

Take 1-0 Lead In SWC Championship Series

Mounties Nip Raiders 4-1 Tuesday

Kings Mountain's Mountaineers scored three runs in the seventh inning to break a 1-1 tie and defeat South Point 4-1 Tuesday night in the opening game of the best-of-three Southwestern Conference championship baseball series.

The two teams were scheduled to play the second game last night at Lancaster Field. The third game, if needed, will be played Friday night at

Davis Park in Belmont. The victory, KM's first this year over the Red Raiders, moved the Mountaineers to 11-10 overall. However, six of those defeats came in non-conference play. In league competition, including regular season and playoff action, the Mountaineers are 10-4.

It was only the second loss of the year for the Red Raiders, who went into the playoffs as a heavy

favorite. The Raiders, now 15-2, have lost only in playoff action, to Burns and Kings Mountain.

Righthander Ronnie Wilson, whose six-hitter against Crest last week put the Mountaineers in the finals, went the distance Tuesday night with a five-hitter. The lone South Point run, which came in the third inning on Karl Witzke's triple, was unearned. Joe Shepherd, who scored the run, reached

base on an error.

Righthander John Conner went the route for the Raiders and had a two-hitter and a 1-0 lead going until the sixth inning.

But the Mountaineers collected seven of their nine hits in the final two frames to swing the victory and put them in a good position to win their second SWC title in three years.

Bruce Valentine doubled to lead off the sixth inning

and scored the tying run moments later on a sacrifice fly by Jimmy Hall.

The Mountaineers then took advantage of five straight hits and another sacrifice fly to score their three runs in the seventh.

Designated hitter Steve Lancaster doubled to get things going in the seventh and Wilson reached on a bunt single. Bryan White's double accounted for two runs and after singles by

Danny Bolin and Andy Loftin loaded the bases, Valentine plated White with a sacrifice fly.

Kings Mountain's other two hits off Conner came in the first two innings. David Ray Robinson singled in the first and moved to second when Scott Ellis was hit by a pitch but Lancaster bounced into a double play to end that threat.

In the second, Bolin singled with two away but

stayed at first as Loftin filed out.

Conner then retired nine batters in a row before Valentine's double led off the sixth.

South Point threatened several times but Wilson came up with some big

itches, and his defense came up with some big plays, to stop rallies.

The Red Raiders had baserunners in every inning, and they had men in scoring position in six of the seven innings.

SPORTS

Four KMHS Golfers Qualify For WNCCHSAA



Mark Sanders hits approach shot on number 9...

Legion Practice To Begin, Gillespie Is Named Coach

Kings Mountain Post 155 American Legion baseball coach Robbie Moore has called on another Gardner-Webb player to assist him with this year's junior team.

He's fireballing pitcher, Richard Gillespie, the ace of the G-W staff who hurled Kings Mountain's Mountaineers to the Southwestern Conference title two years ago.

Gillespie's appointment was announced today by Moore and Post 155 athletic officer, Gene Tignor.

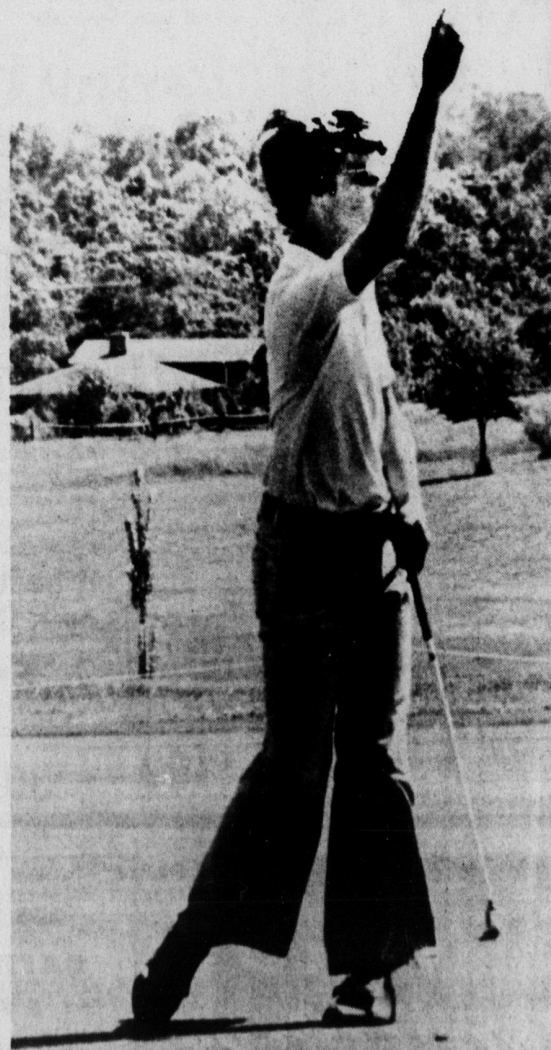
Also, Moore and Tignor have called for pre-season practices to begin Saturday at 2 p. m. at Lancaster Field.

