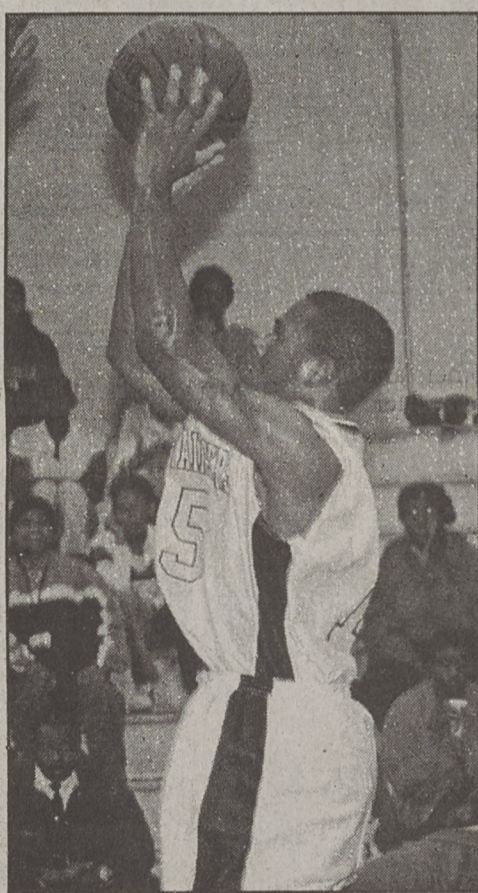
In the first overtime, and the game tied at 72-all, the Mountaineers went to the foul line with six seconds left and missed two more free throws, forcing a second overtime.

At the beginning of the second OT, it was the same story. Kings Mountain was at the line with a chance to take the lead but missed again. Independence then went on a 5-0 run to take command.

For the game, the Mountaineers attempted 46 free throws but missed 17 of them. A couple made shots here or there could have been the difference.

"If we'd hit those free throws in regulation the game would have been over," McDowell said. "We should have never gotten to the point of having to go overtime."

Despite the loss, McDowell was pleased with his team's fourth quarter



GARY STEWART / HERALD
Ta Tae Roebuck's 3-pointer at the buzzer sent Monday's game with Independence into overtime

comeback.

"We made a great run, but our free throws wouldn't let us take the lead," he said. "We got the ball down inside to the big guy (Gabe Blair), and he came through for us."

Blair finished the game with a game and career-high 32 points, and also grabbed 17 rebounds.

"He probably had the best game of his young career," McDowell said. "He also had about five highlight dunks. The kid played well."

D.J. Byrd also played tough inside with seven rebounds and eight points.

Roebuck scored 11 points.

Kings Mountain had trouble hitting from the outside. They managed to hit only 10 percent of their shots from 3-point land. The Patriots held KM's guards Derrick Smith, Terry Lipscomb and Dashawn Young to nine, five and two points, respectively.

"We're not a very good outside shooting team, so I think we'll just go inside to the big guys," McDowell said. KM hit 43 percent of their two-point field goal attempts.

Smith fouled out in the first overtime and KM had to play the final three minutes of that extra period, as well as the entire second overtime, without their leading scorer.

McDowell didn't blame the defeat on the loss of his senior standout, though.

"We just had too many unforced turnovers and missed free throws," he said. "That's one of those games that you know you should have won but it just got away from you."

■ Kings Mountain's girls lost their opening round game to Independence 65-19. Independence rolled to a 35-7 halftime lead.

Leondra Doomes-Stephens led the winners with 12 points.

In other first round games, the West Mecklenburg boys defeated Olympic 60-44 and the West Meck girls beat Olympic 51-31.

The KM girls and boys were scheduled to play Olympic in consolation games Tuesday afternoon and the Independence and West Meck boys and girls were to battle in the championship games Tuesday night.

BOYS GAME

KM (77) - Blair 34, Roebuck 11, Smith 9, Byrd 8, Lipscomb 5, Feaster 3, Young 2.

Independence (82) - Mark 19, Gist 14, Corneliuss 13, Nicks 13, Tomko 11, Lyon 10, Ellington 2.

