

# Of Umps, Coaches And Winners....

Short stories from the world of sports:

**Number 1: CHUCK CLEMENTS** is an umpire. In a recent game here between Kings Mountain and Bessemer City, he called a runner out at first who was a good step past first base when the first baseman caught the throw. Yours truly was stationed by the first base coaches' box taking pictures and told Chuck we had a record of the play that would show he missed it. When KMHS Coach Barry Gibson showed Chuck the picture recently, just for fun, sure enough, there was the runner crossing first base and the ball was still in the air. Chuck, who had already admitted he could have been wrong, took it in style. "I've been in the business 45 years," said the Gastonia school principal, "and I've missed a lot of calls. Everybody misses them. The thing is, most umpires won't admit it." Although Chuck missed this one, don't think for a moment he's not one of the best umpires around. Leon Harrington, Chuck's umpiring partner, says he feels more comfortable with Chuck than any other ump he's ever worked with. Barry Gibson says, in a key game he'd rather have Chuck on the bases than anybody else he knows, because he stays right on top of the action.

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**Number 2: A STORY OF COURAGE.** Ralph (Puddin') Broome of Belmont is a baseball coach. For years, he's been coaching youth teams in and around Gaston County, most of the time for little or no pay. Broome had to have a leg amputated last winter because of a blood clot. But you can see him at every South Point High practice session and ballgame, assisting Red Raider head coach Phil Tate from his lawn chair position in the dugout. The coaching profession could use a lot more Puddin' Broomes.

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**Number 3: ANOTHER STORY OF COURAGE.** Mike Cabanias is a golfer from nearby Crest High School. He plays number two for the Chargers and usually shoots around bogey golf. That's not a great accomplishment compared to some of the sub-par high school golfers of today. The only thing is, Mike Cabanias was a polo victim as a child and walks every inch of the

golf course in braces. In this day when some athletes refuse to compete, it's good to see people of this character.

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**Number 4: ROBBIE MOORE** is a preacher, student and athlete... the type of young man any father would like to see his son grow up to be. Now, Robbie's taking on a new challenge, that of coach of the Post 155 American Legion Juniors. It's no secret the American Legion baseball program is on shaky ground, not only in this area but in many others. The Kings Mountain legion program can't be anything but better off because of Robbie Moore. The young men who play for him this summer, win or lose, will be thankful they had the opportunity to know him.

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**Number 5: ED GUY** is a school teacher and one of the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet. He's also a tennis coach, handling both the boys and girls teams at the local high school. He didn't go to college to be a coach. He coaches tennis because he loves the sport and he loves working with young men and women. His many years of efforts in building a successful program here is paying off as the Mountaineers are experiencing their greatest season ever. Guy gives all the credit to his players, like any good coach will. But the players know, and the fans know, that Guy's dedication and hard work has meant more than anything else. Of KM's two losses this year, one was to county rival Shelby and Guy and the Mountaineers feel they're a better team than the Lions. The Mounties can show their appreciation to a swell "guy" by winning the upcoming Bi-Conference tournament on Shelby's home court.

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**Number 6: MIKE BUMGARNER** is a high school honor student, a football player, a nice young man... the Robbie Moore type. He recently received an appointment to West Point. He's already talked to football coach Homer Smith about the possibility of playing quarterback for the Cadets. Throughout his high school football career, Bumgarner was bothered with injuries.



GARY STEWART

But he led the Mountaineers to their best three-year record (19-9-2) in over a decade. He was regarded as a dangerous passer but due to interceptions and not the greatest receivers in the world, his record wasn't that impressive except during his junior year, when he led the league in touchdown passes. But he has the talent, and if anybody can bring it out it's Homer Smith. But more than being a good passer, Bumgarner's a good leader. That, more than anything else, was the key to KM's good three-year record. It'll also be his greatest asset at West Point.

**Number 7: BUD BUMGARDNER** is a welding specialist, a school teacher and a volunteer assistant coach. He helps out wherever he can. What he's meant to Barry Gibson and the KMHS baseball team can't be expressed in a column. Like Ed Guy, he coaches because he loves the game and the athletes, not for money. He's the type person that would pay to get in the gate. He asks for no credit, but he deserves a lot.

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**Number 8: DEVOIL BUTCHER** is a high school and college umpire... a former professional ump who probably could have made the big leagues. But one night in a Western Carolinas League game he decided life was too short to take some of the cursing some pro ballplayers can dish out, so he decked a Rock Hill player and was suspended. After his suspension was lifted, he decided not to go back to the same thing. Butcher also likes to have fun, to play jokes, to laugh at other people. This story is about a laugh on him. At an umpire clinic recently, Butch was demonstrating how a plate umpire can throw his mask off without losing his

cap. "Grab the bars," Butch demonstrated, "pull the mask straight out and back over your head." He did, and his cap came off. A second try... cap came off. A third... cap came off. "Well, this is a new cap," Butch tried to cry as the gym full of umpires roared 'til they almost cried.

