

HOOPS: Lady Mountaineers look to improve, scrimmage Thursday at No. Gaston

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rebounder (11 per game) last season.

Others with varsity experience are Miranda Ellis, Talajah Hutchens, Shadaiya Roberts, Martina Edwards and Faythe Brown.

Players up from the JV team are sophomores Tamara Adams, Ka'Myah Pressley, Kelsey Farmer and Chaya Hunter. Freshman guard Leeasia Rhodes, coming off two big years at Kings Mountain Middle, will also be on varsity.

"We have a lot of talent," noted Coach Cooke. "The four sophomores and one freshman are on the varsity because they're good enough to play at that level."

Kings Mountain had 30 girls come out this year, its biggest turnout in years.

"I am really pleased with how the girls have done so far," Cooke said. "They are very athletic. Some are still learning but their ability will make up for it. I'm confident this will be a good year."

Cooke said the Lady Mountaineers will be a "slashing offense," with a lot of cutting and screens. "They've picked up on it really well," he said.

"We'll have a strong inside game with girls that can take it to the basket or kick it back outside. "Defensively, we will run a lot

of man to man. We're athletic enough to play it but we will fall back into a zone, too."

With her height and athletic ability, Thompson should rank among the top players in the SMAC 2A/3A.

"We look for her to improve her numbers," Cooke said. "She has really been working hard in practice."

"A lot of our younger players are looking good, too," he said. "Rhodes will be playing a lot as a freshman and I look for her to be really good by her junior and senior years."

"Tamara Adams was hurt last year (torn ACL), but she's really looking good, too."

Even though they play a tough non-conference and SMAC schedule, Cooke said he expects the Lady Mountaineers to improve on last year's record.

"We play a lot of good teams but our goal is to have more wins," he said. "Our JV team went 9-3 last year and we have three of them (Hunter, Pressley and Farmer) on varsity and they should make us better. Kelsey's a pure shooter and she will be good starting or coming off the bench."

Cooke still hasn't decided on a starting five for opening game, "I'd say Thompson for sure, and the others are still fighting," he said.

Brown gained valuable

experience last season as a back-up forward. Pressley and Hunter, both 5-10, will also see a lot of action inside.

"Hunter is a great defensive player," Cooke noted. "She averaged five or six blocks a game last year on JVs. Pressley is very athletic."

Cooke said he has a good group of guards and he wouldn't have a problem rotating them in and out. They are Adams, Ellis, Hutchens, Portee, Farmer, Rhodes and Roberts.

"I've been really pleased with them," he said. "Ellis is an in between player. She can play several positions. She's a good athlete."

Looking to the SMAC, Cooke said the competition will be good.

"Crest has a lot of players back and they should be really good," he said. "East Burke and East Rutherford lost some good players but they'll still be good."

"It's going to be wide open. The conference will be pretty tough but I like our chances."

With more players coming out each year, Cooke said the future looks bright for the KM program.

"This is my third year here," he noted. "The numbers have increased every year. My wife (Callie) has taken over the JV program and she's doing a good job. We should be really strong this year."

Rockwood Lithium hosts "Making It Work" event for 180 Cleveland County students

On Friday, October 3, thirty KMHS students were able to attend "Making it Work", an Engineering & Manufacturing Fair hosted by Rockwood Lithium and developed through cooperation of the Business Education Alliance, PPG Foundation, Cleveland County Economic Development, Region C Workforce Development Board, and North Carolina State University.

The purpose of the event was to create awareness and build excitement among local high school juniors and seniors about career opportunities in engineering and manufacturing. Manufacturing in Cleveland County is growing rapidly and bright talent is needed to fill the demands and future needs of our manufacturers.

Cleveland County businesses including Clearwater, Duke Energy, Greenheck Fan Corporation, Hanwha, Hurst Jaws of Life, Industrial Maintenance & Automation (IMA), Kendrion, Pioneer Motor Bearing, PPG, Rockwood Lithium, Schletter Inc., Steag Energy Services, Wal-Mart, and Bank of the Ozarks helped sponsor the event. Several post-secondary institutions and exhibitors also participated in the manufacturers' showcase including Western Carolina, NC State (IES), Cleveland Community College, Isothermal, NC Center for Engineering Technologies, and the Region C

Workforce Development Board.


Over 180 students participated from Kings Mountain, Burns, Crest, Shelby, Chase, East Rutherfordton, and Cleveland County Early College High Schools. The schedule for the day included a welcome and information session by Rockwood Lithium; a tour of the facility and explanation of manufacturing processes; a showcase of local manufacturers and post-secondary colleges and universities; a "Battery Challenge" engineering competition sponsored by NCSU-IES; and a time of door prize drawings.

Each student attending received a free t-shirt, and a chance to win prizes during the drawings. Seniors attending the event also have an opportunity to apply for various STEM scholarships that will be awarded in December.

A special thank you goes out from the students to all those who participated and sponsored this year's event.

Making it Work- Thirty Kings Mountain High School students attended a "Making It Work" engineering and manufacturing Fair at Rockwood Lithium recently.

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