



Pat's Peckings

By NEALE PATRICK

Who's Favorite In Junior Race?

Legion junior baseball arrived on the sports scene again this week, with slightly-less fanfare than often has been the case with the summer kid diamond program.

The season, in fact, slipped upon us and the teams headed into the Area Four race without anyone having a concrete idea about the season's favorite. . . . If you remember your past junior baseball seasons, you recall that some team always was touted as "loaded" in the pre-season pickings. . . . Usually you could put the finger on a Gastonia or a Shelby club as the potential power, and in recent seasons the Linc-Cherries rated highly on the strength of such pitchers as Tony Cloninger and Ronnie Hovis.

The Area favorite as the teams took their first swings this week, however, hasn't shown itself. . . . The folks who usually claim to know about such things haven't put one of the clubs out on the odds-on favorite's limb.

Closest thing to one of the clubs admitting strength came from Pop Simmons of Shelby recently, and that might be a tip-off because, as you know, the veteran mentor usually lets his kids take care of their winning on the field. . . . But in recent gab session with some fellow coaches, Pop let it out that, "we are going all the way" . . . Perhaps, Pop was kidding, but you never know. . . . For one thing, Shelby figures to have the depth of pitching that it takes for survival in junior baseball. . . . Charles Noggle, Ed Kouri, Harry Mauney and Hugh Hardin provide mound strength.

The overall play in the Area, and throughout junior baseball, for that matter, should be improved this season, as result of the new rule which has given several players on almost every team an extra year of eligibility. . . . Youths 18 years of age and high school graduates can play this summer which should mean a faster brand of Legion Baseball.

Kings Mountain, for instance, received a big boost from the new rule which permits all boys born January 1, 1943 and thereafter to play this summer. . . . Some nine players on the current squad gained the extra year of eligibility, including six holdovers from last summer. . . . Boys given the added year of eligibility include Ronnie Pearson, Bud Sanders, Tommy Barrett, Punch Parker and Randall Haynes, all members of last year's team, along with Ken Cash, a newcomer.

One Weekend Game On KM Home Card

Local Legion officials aren't particularly pleased with the first round Area schedule as drawn by commissioner John Yandle but they plan to make the best of the half-dozen games here.

The slate shows that Kings Mountain will play five of its first-round games in the first three playing dates of the week (Monday-Tuesday-or-Wednesday), and only one on the last two weekend dates. . . . The breakdown by days shows one game on Monday, two each on Tuesday and Wednesday, and one on Saturday, with none on Friday.

Dating the season in junior baseball, the Area Four race continues through June 28, and the Area playoffs must be completed before the opening of the state semifinals (between Area champions) on July 19. . . . The state finals must begin by July 28 and the state champion crowned by August 10. . . . The Ole North State winner again will play in the new-style six-team regionals to be held at Sumter, with other state champs from South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, Florida and Alabama.

The six-team regionals and the eventual eight-team national finals (thus eliminating the sectional tournaments) were the brain-children of Lou Brissie, but he stayed around only one year of the new plan, designed to trim travel and expenses.

Brissie received the heave-ho from National Legion officials in March with the hint that junior baseball may be in for a "de-emphasis" on the national scale. . . . It seems that Brissie put in his time strictly with junior baseball, and the powers-that-be felt that the national commissioner should devote some of his time to other Legion duties, for budgetary reasons.

Former KM Coaches Head Other Clubs

A pair of former Kings Mountain coaches are heading the Legion programs for a couple of neighbors this summer. . . . Ex-Mountaineer coach Jack Sink, now of Myers Park High in Charlotte, is tutoring Post 262 club in the Queen City for the third straight year. . . . Buddy Lewis, mentor of the KM juniors one summer, is the new athletic officer and heads the board of coaches for Gaston Post 23.

Gastonia's Chicago-Cub style board of coaches is something new in the legion ranks, and Lewis admits the innovation came about for financial reasons, with the mentors serving gratis.

While the Legion junior and high school baseball programs are closely inter-meshed with the use of the same players, etc., it's interesting to note that Jack Sink is one of only two coaches of the 14 teams in Area Four who also tutors the high school baseball team in the same town. . . . The other is Wally Carpenter at Rutherfordton. . . . The other coaches are "imports" from county schools, such as Bill Powell here and Pop Simmons at Shelby, a mentor from a rival community such as Gaither Cline of Gastonia High and the Belmont juniors, or coaches unaffiliated with the schools.

This week's issue of The Sporting News includes the first of four special editions for the season on Legion baseball and one of the items of interest is the fact that the "junior" tag has been dropped by the American Legion in referring to the baseball program. . . . Henceforth, the program will be known as "American Legion Baseball." . . . That's all well and good, but after some 35 years of "junior baseball", it will be hard for the fans and followers to make the change.

