

OPINION

Bates made big impact

The kids who play sports at KMHS today probably don't know a thing about Bill Bates except that his name is on their field house.

Bates left Kings Mountain in 1978, long before any of the current athletes were born.

But the Mountaineers of today can thank Bill Bates for the outstanding home facilities on which they play and practice, because most of them are the result of Bates' planning and hard work as athletic director in the 1960s and early 70s.

I was a young, green sports writer in 1965 when Kings Mountain was making plans for its new high school on Phifer Road. I still recall the day in that little matchbox of a coach's office at Central School gym when Coach Bates and I laid out a form that we would put in the paper for people to pledge money to build a football stadium in honor of Coach John Gamble.

As I recall, the estimated cost was \$80,000. Numerous pledges were received, some tax money also went into the project and the stadium was built and dedicated in 1967. At that time, and for many years after, it was the nicest football facility anywhere.

Other facilities would follow, such as the tennis courts at the high school and middle school and baseball fields and practice fields with a lot of help from Paul Lancaster, Carl Champion

and others.

Coach Bates enlisted the help of brick masons to build a field house, and many donated material.

But Bill Bates was also a builder in much more meaningful ways. As a teacher and coach he helped mold the lives of hundreds of young people, and he was also a positive influence on those of us who were not officialy under his wing.

I didn't play sports in high school, not because I didn't love them but because I didn't have the size or the talent. But, I did the next best thing. I wrote about sports and the biggest influence on me as I was starting out was Bill Bates.

Every chance I got, I'd visit him in the coach's office and talk football. He was also the baseball coach at that time. When I'd cover games, instead of sitting in the press box I'd sit beside him at the end of the bench on the third base side of old City Stadium.

Bill Bates was the kind of coach whose influence reached far beyond the goal line or home plate. I can honestly say in all the time I spent in his presence I never heard him use profanity and to this day I have never heard any of his former players say anything bad about him. Then, and now, they had much respect for him.

Bill Bates' success as a coach didn't lie in his won-lost record, which was good. He was successful because he had his priorities straight. He was a good man who put God first and regarded others just as highly, if not more so than himself. He truly loved people and was concerned about them.

A good example was two years ago when the Hall of Fame and some other folks around town hosted a "Salute to Bill Bates" at the Patrick Center in conjunction with the dedication of the KMHS field house in his honor. The main reason for that night, unknown previously by Coach Bates, was to announce that a special "Bill Bates Scholarship Committee" was raising money to endow a scholarship in his name at Gardner-Webb University.

After numerous speeches by some of his former players and others, the scholarship announcement was made and it was Coach Bates' time to talk. Even though he was appreciative of the honor, he was urging people to give to the Norman Harris Scholarship at GWU. Harris was his college coach and a man he held in high regard. That was typical Bill Bates, just like 40 years before when he wanted a football stadium to honor John Gamble.

Another thing that will always stand out in my mind is that anytime Bill Bates shook your hand, his left hand was either wrapped around your arm or touching your shoulder. He wasn't just going through a motion, he was genuinely interested in how you were doing.

As much as we love them, stadiums and field houses and press boxes will some day be bulldozed down to make way for fancier facilities. But the impact one makes on helping build people's lives lasts forever.

Bill Bates, who died last week, was a good and faithful servant and has been welcomed Home.

Bill Bates, left, with one of his former players and current KMHS assistant football coach, Tony Leigh, at a Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame ceremony at B.N. Barnes Auditorium.



Photo by Gary Stewart

SPORTS BRIEFS

Burns at KM tickets on sale at schools

Tickets for Friday's Burns at Kings Mountain football game will be on sale in the KMHS main office through 4 p.m. today and Friday. The game is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Friday at John Gamble Stadium.

JV Mountaineers beat R-S Central by 20-14

Kings Mountain High's JV football team edged R-S Central 20-14 Friday night in Rutherfordton.

Cameron Roseboro scored two touchdowns and ran a two-point conversion and Carlos Bell added the other touchdown.

The JV Mountaineers, 5-4, end their season tonight at 7 o'clock at Burns.

KM's Justin Boyd 69th in Region cross country

Justin Boyd of Kings Mountain finished 58th in the Western Regional cross country championship Saturday at Jackson Park in Hendersonville.

Tyler Hellstrand of the Mountaineers was 69th, Jared Boyd 119th, Nick Adams 129th, Camden DeVane 135th, and Boone McDaniel 137th.

Mooresville won the team title with 43 points. KM was 20th out of 21 teams.

In the girls division, Alex Plonk of KM was 94th.

Dead Ducks still lead mixed duckpin league

The Dead Ducks and Dead Weights continued to lead the way in duckpin bowling action Thursday night at Dilling Heating.

The leading Dead Ducks (40-16) defeated the Pushovers (16-40) 6-2. Greg Evans led the winners with a 162 line and 410 set and Greg Mocanu added a 119-330. Zeke Rybczk led the Pushovers with a 109-314 and Jack Barrett had a 108-304.

Allen Myers rolled a 150 line and 391 set to lead the Dead Weights (30-26) over the Checkers (26-30). Bob Paramora led the Checkers with a 125 line and 308 set.

Last Thursday night, the Dead Weights narrowed the gap on the Dead Ducks by sweeping them 8-0. The Checkers swept the Pushovers.

Allen Myers led the Dead Weights with a 155 line and 414 set and Judy Abernathy added a

125-315. Greg Evans had a 143-379 and Greg Mocanu a 134-369 for the Ducks.

Bob Paramora's 125 line and 344 set led the Checkers over the Pushovers. Bonnie Warren had a 124-326 and Tommy Barrett added a 124-324. Zeke Rybczk had a 117 line and Ed Philbeck a 313 set for the Pushovers.

Chamber golf classic slated at Deer Brook

The Cleveland County Chamber Classic will be held Thurs., Nov. 8 at Deer Brook Golf Club.

Registration is at 10 a.m. A big Break Skills Challenge is set for 10:30. Lunch is at 11 a.m. and there is a shotgun start at 12 noon.

The format is captain's choice. There will also be hole-in-one, closest to the pin, and putting contests.

Entry fee is \$100 for individuals and \$400 for four-person teams.

For more information call the Chamber at 704-487-8521.

Arnold's November Diamond Sale

2 Carat Diamond Set
14k Gold \$4195

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