

**NO HOME CURSE**

# Newton Co. Wins Title

By DAVID DAVIDSON

At Forest Park High and at Newton County High in Covington, perhaps more than anywhere else in Georgia, the home-court advantage is a curse to visitors.

Over a 10-year period between December of 1959 and December of 1968, for instance, Newton County won 129 straight games at home, a feat proclaimed a world record on a metal tablet prominently on display in the Newton County gym.

At Forest Park, the curse on visiting teams is almost as strong. Before Saturday night, the Panthers had won 64 straight on their home floor over a five-year period, the last home defeat being to Griffin in 1967.

But Saturday night, Newton County stopped Forest Park at Forest Park, 69-65, and thereby claimed the Region 6-AAA basketball championship.

**BEFORE THE** game, Forest Park Coach Doug Cobb estimated the home-court advantage between Newton County and Forest Park was good for from 10 to 12 points.

Newton County Coach Ron Bradley said he thought having the home floor was worth from 10 to 15 points.

Newton County's victory was especially important, because of the Region 6-AAA tournament draw. Instead of being in a bracket against tall and dangerous Price High of Atlanta, the No. 3 team in the region and the No. 6 team in the state, the Rams — ranked No. 1 — will be in a bracket with Newnan and Griffin, the No. 4 and No. 5 teams in the region — strong opponents, but no match for Price.

**FOREST PARK'S** loss throws the Panthers into the bracket with Price, and does not enhance its chances of moving on to the state tournament.

Had Forest Park won, there ping ceremony Sunday to determine the No. 1 seed in the 6-AAA tournament.

Kevin Price scored 18 points to lead Newton County. would have been a coin-flip—His brother, Scott, Neal Dickerson, and Donnie Freeman scored 15 apiece.

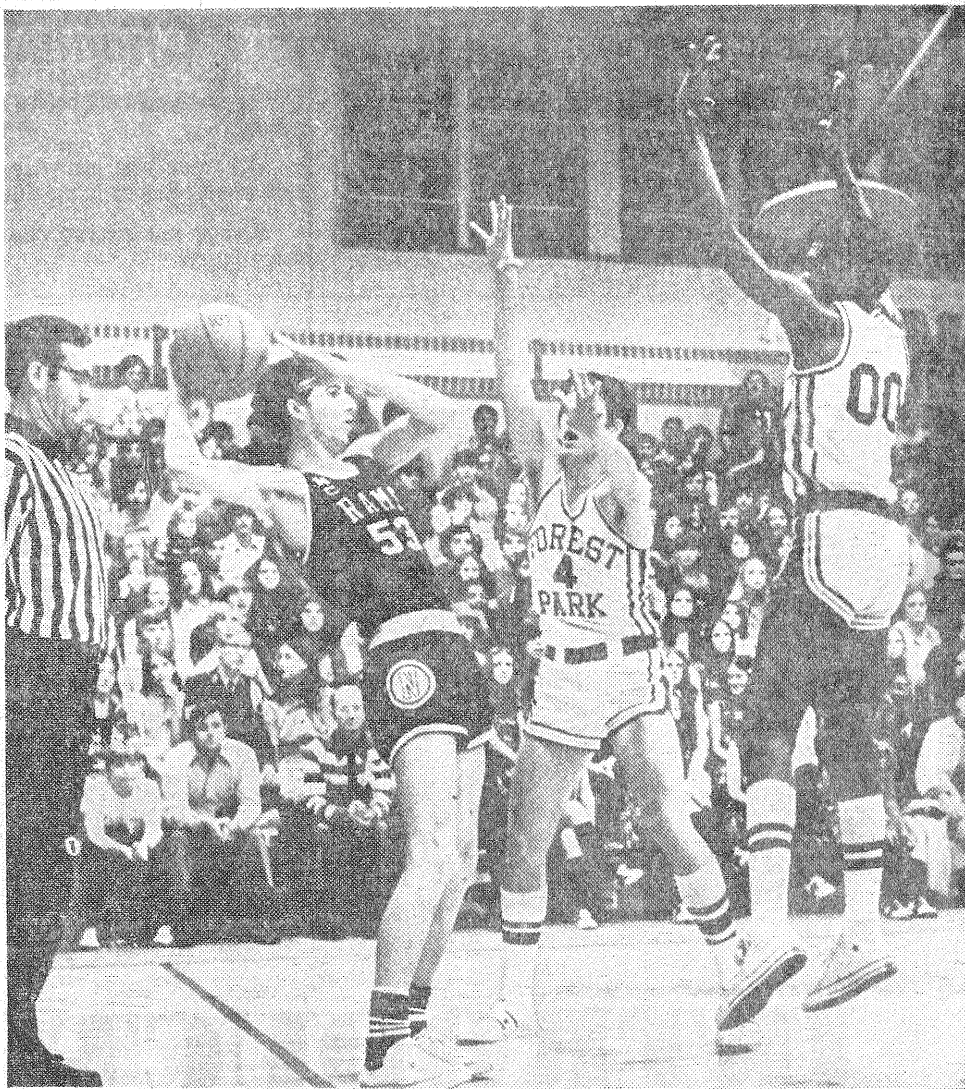
Mike Kirk was Forest Park's big scorer with 27 points, while Willie Finch made 10.

**FOREST PARK** jumped ahead late in the first quarter and, although headed midway through the second period, managed to hold on to a 30-29 halftime lead. In the third quarter, Forest Park led by as many as six points, but a 10-point burst by Newton County brought the Rams from a 41-35 deficit to a 45-41 lead, and Forest Park was never in the game again.

The victory was Newton County's 21st of the season, against only one loss, at Price. Forest Park dropped to 19-3. The Panthers lost at Newton County earlier in the year, 58-42, and also lost at Price.

Both teams won against Price at home before Christmas, but the Atlantans have not lost since the holidays.

**NEWTON CO.** (69) — Freeman 15, Stevenson 4, Christian 2, Dickerson 15, S. Price 15, K. Price 18.  
**FOREST PARK** (65) — Germany 4, Finch 10, Hartsfield 8, Hobbs 7, Kirk 27, Wright 2, Evans 9.  
**HALFTIME:** Newton Co., 30-29.  
**GIRLS:** Newton Co., 36-34.



Staff Photo—Robert Connell

**NEWTON COUNTY'S KEVIN PRICE HAS TROUBLE GETTING RID OF BALL**  
 Mike Kirkland (4) and Willie Finch of Forest Park Won't Let Him Pass It Off