Back to the "favorite's tag" for this area, one source puts the finger on Forest City and Charlotte 9. . . . Those two may rank with the top clubs, Forest City certainly having the pitching in the likes of Johnny Hawkins and Jerry Steffey, and the Charlotte club has two of the better players of the area in Gary Black and Dickie Kelly. . . . But neither appears to be the type of powerhouse which has often opened the season as the odds-on favorite in Area Four. . . . Time will tell.

Juniors Divide Opening Pair Of Games

McCarter Victim Of Six Errors In 7-3 Defeat

Ernest McCarter's mound luck follows the same pattern it set last summer. . . . bad.

The Kings Mountain juniors right-handed hurler from York ran into the same brand of luck which plagued him most of last year. He hurled a six-hitter at Charlotte 262 team at Highland Park in Charlotte, but was the victim of a half-dozen errors and lost, 7-3.

Five of the runs were unearned as the defense fell completely apart in the seventh inning when three errors permitted four unearned runs to score. That wild frame proved to be the margin for Coach Jack Sink's Charlotte club.

McCarter's mound performance identically matched that by Kenny Wilson against Mt. Holly the night before. . . . each allowing six hits, each walking two and fanning ten. But where the fielding was sharp against the Hollies, it sagged against Charlotte.

The right-hander fanned at least one batter in seven of the frames, and he was aided by one double play, ironically, just the inning before the same infield blew up with three miscues.

For the second straight night, Lawrence Bolin was one of the KM team's leading hitters, with a double and single, and this time he shared the bat heroics with Robert Munday.

The stocky young product from Clover rapped a pair of singles, one of the knocks driving home two runs, and Munday scored the other run after some daring base running.

Bolin and Munday obtained the hits as Kings Mountain picked up its first two tallies in the sixth, to trim the Charlotte lead to 3-2. Bolin was wiped out on a fielder's choice following his blow, but Ron Pearson and Punch Parker who walked came around to score on Munday's single to left.

Munday started a mild KM rally in the ninth, walking and stealing both second and third, scoring on pinch hitter Barry Gibson's sacrifice fly.

But all that came too little too late for Kings Mountain.

Charlotte tallied two in the fourth on a single by Byron Slaughter and Al Barnett's long triple, the latter coming home on McCarter's wild pitch. Those were the lone earned runs for the Charlotte nine.

A third-out dropped ball in right field by Richard Little admitted another Charlotte run in the fifth, and three infield errors went along with a single and a walk to hand the host club four unearned tallies in the seventh. Bud Sanders committed two of the bobbles, Bolin the other.

Punch Parker pulled the fielding play of the game for Kings Mountain, a throw from center-field to nab a runner at the plate for the final out of the third frame. With two away Jack Scott doubled, and Joe Turner singled to center, but Parker fired a strike in the air to Ron Pearson to nip the runner by ten feet.

Kings Mt.	AB	R	H	rbi
Barrett, ss	5	0	0	0
Bolin, 3b	5	0	2	0
Pearson, c	4	1	1	0
Parker, cf	2	1	0	0
McCarter, p	4	0	0	0
Munday, lf	3	2	2	2
Sanders, 2b	3	0	0	0
Leigh, 1b	3	0	0	0
Little, rf	1	0	0	0
Young, cf	1	0	0	0
A. Gibson	0	0	0	1
C-Green	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	31	3	5	3

A-Sacrifice fly for Leigh in 9th. C-Walked for Young in 9th.

Charlotte 262	AB	R	H	rbi
Turner, lf	3	2	2	1
Slaughter, cf	4	2	1	0
Thompson, ss	2	1	0	0
Barnett, rf	4	1	2	1
Wilkinson, p	4	0	0	0
Kelly, c	4	0	0	0
Shay, 1b	4	1	0	0
Hant, 3b	3	0	0	0
Scott, 2b	3	0	1	0
Tweed, p	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	31	7	6	2

E - Pearson, Leigh, Little, Sanders, 2 Bolin; DP - Sanders and Leigh; LOB - Kings Mt. 8, Charlotte 4; 2B - Scott, Bolin; 3B - Barnett; SB - Munday 3; Thompson, Slaughter, Barnett; S - Thompson, Hant; SF - Gibson; WP - McCarter; PB - Kelly 2; Pearson; U - Hawkins & Pare; T - 2:20.

Pitching	IP	H	R	Er	Bb	So
McCarter	8	6	7	2	2	10
Wilkinson	8 1/2	5	3	3	6	5
Tweed	2	0	0	0	0	0

Larry Pearson Enters Air Corps

This is a reverse twist. . . . the American Legion sponsored Kings Mountain juniors have lost a payer to the armed services.