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**Number 9: QUITTERS... AND WINNERS:** By now, it's probably no secret that seven players quit the KMHS baseball team this spring. The main reason given was they weren't getting to play enough. This is one of the most discouraging things about covering high school sports. I can imagine how even more discouraging it is to coaches, who try as they may, find it hard to explain why it's sometimes necessary for players to wait their turn. Even though quitters make you feel bad, it's a good feeling to think of the ones that didn't quit... that waited their turn. People like Jimmy Fitts. Several years ago, he was playing second string at first base behind a young man named David Lancaster, a slugger. Fitts didn't quit. But when Lancaster broke his leg sliding into second, Fitts took over the first base job, led the league in hitting, made All-Conference and won the most valuable player award. Larry Hinson didn't quit either. As a youngster, he had polo in one hand, and it's withered to this day. But his dedication to his golf game brought him a college education and a spot on the PGA tour, and three pro victories. Steve Lancaster didn't quit either. A young man who has a lot of baseball talent, he's played most of his career with a bad back. But he didn't quit, even though most of his sophomore and junior years were spent on the bench. But this year he got his chance, he has a 3-0 pitching record and a batting average in the high .300's. Tim Whitaker didn't quit either. A catcher with a lot of talent, he's spent most of this year warming up the pitchers in the bullpen while Scott Ellis works the ballgame. But last Tuesday night, Ellis came to the game sick and Whitaker got his chance to play. He played a super defensive game and led the hitting attack as the Mountaineers wrapped up a conference playoff spot. And several other players, who are still riding the bench, didn't quit either. They're sticking it out. And they'll get their chance. And they'll come through.

## Crest Power-Hitting Ballclub

# KM Mountaineers Begin SWC Playoffs

Kings Mountain's Mountaineers open their bid for their second Southwestern Conference baseball championship in three years today at 4 p. m. at Crest High School against

a Charger team that features power hitting, strong pitching and outstanding defense.

The Mountaineers, who lost their first six non-conference games before

settling down to finish second in the Division One race against South Point, will go into the playoffs against the team that they whipped to get their winning ways going.

In their final non-conference game at Lancaster Field in late March, the Mountaineers surprised the Chargers 6-2 in one of their better efforts of the year. Coach Barry

Gibson hopes his charges can play the same type of baseball in the playoffs.

That loss was one of only three for the Chargers, who copped their first division baseball crown since entering the Southwestern Conference. Crest's only Division Two loss was to Chase and their only other non-conference defeat was to a strong Lincoln team.

The Chargers' strong point this spring has been their hitting. They're one of the highest-scoring high school teams in the state, having scored over 10 runs in six different ballgames. They scored 17 runs against R-S Central and 14 against both Cherryville and Shelby.

Centerfielder Woody Lovelace and catcher Bill Daves have been the big Crest hitters and RBI men this spring. Both have a home run swing and are hitting for high averages. Daves' home run accounted for both Crest runs in the loss to the Mountaineers.

Other starters for the Chargers are first baseman Tim Bowen, second baseman Chris Newton, shortstop Ivvie McFarland, third baseman Gary Downs, leftfielder Dennis Russ and rightfielder Kevin Patterson. Downs is one of the team's best clutch performers. McFarland is perhaps the best shortstop in the league and Russ is another power hitter who has two grand slam homers to his credit.

Coach W. E. Halyburton feels he has two of the league's top pitchers in righthanders Mike Green and Britt Mills. Mills' 6-1 record is one of the best in the SWC. Both players have a lot of experience in both high school and legion play.

If the Chargers have a weakness, it's their lack of speed. But, with their hitting, it doesn't affect them too much.

Although they probably can't match up with Crest as far as hitting home runs

is concerned, the Mountaineers also have a strong hitting attack. Their pitching, also, can probably stack up but the Mountaineers will have to make some improvement in their defensive game.

Coach Barry Gibson will probably open with righthander David Ray Robinson, who has lost only one conference game and that in relief. His other three losses were all in non-league play when the Mountaineers were doing a lot of experimenting.

