

**SPORTS**

**Moss retirement, Childers' records big sports stories of '07**

Sports in Kings Mountain had its high and low points during the calendar year 2007, but many teams and individuals excelled.

Probably the biggest sports story was John Henry Moss, who announced that he was retiring December 31 after 50 years as President of the South Atlantic League.

Moss, who spent 23 1/3 years as mayor of the city and earned a reputation nationwide as the "Mayor with the Midas Touch" because of his knack of receiving federal grants, devoted most of his life to baseball and earned the title - and in fact was once crowned - "King of Baseball."

Moss began a love affair with baseball as a kid when he would walk from his home on the Park Yarn Mill hill to see high school and American Legion games at the old City Stadium that was located near Deal Street.

He began promoting sporting events and spent some of his early adult years as general

manager of several professional baseball and football teams. He returned home to Kings Mountain and in the late 1940s organized the semi-pro Kings Mountain Vets and later the professional Western Carolinas League. The WCL eventually became the South Atlantic League, adopting the name of the longtime Sally League.

Moss was recently honored by the city with a reception at the History Museum for serving for 50 years as league president. He also received several prestigious awards during the year, including the inaugural Baseball Digest Award of Distinction, and is slated to be honored even more early this year for his accomplishments.

Not one to ever fully retire, Moss recently organized and was elected President of the Cleveland County Sports Commission, which will work to bring top sporting events and visitors to the county.

Perhaps his major accomplishment of 2008 will be finding a site for the SAL Hall of

Fame, of which he is a member.

Many other individuals continued to make sports news during the year, adding to the highlights of their careers.

The one that would have to be named Athlete of the Year in Kings Mountain was KMHS softball pitcher Morgan Childers, who completed a brilliant four-year career by leading the Lady Mounties to a third place finish in the state 3A tournament.

Childers completed her high school career with a 93-8 pitching record and 1,284 strikeouts. Her sophomore and junior years she pitched the Mounties to the state championship. She is now a freshman pitcher for USC Upstate.

Childers was voted Conference Player of the Year for an unprecedented fourth straight season.

Dremiel Byers of Kings Mountain helped his U.S. Greco-Roman wrestling team win its first ever world championship in Russia. Byers has won numerous U.S. Open and World

titles in the heavyweight division, and has come up just one point shy of qualifying for the Olympics in the last three Olympic Trials. With the retirement of former Gold Medal winner Rulon Gardner, Byers will be the leading contender for the U.S. Olympic berth in the future.

Shonda Cole of Kings Mountain completed her four-year volleyball career at the University of South Carolina by being named Honorable Mention All-American. She holds numerous records both at USC and Kings Mountain High School, where she was a two-time State Player of the Year. She is currently playing professional volleyball in Europe.

Other sports highlights of the year:

KMHS lineman Logan Hardin signed to play football at Elon University.

The KMHS boys repeated as SWC swimming champions.

Wesley Bell, Tyler Hellstrand and Jiris Toney of KMHS won their weight class in the SWC

wrestling tournament.

Darrell Van Dyke, Bruce Clark, and the 1998 KMHS volleyball and football teams were inducted into the KM Sports Hall of Fame.

KM's boys basketball team qualified for the state 3A playoffs for the first time in four years, losing in the first round to Hickory. The boys finished 8-19 and the girls, who also made the state playoffs, finished 13-11.

Sisters Morgan and Jordan Childers combined for a perfect game as the KMHS softball team blanked Burns 7-0.

Greg Evans bowled the first-ever 500 series in duckpin bowling at Dilling Heating.

The KMHS women's soccer team blanked Shelby 2-0 for its second straight SWC title.

L'Tisha Bell completed a brilliant four-year softball career at Winston-Salem State University, where she was a team leader in hitting, defense and stolen bases.

The KMHS men's track team, See Sports, Page 15

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