Larry Pearson, a member of the junior team for the past two years, and a candidate this year, has enlisted in the U. S. Air Corps.



BASEBALL GRIDDER - This is very much baseball season and these three players are starting for the Kings Mountain Legion juniors, the starting outfield, for instances, in the home opener Monday night. And if you change the sport to football, the trio would comprise three-fourths of one of the finest prep backfields in the Carolinas. Left to right are

Robert Munday, the dazzling running back from Clover who scored two touchdowns against the Mountaineers last fall, Ernest McCarter who quarterbacked York to the state finals in its class last fall, and Punch Parker, the 20 TD maker for the Mountaineers. (Photo by Claude Gilstad)

Jerry Morris Selected As Catcher On All-State High School Team

Jerry Morris has added another honor to his growing collection.

The Bethware senior has been named as one of the catchers on the all-state high school baseball team, selected by The Greensboro News. The announcement of the mythical team was made Sunday by the paper which annually selects all-state clubs in all prep sports.

Morris was one of the half-dozen all-state performers pictured in the article which also noted that the slugging southpaw hitter was the top stickman on the team, with a phenomenal .627 batting average on the campaign. The all-state nomination is the second honor in the last two weeks for the Buccaneer and former Kings Mountain Legion junior star. He also has been selected as a member of the western team to play in the second annual East-West all-star baseball game in Greenville, S. C., on June 16-17.

Writing for the Daily News, sports scribe Tom Northington quoted Bethware Coach Bill Powell on Morris: "He's just the boy a coach wants behind the plate all the time. A tremendous play, no question about it. Seven players tried to steal on him and all seven were thrown out."

Morris has been the regular catcher and top hitter for Bethware High for four seasons and he also was the catcher and the leading hitter two years for the Kings Mountain juniors. He was the runner-up in the batting race the other season.

His long-range bat bashings this year included five doubles, two triples and two homers.

Pitching Depth And Late-Season Improvement Carry Duke To Finals

The Atlantic Coast Conference, proud of its heritage in football and basketball, is methodically acquiring the rating as the king of college baseball in Dixie.

Duke's Blue Devils had it relatively easy in Gastonia last weekend to capture the district 3 NCAA baseball tournament with two straight victories, thus giving the ACC its fourth district diamond diadem in a row.

The Blue Devils, a Johnny-come-lately club in the NCAA play, whipped sixth-ranked nationally Florida State, 7-2, and Southern Conference champion West Virginia, 7-3, for the pair of triumphs which send Duke to the college World Series in Omaha.

Former national champion (in 1959) Oklahoma State is the first foe for the Dukes on Friday night.

Duke is the fourth straight ACC team to win the district event at Gastonia, the third in a row to capture the title without the loss of a game. Carolina last year and Clemson in 1959 also won the crown without a loss in the double-elimination tournament. Clemson also copped in '58 but lost a game.

Eight Teams Play In Local Little League

Eight teams are ready to go in the Kings Mountain Little League baseball program for the 1961 season.

The eight-team league, an increase of two clubs over last year, is scheduled to open Monday night, June 19th. Double-headers will be played four nights a week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and the schedule will continue through the first week in August and will be followed by a single-elimination tournament.

Each team will play the other seven members of the league two games each.

Biddix Posted 4-2 Mound Mark

Bobby Biddix won over half of the games the Wake Forest freshman baseball team copped this spring.

The right-hander from Bethware and former Kings Mountain Legion junior posted a season's mark of four wins and two losses in the Baby Deacon's seven-seven year.

Biddix hurled a win over each of the Dacs' Big Four opponents, Duke, Carolina, and State, and won his other game from Presbyterian Junior College. His pair of mound losses were to Carolina and Wingate.

The slender right-hander also put on weight during his freshman season, now tips the scales at 180.

Kenny Wilson Hurls 3-0 Victory Over Mt. Holly In First Start

Impressive was the word for it as the Kings Mountain Legion juniors opened their season with a victory here Monday night.

The 3-0 triumph over Mt. Holly Pawcreek gave the local lads an early jump in Area Four action and also was the first opening game victory for the Kings Mountain kids in several years.

The past had no bearing, however, on the performance of the Otis D. Green Post 155 club which picked up the three runs early in the game and held on with some sharp fielding behind the impressive six-hit pitching of Kenny Wilson.

Right-hander Wilson went the nine-inning distance fanning ten and walking only two. He was plagued by base-runners in six of the nine frames, but the twin-killings helped him out of a pair of possible jams, including a game-ending double-play.