KM 14-16-7-27-8-5--77

Ind. 18-20-12-14-8-10--82

KM FOOTBALL

NEEDS

NEW DIRECTION

NEW LEADERSHIP

NEW COMMITMENT

☐ A Proven Head Coach and A.D. that's committed to the program and willing to live in and be part of the Kings Mountain Community.

☐ A Proven Head Coach that has experience playing football.

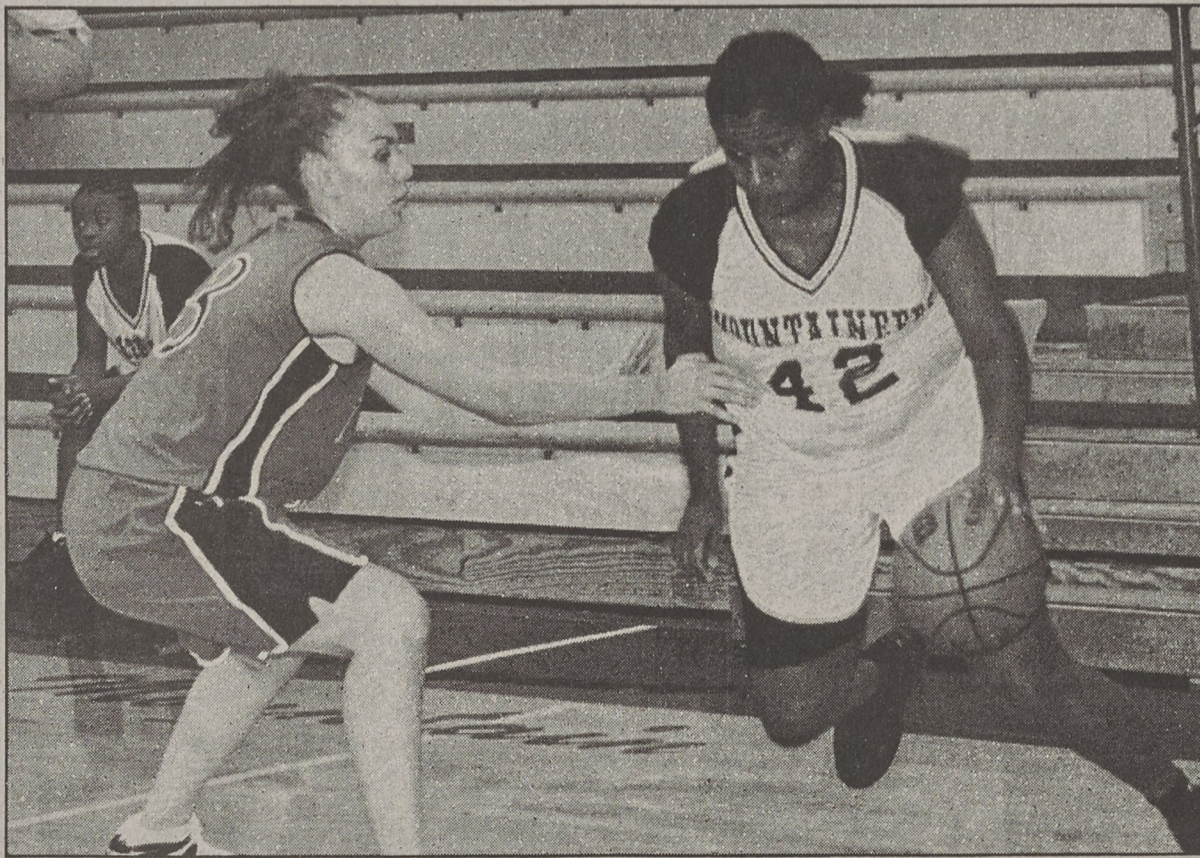
HUNDREDS SIGN PETITION FOR CHANGE EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMICS AND ATHLETICS

Who's Responsible?

The School Board or the Principal?

IT'S A PRIDE THING!

William Martin



Kings Mountain's Candace Springs makes a drive for the basket in recent game at Donald L. Parker Gymnasium. Kings Mountain's boys and girls teams resume conference play Friday at home against Burns.