

KMHS Girls Eyeing State Tourney Berth

By GARY STEWART
Managing Editor

Bruce Clark's first year of coaching girls sports has been a huge success.

His Kings Mountain High girls softball team is currently 19-1 overall and will begin play next week in the Southwestern 3-A Conference championship tournament.

The SWC champion and the other SWC team with the best overall record will advance to the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Tournament.

Clark not only expects his team to make the State Tournament field, but he is not being over-confident when he says the KM ladies can go all the way.

"Our goal at the beginning of the year, was to go undefeated and make it to the state playoffs," Clark said Tuesday while watching his team go through a practice session. "There's no team that can beat this team. If we lose another game, it will be because we beat ourselves with errors. That's the only reason we lost the one regular season game to Chase."

Kings Mountain, which won the Eastern Division title of the split SWC, will host the second place team from the Western Division (either Crest or East Rutherford) in the opening game of a best-of-three series beginning either Monday or Tuesday. The second game will be played away and the third game, if necessary, will be back in Kings Mountain. The winner will advance against the winner of the Chase-North Gaston game for the overall SWC title.

Kings Mountain's success this spring has been the result of experience and hard work. Clark has eight returnees from last year's team which tied for second in the division and made the SWC playoffs, and he has some talented sophomores and juniors who have filled in at key positions.

No less than six Mountaintettes are hitting over .500 and the team has received excellent pitching from Melanie Herndon (14-1) and Leslie Sellers (5-0 with five saves).

But the big key to the team's success has been the defense, which failed only in the 7-4 loss to Chase.

"After 20 games, we're giving up only 3.9 runs a game, which is excellent for slowpitch softball," says Clark.

Senior Pat Davis leads the team in hitting with a .556 average and has been All-Conference two years running at second base. Outfielder Melinda Roberts is also hitting over .500 and has over 40 runs batted in. "Roberts hits the ball as hard as any girl has ever hit a softball," says Clark.

First baseman Becky Bolt, catcher Tippy Curry and outfielders Cindy Bullock and Yvette Moore are also over .500 mark. Edie Herndon, a sophomore catcher, and Dawn Morris, a senior outfielder, are hitting over .500 off the bench.

Outfielder Leigh Anne Odell is probably the best leadoff hitter in the conference. She has come to bat over 75 times "and consistently gets on base," says Clark. She is also hitting over .500.

Other members of the team are Shannon Curry, a junior who has done a good job running the bases; Debbie Nance, who has improved tremendously and will be a big help next year; Susie Moore, a sophomore third baseman who has done an excellent job defensively, and Joanna Boheler, a junior shortstop who Clark calls his best defensive player.

Also contributing greatly to the team's success have been

managers Kim Hawkins and Stephanie Joy.

Clark, who also is assistant football coach at KMHS, has enjoyed his first association with girls sports.

"The difference in girls and boys is that girls work harder

when they're told to do something," Clark says. "The enthusiasm on this team has been terrific. We've had Saturday practices and late afternoon practices and they've never complained. The reason is winning creates some more desire."



EYEING STATE PLAYOFFS - Kings Mountain High's girls softball team is currently 19-1 and in the thick of the running for the Southwestern 3-A Conference title. The Mountaintettes open SWC playoff action next week

and hope to land a berth in the upcoming state playoffs. Coach Bruce Clark, kneeling, is joined by players, left to right, Becky Bolt, Tippy Curry, Leslie Sellers and Dawn Morris.

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Rotary Winner

Rotary edged the Lions 7-5 in the opening game of the Dixie Youth Major League baseball season Tuesday night at Deal Street Park.

Reid hurled the victory and also contributed a double to the Rotary plate attack. Dellinger had a single and double, Brannon added a single, Young a double, Reynolds a triple, Melton a single and Hendrix a single. Whittington had a double and single, Cash two singles, Breakfield a double and single and Green a home run for the losers.



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KMHS Girls Whip Crest

Kings Mountain High's girls softball team closed out regular season play last Friday with a 12-8 win over Crest.

Melanie Herndon hurled the victory and Leslie Sellers earned a save.

Pat Davis led the hitting with 3-for-5. Becky Bolt was 2-for-3 with two runs batted in and Melinda Roberts was 2-for-4 with a two-run homer.