

# Cagers Young, Inexperienced

Kings Mountain High School will put two young and inexperienced, but talented basketball teams on the hardwood this winter.

John Blalock, veteran coach of the Mountaineers, has only one starter back from last year's 13-11 team while David Brinkley, coaching the girls for the first time, returns three players.

Both coaches are hoping to find some depth before they get into a rugged Southwestern 3-A Conference schedule.

Brinkley, taking over the girls program from Kathy Brooks, who stepped down after four years, has some good height but will have to depend on some rising jayvee and junior high players to fill some key positions.

"Our big problem is going to be depth," he said. "Somebody's going to have to be able to come off the bench and play well for us."

The Mountaineers return two of the top big girls in the conference. Center Sheryl Goode and forward Diane Williams, both juniors, are 5-10 and should prove to be among the league's top rebounders.

The other returnee is senior Debbie Appling, whom Brinkley says has improved more than any other player. Bridget Glass, a guard who played half of last season on the varsity and half on the jayvees, is the only other player with varsity experience.

Others being counted on include senior Kim Gladden, the jayvees' top scorer last year, Pam Baily and Sandy Hovis, both up from the jayvees, Andrena Goode, Tammy Bolton, Angie Bell and Glenda Adams. The latter three are sophomores but show a lot of promise.

"Basically, we're young," says Brinkley. "We haven't been tested. I think we have the material to progress and we do have pretty good height and good guards."

Brinkley, who picks Chase as the favorite in the SWC, says he's looking forward to his first year as a girls coach.

"Girls sports have come a long way since I was in school," he said. "Boys are a little faster and jump a little higher, but there's not a whole lot of difference in the coaching. The philosophy is about the same."

The only returning starter for the Mountaineers is senior Eric Dixon, who'll play a wing after playing his first two years at the point guard.

Coach Blalock lost several good players to graduation and some others he was counting on are academically ineligible.

But, Blalock isn't crying yet. He has some talented young players that led the junior high to the conference title last year and he feels as they gain varsity experience, things will improve.

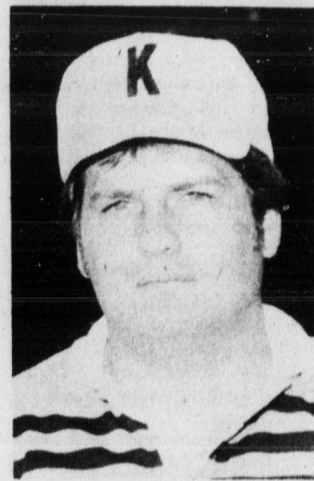
"We're young, but a lot quicker and a lot better on defense than we were last year," he says. "I'm looking for a successful season if the young people come around."

When Blalock talks of his young, he starts with Carl Smith, a 5-9 point guard who should draw the college recruiters to KM before he's through. He's quick as lightning, penetrates well and is one of the best passing guards to come along in years.

"He's going to be tough," said Blalock. "In addition to being a good ballhandler and penetrator, he's a good leader and plays real good defense."



JOHN BLALOCK



DAVID BRINKLEY

Demetrius Goode and Terrence Blalock, the coach's son, are also up from the junior high and they, like Smith, will probably crack the starting five. Both are good rebounders and shooters.

Joining those three and Dixon in the starting unit will probably be Gerald Byers, the only other returnee from last year's team.

He doesn't have a lot of varsity playing experience but should be a strong inside player.

Others being counted on include Eric Moore, Scott Hardin, Tim Bell, Wayne Brown and Todd Friday. Friday, who played jayvee ball his sophomore year but did not play last season, will also play a lot at guard.

## Tennis Tourney This Weekend

Due to the lack of entries and bad weather, the Kings Mountain Tennis Tournament scheduled for last weekend at the Kings Mountain High School courts was postponed and has been re-scheduled for this Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Action will get underway Friday at 6 p.m. Persons still interested in entering may do so before Thursday at 7 p.m. Entry blanks may be obtained at the offices of Kings Mountain Junior High, Kings Mountain Senior High or any of the KM District elementary schools.

Play will be held in boys and girls 10-under, 12-under, 14-under, 16-under, 18-under, men's and women's singles and doubles, mixed doubles and men's 35-and-over singles.

Entry fee is three dollars per event and a can of USTA-approved balls.