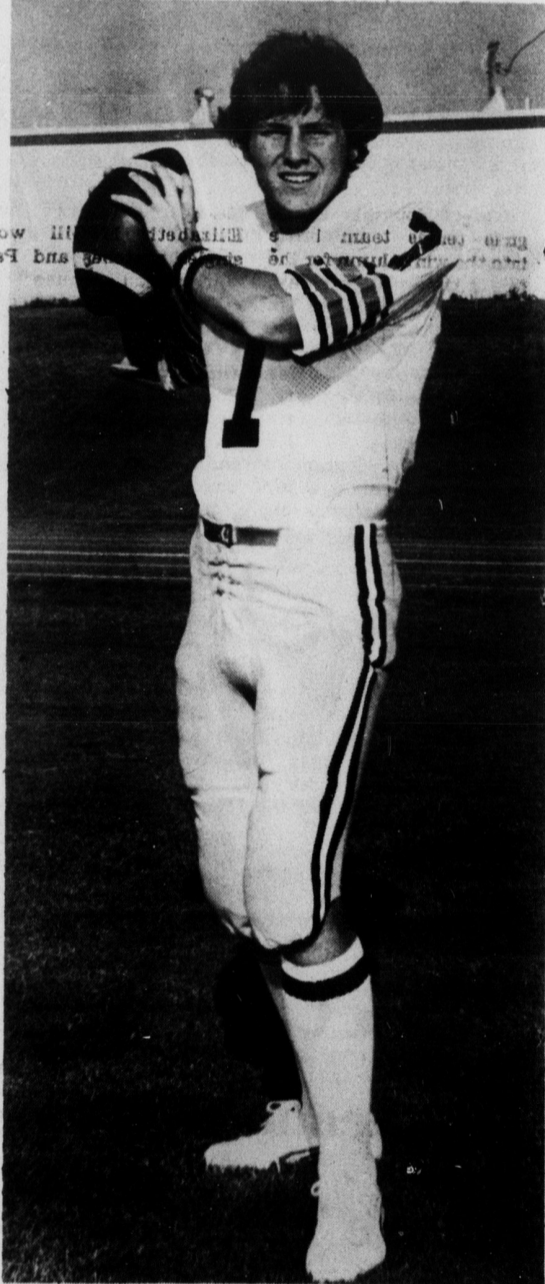
Lefty Steve Lancaster, who is 3-0, will probably get the starting nod Wednesday night when the two teams come to Lancaster Field for the second game of the three-game series. The third game, if needed, will be played Friday afternoon at Crest.

Lancaster, incidentally, went the distance to defeat the Chargers back in March and got the Mountaineers in the winning column for the first time. He probably made the best showing of any pitcher to face the Chargers sluggers this spring.

The Mountaineers have six players hitting over the .300 mark with Andy Loftin and Bryan White leading the way with .417 and .410 figures, respectively. Others over .300 include Robinson .379, Lancaster .371, Scott Ellis .338 and Jimmy Hall .327. Denny Bolin's not far behind with a .297 figure.

The Mountaineers have hit only three home runs this year (one each by Hall, Lancaster and Bruce Valentine) but they do get a lot of singles and doubles and they have the ability to run the basepaths.

The winner of the KM-Crest series will advance to the SWC finals against the winner of the South Point-Burns best of three series. The finals series will also be a best of three, as will the bi-conference and association championships.



MIKE BUMGARNER

## Mike Bumgarner KM Honor Athlete

Mike Bumgarner was named Kings Mountain High School's honor athlete at Thursday night's annual Shelby Chamber of Commerce Hall of Fame sports banquet at Gardner-Webb College.

The honor athletes from the four Cleveland County high schools are chosen on the basis of their excellence in the classroom and the athletic field. A senior at KMHS, Bumgarner was a three-year starter at quarterback and led the Moun-

taineers to their best record (19-9-2) in over a decade.

He led the Southwestern Conference in touchdown passes thrown (nine) during his junior season and finished second in the overall passing offense. His passing statistics slacked off during his senior year but his leadership ability helped lead the Mountaineers to an 8-3 record, their best in 12 years.

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Photo By Gary Stewart

**TAKES LEAD** - Kings Mountain's Steve Lancaster takes a lead off first base in recent Southwestern Conference baseball game. The Mountaineers, who

finished second in Division One, enter the SWC playoffs today at Crest High School. The two teams return here Wednesday night.

# Raiders Blank KM 2-0

Kings Mountain High's baseballers closed out regular season play Friday night at Davis Park in Belmont, losing a tough 2-0 decision to unbeaten South Point.

The victory gave South Point a final 10-0 Southwestern Conference

Division One mark and the top seeding going into the SWC playoffs against Burns. The Red Raiders are 13-0-1 overall.

The loss dropped KMHS to 7-3 in the division and 8-9 overall heading into this afternoon's opening round playoff game at Crest.

John Conner, the righthander who saved South Point's earlier 4-2 victory over the Mountaineers, went the distance Friday with a five-hitter. He walked only one and struck out nine.

David Ray Robinson and Ronnie Wilson of the

Mountaineers held the Red Raiders to just four hits. Robinson worked the first four innings and was tagged with the loss. Wilson came on in the bottom of the fifth and retired the last six Raiders in order.

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