

Diane Williams Helps LR Win State Title

Diane Williams just can't seem to get away from sports.

The former Kings Mountain High four-sports standout and co-winner of the school's Female Athlete of the Year her senior season, fully intended to concentrate on volleyball when she signed an athletic grant-in-aid with Lenoir Rhyne College.

But after a successful first year on the volleyball court last fall, her coach, Pat Smith, asked her to come out for the basketball team.

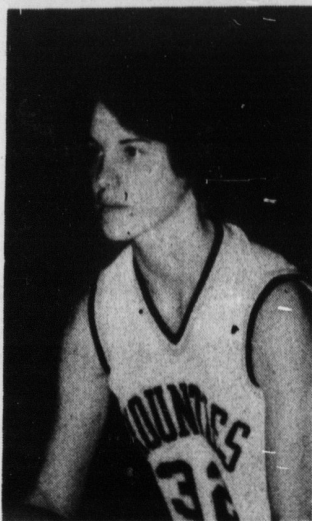
She knew LR had some veteran players and it would be hard to make the squad, but she was anxious to give it a shot. She not only made the team but has been a key factor in the Lady Bears' drive toward the national tournament.

The LR ladies wrapped up the North Carolina State title last weekend at Wilmington and will go to Charleston, S.C., today for the Southeastern Regionals. If they win there, they will host the first two rounds of the national tournament, and hopefully, will return to Charleston in a couple of weeks for the final four.

Williams is a reserve but, according to Coach Smith, "is willing to learn" and will be a strong candidate for a starting position next year, when the Lady Bears lose both their starting forwards.

She's presently the backup to senior standout Donna Elrod, a former North Gaston star and an all-state performer for the Lady Bears.

Diane is averaging 2.0 and 1.9 rebounds per game but doesn't see statistics as her key role.



DIANE WILLIAMS

"I see my role as having to always be ready to go in and give 110 percent," she says. "Whether the start just needs a rest, is injured or has fouled out, I have to go in with a good attitude. I feel like whether I'm on or off the court, I have to be ready to help the team however I can."

Williams, whose best game was a 10-point effort against Mars Hill, was an All-Southwestern Conference performer in volleyball, track, softball and basketball at KMHS. She led the basketball team in scoring and rebounding, was the Volleyball Player of the Year her junior season, was the top home run hitter on the softball team and advanced to the Regional Tournament in track.

Playing a reserve role is new to her, because she's always been

the leader of the pack, but just making a team as powerful as the Lady Bears is a great accomplishment. She was the only walk-on freshman to make the team. The only other walk-on to make it was sophomore Amy Robbins, who played the year before at Appalachian State.

Her hard-work and accomplishments thus far have already earned her a four-year basketball scholarship, and she looks forward to three more successful seasons.

"As for myself, I just want to improve with each practice and each game," she said. "I plan to go to summer school and work out for both volleyball and basketball. Next year I hope to fill a starting position."

As for the team, she's confident of its chances in the regionals.

"I really believe we have a good enough team to win the national championship," she said. "We beat a very good UNC-Wilmington team for the state championship. They were a fast-paced team and very disciplined. The only difference was that we had experience and they didn't."

The Lady Bears will open tournament action Thursday at 3:30 against Campbell, a team with which LR split a pair of regular season games. LR goes into the tourney as the 16th ranked team in the nation and fourth seeded in the tourney and with an overall 20-7 record.

Williams started most of the season in volleyball, due to a pre-season injury to Elrod. Elrod returned late in the year to win her starting spot back, but Williams anticipates becoming a starter again next fall.

The volleyball team compiled a 20-14 record and gave Coach Smith her 100th victory. She later won her 100th game in basketball, giving her the distinction of being one of the few coaches in the nation with 100 wins in two different sports.

She also intends to give softball a try as soon as the basketball season is over. She'll try out for leftfield.

"Our first game is scheduled for March 23 against Elon," she said. "We're all hoping that it will have to be cancelled. If we make it to the national tournament in basketball, we'll be playing basketball then."

"The coach (Pat Furr) sees a good season for us, even though Lenoir Rhyne has been playing softball for only three years. As for myself, I hope to see a lot of playing time."

The Lady Bears return six of last year's 10 starters, and Coach Furr expects to field a much quicker and stronger club than in the past.

The LR ten faces a tough schedule, playing such teams as Pfeiffer, Appalachian, Western

Carolina, UNC-Wilmington, UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC-Charlotte, Pembroke, Campbell and North Carolina A&T.

As for her final three years on the Hickory campus, Diane says

she'll continue to play all three sports as long as they don't interfere with her studies.

"Even though I love sports," she said, "the education comes first."

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KM's Carl Smith Player Of Year Again

Four Kings Mountain High School basketball players were named to the 1982 All-Southwestern 3-A Conference team, announced last week.

Senior point-guard Carl Smith, who led Coach John Blalock's Mountaineers to their second straight SWC title, was named SWC Player of the Year for the second straight year.

Dixie Friend, leading scorer on the North Gaston team which finished in fifth place, was the Girls Player of the Year.

Coaches of the Year were Dick McCleney, who coached a sophomore Shelby team to fourth place in regular season play and first in the District 7 Tournament, and Billy Willis, who coached the Shelby girls to a share of first place in regular season play.

Other Kings Mountain players on the boys all-conference team were seniors Terrence Blalock and Demetrius Goode. Blalock, Goode and Smith were all three-year starters for the Mountaineers and helped lead the team to an overall 51-4 record over the past two seasons.

Junior Trina Hamrick, the leading scorer and rebounder on a young Mountaineer team which finished fourth in regular season play, was the only KM



CARL SMITH

player named to the girls team.

Joining the KMHS trio on the boys team were Johnny Smith and David Davis of second place R-S Central, sophomore Terrence Petty of Shelby, Martin Kee of Burns, Vernilious McDowell of Chase, Benji Camp of East Rutherford and Kelvin Keitt of North Gaston.

Joining Friend and Hamrick on the girls team were Pauline Finney and Beverly Kilgore of Crest, Lori Bridges and Sandy Abbey of East Rutherford, Vera Young and Christine Logan of R-S Central, Denise Williams of Burns, Dawn Moose of East Gaston and Michelle Smith, Shelia Whitworth and Barbara Cannon of Shelby.

MEETING

The Parks and Recreation Department will hold an Industrial Softball Meeting on March 15 at 7:00 p.m. in the Kings Mountain Neighborhood

Facility Center (Community Center) in the Mountaineer Room (111). For further information contact George Adams, Athletic Director at 739-9631.

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