

Sports

PREP ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Senior makes little things count

Herring invaluable during Rams' run

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Justin Herring is a posterboy for the little player who does all the little things.

Herring, The Covington News/Chick-Fil-A Prep Athlete of the Week (Jan. 26-Feb. 1), made steals on three consecutive possessions in the game's final minutes as the Newton High School boys' basketball team roared back from 20 points down at half-time to defeat Eastside 59-57 Jan. 30 at Newton High School.

The senior has become Newton's coach on the court.

"He doesn't score a lot of points, but what people don't realize is how many points he affects," said Newton head coach Ron Bradley. "He's just invaluable. He's the most dependable player we have."

Herring had five assists to go along with his three pivotal steals in the second half as Newton erased a 14-point deficit in the last 5:49 of the game against Eastside. He also knocked down some clutch free throws.

Vincent Scott's game-winning reverse layup drew all the post-game attention, but Herring's efforts on defense made it possible.

"He's what got us started,"

Bradley said. "Everybody else fed off of him. He's always doing something to help the team."

At 5-foot-6, Herring is by no means a physical marvel who fills up the stat sheet. He is averaging just 4.0 points per game but leaves his mark in more subtle ways. He puts up 4.0 assists, 3.5 steals and 3.0 rebounds per game and owns a staggering 4-to-1 assist-to-turnover ratio.

His leadership skills are invaluable.

"He's the captain of our team, and it's been that way all season," Bradley said. "He's so stable out there."

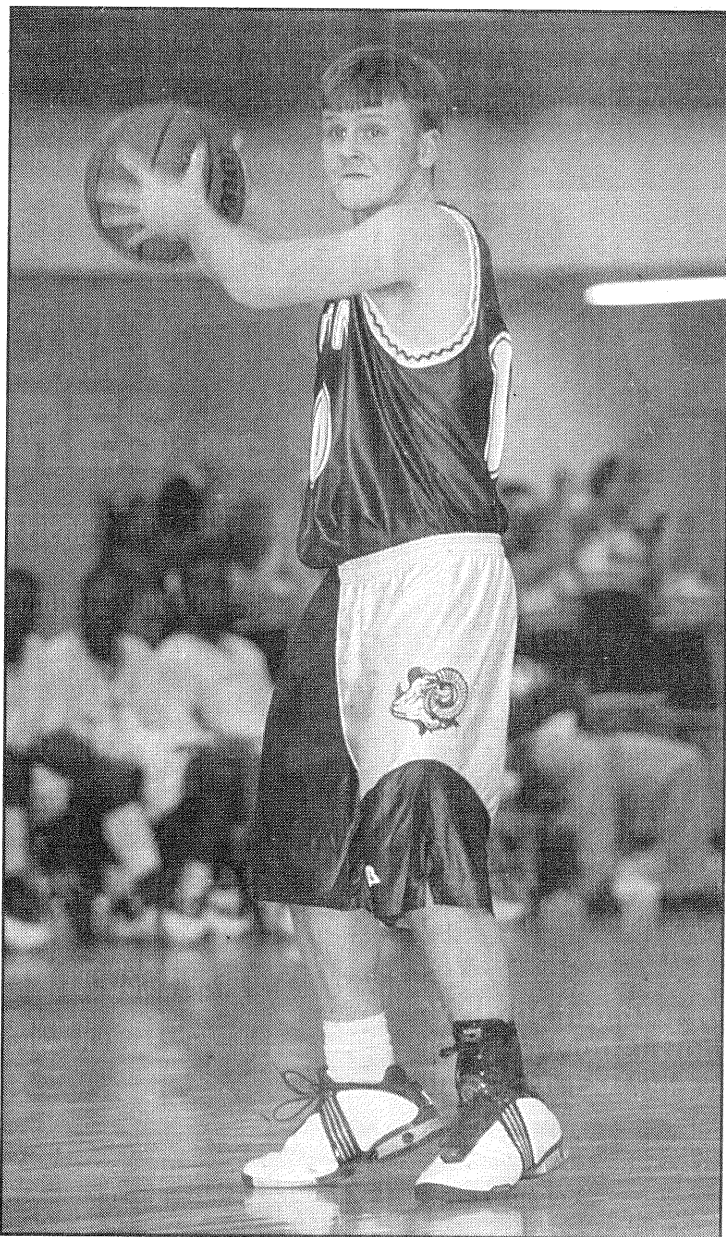
Herring undoubtedly has his greatest impact on the game and on his team on the defensive end of the floor, where he hounds and harasses opposing guards.

"Defensively, I can't say enough about him," Bradley said. "He takes so much pride in his defense. When we put Justin on somebody, he takes them away."

His heart more than makes up for any shortcomings he has from a pure talent standpoint.

"He works, he has good hands and he understands the game," Bradley said. "He does anything he can to help this team."

Herring will lead defending Region 8-AAAA champion Newton into the Region 8-AAAA Tournament this week.