He fanned at least one batter in all except two innings, ironically, the pair of frames in which the infield backed him up with twin-kills.

Third-sacker Lawrence Bolin and second baseman Randall Haynes teamed-up for the double play in the second inning, the play ending the frame in which Mt. Holly landed the first two runners on base.

Then in the ninth, Tommy Barrett started the twin killing from shortstop, with Haynes the middle man for the relay to first to end the game.

Kings Mountain bunched five of its seven hits for the game in the first three frames for the three tallies.

Ernest McCarter, playing in right field, started both scoring frames. He singled to open the second, advanced when Robert Munday reached first after the catcher dropped his third strike. Haynes sent McCarter home with an infield single and Munday scored as Wilson gained life on an error.

A pair of opposite field extra base blows accounted for the third run in the third.

With two away, right-handed hitting McCarter bashed a triple down the right field foul line and he scored when the left-handed swinging Munday powdered a double on the left field bank. Unaware of the ground rule, Munday legged his hit into a triple, but was sent back to second.

Kings Mountain missed another opportunity in the fifth when Lawrence Bolin opened with a single and two walks loaded the sacks. Lefty Helton came along in relief at this point to fan the final two batters. Helton continued to give Kings Mountain trouble, whiffing the first two in the sixth, and another southpaw, Gary Lemmond fanned the side in the eighth.

Juniors Play Four Straight At Home

Kings Mountain's juniors will play their only weekend home games of the first round here on Friday and Saturday, the first of four straight home games.

The pair of games include an Area Four, League A tussle with the highly-touted Charlotte Post 9-380 club on Saturday evening, and an exhibition contest with Lincoln-Cherryville's defending area champions on Friday night.

Both games are carded for 8 o'clock at City Stadium and mark the only Friday and Saturday night contests for the local juniors during the first round of play in June. All other weekend games for Coach Bill Powell's club are on the road.

The game with the Linc-Cherries was arranged this week due to both teams having byes in the seven-team league schedules for the night. Kings Mountain plays in the Southern Division (League A) of Area Four while Lincoln-Cherryville plays in the north group (League B).

Charlotte's Post 9-380 again is led by stars Gary Black and Dickie Kelly.

The Kings Mountain kids also will be at home early next week, playing old rivals Shelby and Belmont.

Pop Simmons brings his touted team to town for a Tuesday night contest, and Belmont plays here on next Wednesday night, June 14.

Faith Clinches Tie For R. A. Title First And Oak View Also Post Wins

The Faith club has clinched at least a tie for the title in the Kings Mountain Baptist R. A. Baseball League.

Winners of five straight games in the junior and intermediate circuit, Faith holds a two game edge over the runner-up teams as the regular-season heads into the final two weeks of the schedule.

Faith won its fifth straight in a wild 24-23 victory over Eastside on Saturday. The loop-leaders survived a 13-run first inning by Eastside to come back and win with some heavy hitting and scoring of their own through the middle frames. Faith trailed by 13-4 after two innings of play but kept rugging away.

Mike Bennett paced the winners with five for six, including three doubles. Bub Pearson rapped four for six.

Owens clubbed five for six for the losers, including a homer, and Welch and Bridges also banged round-trippers.

R. A. Baseball STANDINGS

Team	W	L	Pct.
Faith	5	0	1.000
First Baptist	3	2	.600
Macedonia	3	2	.600
Bethlehem	3	2	.600
Oak View	2	3	.400
Avails	2	3	.400
Eastside	1	3	.250
Oak Grove	0	4	.000

SATURDAY'S SCHEDULE

Macedonia at Davids Oak Grove at First Baptist. Faith at Bethlehem. Eastside at Oak View

Couch with a double led Macedonia.

Four Macedonia pitchers handed out a total of 18 walks and seven errors afield contributed to the First Baptist cause.

Steve Goforth fanned 14 batters in six and a third innings for the winners.

The linescore: F. Bap. 2(13)5 000 5-25-11-1 Macedonia 041 000 1-6-4-7 S. Goforth, T. Goforth and Raines; B. Mullinax, D. Sprouse, Medlin, Farris and Couch, D. Sprouse.

Oak View won its second game of the season, a 7-5 triumph over Bethlehem.

Donny Bumgardner rapped three for three, including a pair of homers, Jerry Bumgardner two hits and Haas a homer to lead the winners. The losers five knocks were evenly divided.

Jerry Bumgardner hurled the win, whiffing seven and walking six, with Sherrill coming on in relief to fan the final batter. Bess struck out 11 and walked five for the losers.

The linescore: Bethlehem 212 001 0-5-2-2 Oak View 312 021 1-7-7-4 Bess and Lay; J. Bumgardner, Sherrill and Haas.