Drawing for pairings will be held Thursday at 9 p.m.

## Cage Slate

### NOVEMBER

27 - at West Charlotte  
30 - West Charlotte

### DECEMBER

4 - at East Gaston  
7 - at Shelby  
11 - North Gaston  
14 - at Burns  
18 - Chase  
21 - East Rutherford

### JANUARY

2 - at R-S Central  
4 - South Point  
8 - at Crest  
11 - East Gaston  
15 - Shelby  
18 - at North Gaston  
22 - Burns  
25 - at Chase  
29 - at East Rutherford

### FEBRUARY

1 - R-S Central  
5 - at South Point  
8 - Crest  
11 - Conf. tournament

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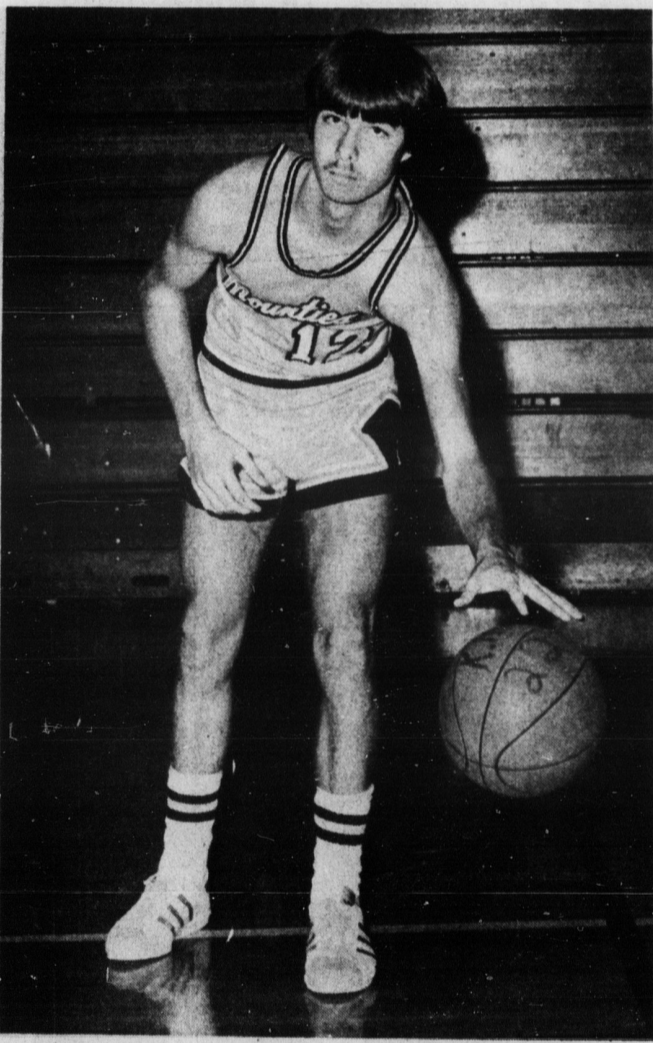
Through The Month Of November

Call For Appointment

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Becky Lail

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Photos by Gary Stewart

KMHS RETURNEES—Eric Dixon, left, and Diane Williams are returning starters for the Kings Mountain High basketball teams, who are preparing for a rugged Southwestern 3-A Conference season. The local fives host Bessemer City in a scrimmage Monday at 5 p.m. The season opener is November 27 at West Charlotte.

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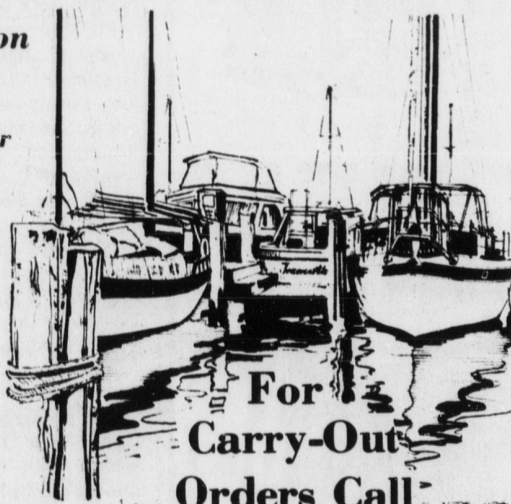
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