Mandi Singer/The Covington News

Point of emphasis: Newton's Justin Herring is The Covington News/Chick-Fil-A Prep Athlete of the Week.

A rivalry in picture

The boys' and girls' basketball teams from Newton and Eastside high schools added to a growing list of thrilling memories in two meetings this season, from Jamario Vonner's last-second layup that gave the Eastside boys' basketball team its first win over Newton to an historic 37-0 run to open a game by the Newton girls' basketball team. Here are a few of those memories, frozen in time, as *The Covington News* looks back on the images that made the Newton-Eastside series so unforgettable.

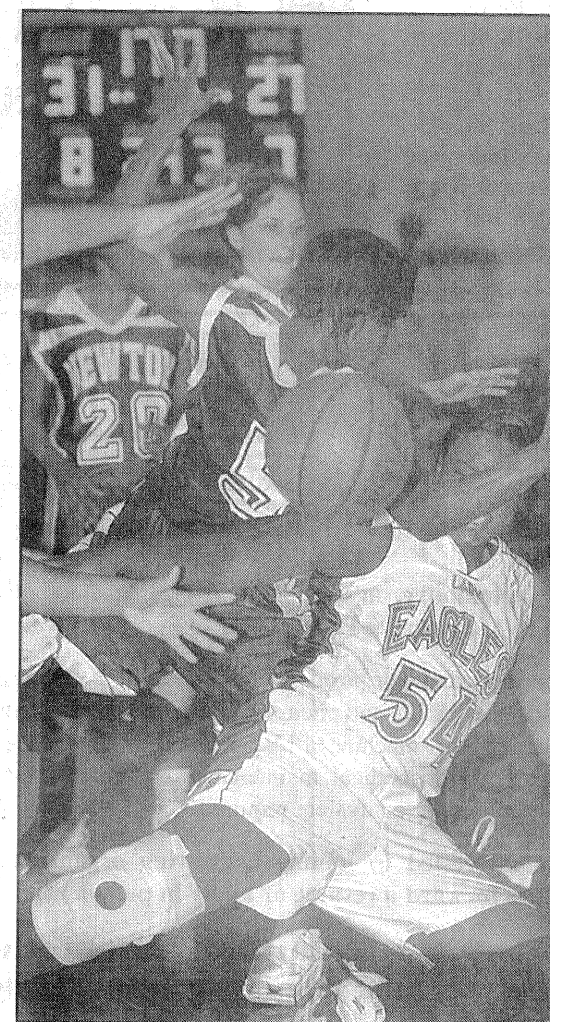
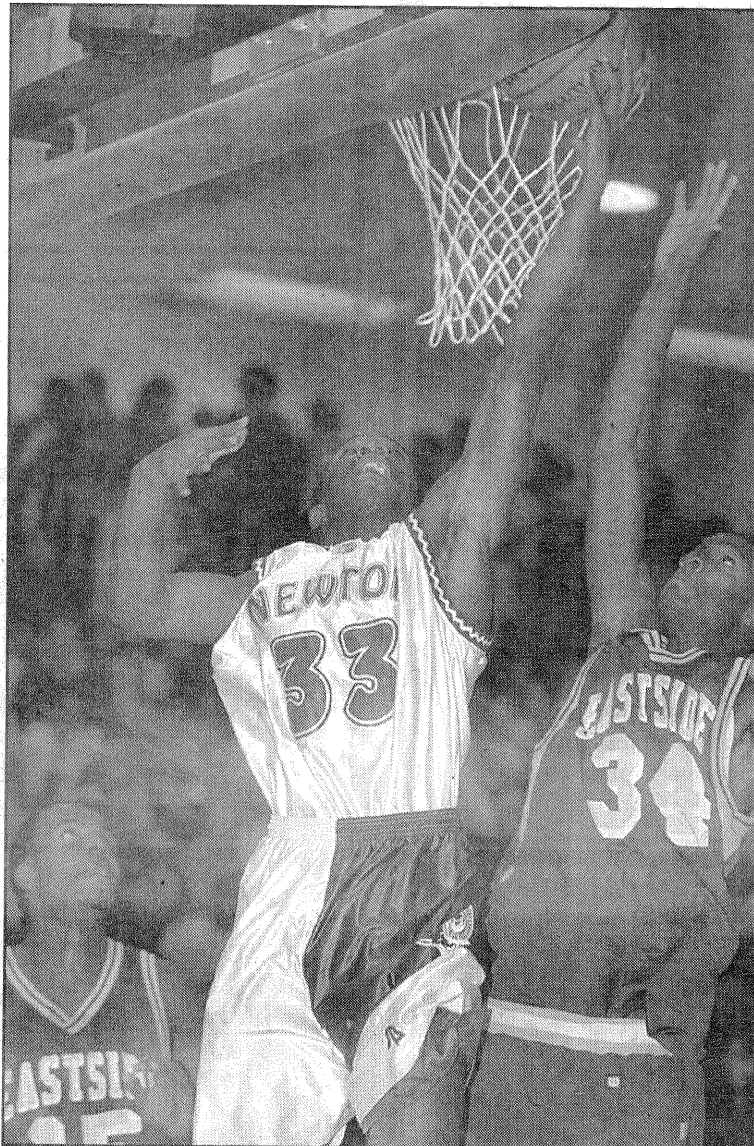


Bringing the noise: The Newton High School student section celebrates during the second meeting with rival Eastside.



