

Local/State

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Vandals hit Kingsport park. Becky Campbell. Matthew Lane. Kingsport Times-News. February 2, 1999.

Vandals hit Kingsport park

\$2,000 worth of damage reported

By **BECKY CAMPBELL**
and **MATTHEW LANE**
Times-News Staff Writers

KINGSPORT — Vandals left their mark this weekend at a city soccer park, painting racial and religious slurs on the field and bathroom walls, and they may have taken some telling evidence with them.

According to police, one or more persons broke into a supply shed at Heritage Park between 5 p.m. Saturday and 8 a.m. Sunday to get paint park officials use to line soccer fields, then used it to paint up the fields and facilities.

Jon Schneider, Kingsport Youth Soccer Association coaching director, said the paint used is not easily removed from the user's hands and can take several days to wear off.

"They kicked in the whole front of the aluminum shed, and there were pentagrams on the field. They wrote 'Satan' and '666,'" Schneider said. "But they were pretty illiterate because they wrote 'anti-chris.'"

"Either they were in a hurry or they couldn't spell."

Ronnie Collins, pastor of Spirit and Truth Full Gospel Baptist Church, said he was unaware of the

racial epithets but said it's no reason for violent retaliation.

"Our response must be love," he said. "We should not stoop to calling other races names. It's time to pray. We know racism exists. We must take one step at a time together to see this come to an end."

Schneider said there was about \$2,000 worth of damage to the park.

Several goals and field liners were also damaged.

Police said they have no suspects.

"One of our past presidents was on his way to church and was driving down Riverport Road and saw the vandalism," Schneider said.

Graffiti was spray-painted on the shed, bathroom, soccer field and several goals, he said.

In addition to the vandalism, police said a pendulum header and cooler were stolen. The spray paint cans were taken into evidence for fingerprinting.

Two city workers were called in to help eight others clean up the vandalism. Schneider said the cleanup took about 3½ hours.

Anyone with information should call the Kingsport detective division at 229-9429.



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Kingsport police are investigating vandalism over the weekend at Heritage Park. Graffiti was spray-painted on the fields and facilities.