

starting lineup in the region, though having no giants.

Mike Sutton, 6-4, has great potential. Brad Quillen and Steve Carter are also ready to step into starting roles. Replacing point guard Brad Stultz will be difficult.

**Russell:** The region runners-up graduated star Ryan Howell but coach Ron Reed has backup artillery ready. Chris Hughes and Brett Rose are two excellent players who contributed much last season.

The Russell coach is especially high on Hughes, who was barely late on a goal that would have given the Red Devils the regional championship over Ashland. Rose can be a dangerous three-point shooter.

**Fairview:** The school sees a new Day approaching.

Center Matt Day is the son of former Morehead State and Fairview player Jim Day. The Eagle junior will anchor the inside as coach Brant Creech tries to find a way to replace graduated guard Grant Cannoy, who averaged 20 points a game last year.

Day made his mark in the state All "A" Classic two years ago and has been improving since. Adding weight to his slim frame was a priority.

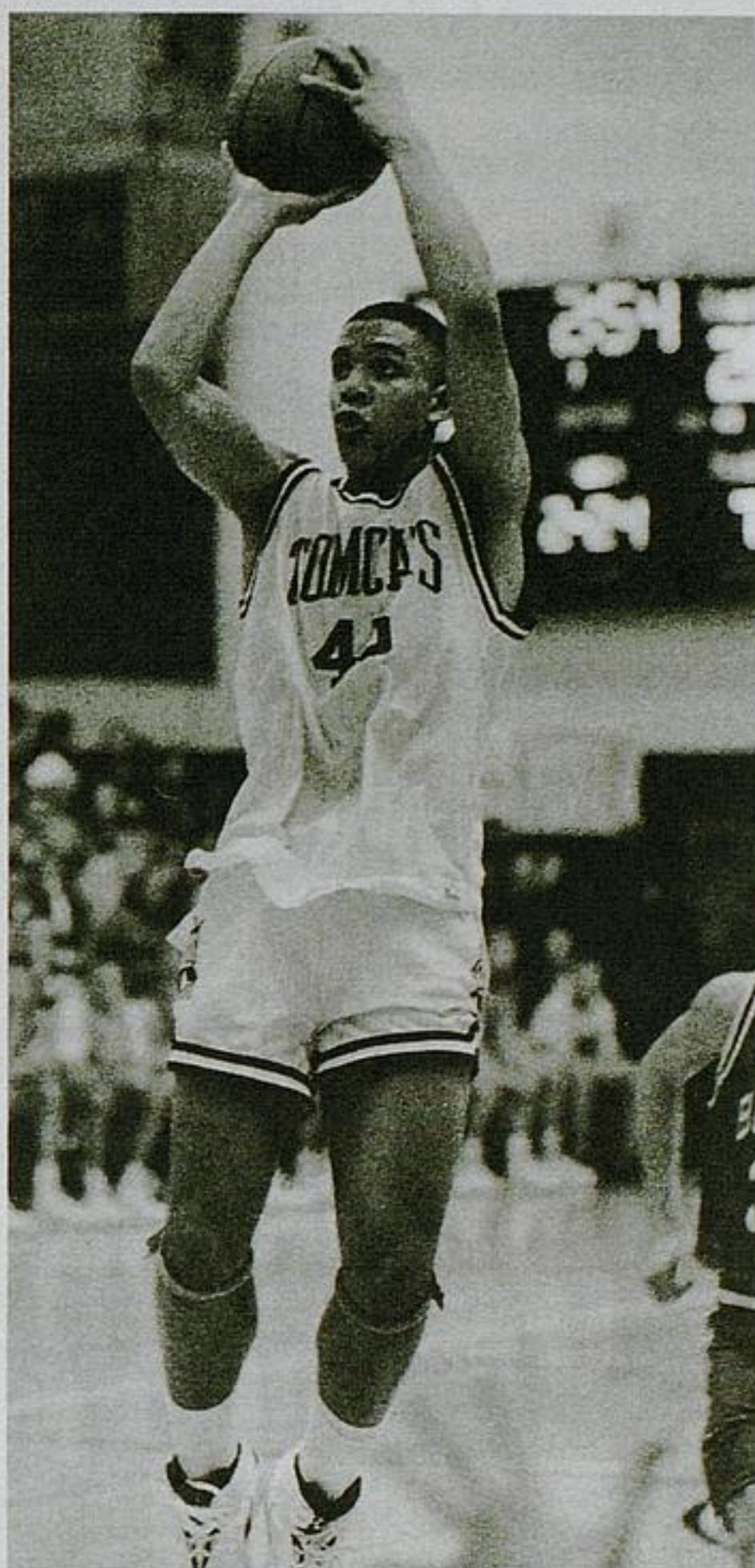
**Raceland:** First-year coach Shawn Johnson has a solid returning guard in Jason McAllister, who showed some offensive firepower last season. The Rams typically have a size problem but have competed within the district annually due to its hustle and team speed.