Anthony Banks/The Covington News

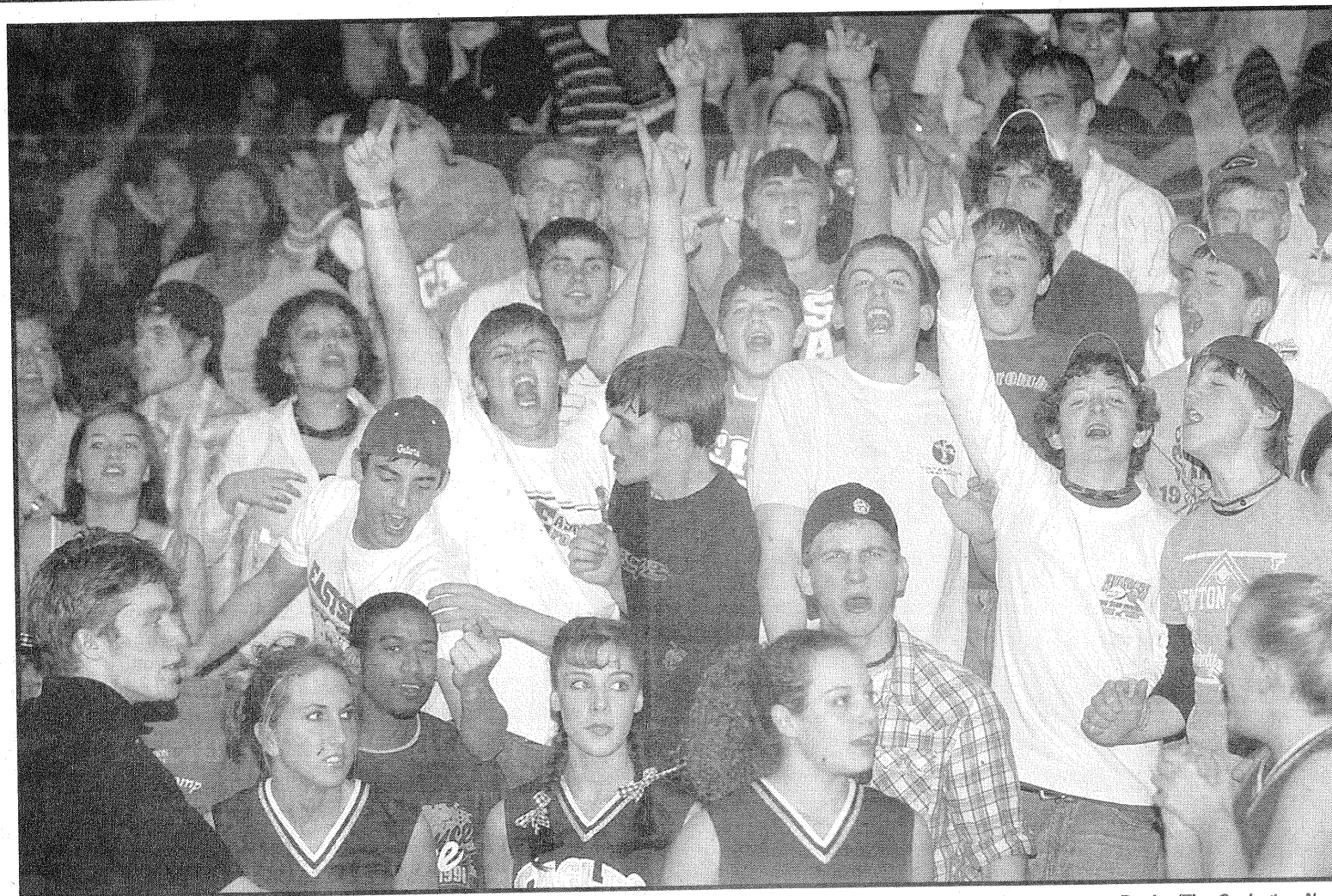
Points of contention: Eastside point guard Marchellius Smith (No. 3) is defended by Newton's Justin Herring.



Anthony Banks/The Covington News

Heat of battle: Left, Newton's Vincent Scott (No. 33) on a reverse lay-up. Above, Eastside's Conchett Williams (No. 54) collides with Newton's Kemisha Williams (No. 20).

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Anthony Banks/The Covington News

Getting rowdy: The Eastside High School student section raises the decibel level during the first meeting with Newton Jan 16 at Eastside High School. Right, Newton's Latoya Flournoy (No. 3) takes a jumpshot over Eastside's Tierra Harrison during a 56-20 victory over the Lady Eagles Jan. 30 at Newton High School.