All persons age 16 through 18 who are interested in trying out for the team are urged to be present. Kings Mountain High School players will not be eligible to tryout if the Mountaineers are still involved in the high school playoffs, but Moore said they'll be welcome if their playoffs are completed by then.

Gillespie was a three-year starter in the high school and legion program here. He was the KMHS most improved player in 1975, when he posted an 8-1 record, hit .350 and helped lead the Mountaineers to the SWC title.

As a freshman at G-W, he drew all the tough District 26 pitching

assignments and he gained some valuable experience which should help strengthen the Bulldog program during the next three years.



Herbie Beam persuades putt to drop in for birdie...

Kings Mountain High's golfers missed out on winning the Southwestern Conference title Monday because of a penalty, but the Mountaineers did qualify four players for next week's Western N. C. High Schools Activities Association tourney at Riverbend Golf Club in Shelby.

Host Shelby and East Gaston shared the league title, both teams coming in with 317 totals. Kings Mountain finished at 318, R-S Central, 321, Cherryville 337, North Gaston 340, Chase 351, South Point 354, East Rutherford, 358, Burns 373 and Crest 388.

By qualifying four players for the association tournament, the Mountaineers will still be able to compete as a team in that two-day tournament, a 36-hole event set for Monday and Tuesday. It's the first time since 1965 that KMHS has qualified a team for the event.

The Mountaineers went into the conference tournament as one of the favored teams, and they battled right down to the wire. But what turned out to be the difference was a two-stroke penalty which Riverbend club pro Phil Wallace assessed to KMHS sophomore Darrell Austin on the par four, first hole. Austin's tee shot went within a foot of a highway which runs beside the number one fairway, and Austin could not hit the ball without standing on the highway. He asked the other players in his foursome if he was allowed a free drop, they said yes, and he moved the ball two club lengths and dropped it.

Wallace saw what happened, came to the green and charged Austin a three-stroke penalty. (Austin had parred the hole, and the penalty gave him a seven).

After the scores were posted, Wallace changed the penalty to two shots instead of three, but that still left the Mountaineers a stroke shy of East Gaston and Shelby.

Austin said he felt like he was right in moving the ball, feeling that the highway would be considered the same as a cart path. Golf rules allow a two club length drop for relief from a cart path.

However, according to Wallace, the highway is out of bounds, and even though Austin's ball was a foot shy of the highway, a player still cannot get relief from a ball that is close to an out of bounds marker. Austin could have stood in the road to hit the ball, but was going against the rules when he moved it.

Wallace said the infraction probably would not have been noticed had it happened away from the clubhouse, but when Austin moved the ball a man on the tee spotted it and pointed it out to

Wallace. Wallace said he actually left the clubhouse with the intention of helping Austin and instructing him to put the ball back in its original position. But by the time he reached the area, the KM player had already hit his approach shot, and Wallace had no other alternative but to assess him a penalty.

"I hated it happened," said Wallace, "and I stayed awake half the night because I knew it cost Kings Mountain the title. But had I not charged him the penalty, the man would have reported it to the tournament officials and he would have been disqualified."

W. C. Clary, executive secretary of the Western N. C. High Schools Activities Association, said tournament director Dick M. Cloney of Shelby was supposed to have appointed judges (coaches and any others McCleney wished to appoint) and stationed them all over the golf course just in case something like this occurred. At the time of this writing, McCleney could not be reached.

"The player should not have consulted the players in his group," said Clary, "but should have consulted one of the judges. Had a judge told him it was all right to drop the ball, that ruling could not have been changed."

Just for the record, the competing coaches and several other golfers at the course said they would have done the same thing Austin did.

But, being more familiar with the rules, Wallace said he felt he had no other choice but to assess the penalty, and felt KMHS is better off finishing a stroke behind than having one of its key players disqualified.

Despite the penalty, Austin still finished with an 80, a good enough score to qualify for the association tournament. Other KMHS golfers making the field included John Gamble, who shot a 77, Herbie Beam, who fired a 78 and Mark Sanders, who shot 83.

North Gaston's Larry Penley won the individual title with a three-under par 69, and Alan Shuford of Shelby was second with 71. They were the only players to break par.

Gary Marshall of Chase and Darren Emmett of East Gaston tied for third with 74's, followed by Gamble at 77.

The complete list of those qualifying for the association tourney includes:

- 69 - Larry Penley, N. Gaston.
- 71 - Alan Shuford, Shelby.
- 74 - Gary Marshall, Chase, and Darren Emmett, East Gaston.
- 77 - John Gamble, Kings Mountain.

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Johnny Gamble blasts from trap on 18...



Darrell Austin blasts from underneath tree on 18...