One big help in the middle comes in transfer Jeremy Calhoun, who played at Russell last season. That's encouraging news since Calhoun meets what is typically a big Raceland need — a center with scoring ability.

#### ■62ND DISTRICT

**West Carter:** Center Shay Berry, who battled inconsistency last season, has the ability to be one of the top big men in the region. Getting the athletic Berry and guard Brandon Burton to perform solidly throughout the season is the key for coach Grady Lowe.

Burton is a classic streak-shooter who can make life miserable for opposing coaches when



KEVIN GOLDY/ASHLAND DAILY INDEPENDENT

**Marty Thomas, rated the best player in the region, will be back to help Ashland defend its regional crown.**

he goes on a run.

**Lewis County:** Youthfulness last season should pay off this season.

Joining All-Area honorable mention selection Chad Mefford is Shane Reeder, Todd Prater, Jason Lykins, Mark Vergne, and transfer Jimmy Sapp, who played at Tollesboro last season.

Coach Merle Kidwell, a former assistant for Morehead State, provides inspiration and inten-

sity from the bench.

**East Carter:** Coach Charles Baker had two standouts last season in guard Eddie Hale and University of Cincinnati recruit Jackson Julson.

This year he has less talent but may have better chemistry. Guard Chris Russell is unselfish and high on experience. He will go a long way toward determining the Raiders' effectiveness.

Travis Steele and Jim Ryland will also see lots of playing time.

**Elliott County:** The Lions were hit hard by graduation and hope an influx of young players can help stimulate the program for coach Rick Mays.

Elliott would like a return trip to the region tournament, but may be pushed out by a better Lewis County team and usually respectable East and West Carter.

#### ■61ST DISTRICT

**Morgan County:** Veteran coach George Bellamy's region semifinalist team has a chance to be strong with the return of five juniors.

Morgan County should at least have size as 6-8 Dustin Hoslins will start at center. Other key players are guards Brad Nickell, Mike Day and Danny Wright. Cory Hoskins or Travis Bishop should also get playing time.

One devastating loss is the transfer of Jamie Brown to Montgomery County. Brown would have likely been rated one of the region's top five players.

**Rowan County:** This team may have been hit hardest by graduation, losing stars Steve Trivette and Scott Blair, along with experienced players Mickey Hardin, Garet Wells and Joe Crawford.

The Vikings could use a strong showing from the only two returnees with much playing time last season, Terry Coldiron and J.R. Ginter. Coach Tim Moore is well-respected within the region, however, and always fields a strong team.

**Menifee County:** Perhaps Menifee County's greatest strength is coach Brian Miller, who has transformed the Wildcats from perennial losers to respectability.

Miller faces a stiff challenge, however, in replacing graduated guard Scott Carty, an All-Area selection last season.

### PRESEASON PICKS

#### TOP PLAYERS

player	class	pos.	ht.	ppg.	school
1. Marty Thomas	Sr.	F	6-5	27.7	Ashland
2. Frank Lee	Jr.	F	6-4	23.3	Boyd Co.
3. Shay Berry	Jr.	C	6-5	15.8	West Carter
4. Chris Hughes	Jr.	G	5-11	9.0	Russell
5. Casey Sparks	So.	G	5-10	8.5	Boyd Co.
6. Michael Lynch	Jr.	F	6-2	13.5	Ashland
7. Chad Mefford	So.	F	6-1	12.5	Lewis Co.
8. Brandon Burton	Sr.	G	5-10	12.5	West Carter
9. Mike Sutton	Sr.	C	6-4	9.5	Greenup Co.
10. Bruce Walters	Sr.	G	5-11	8.5	Boyd Co.

#### TOP TEAMS

1. BOYD CO.
2. Ashland
3. Greenup Co.
4. Russell
5. West Carter
6. Morgan Co.
7. Rowan Co.
8. Lewis Co.