

Clark

From Page 1B

the entire season, and that showed the kind of character these players have."

Clark said his first season presented a lot of surprises. The biggest surprises were the heavy hitters who clubbed a school record 45 home runs and kept the fans excited all year long.

"But winning has not been a surprise," he said. "Winning by such large margins has been a surprise, but we knew we had talented players all along."

Although the long balls excite everyone, Clark said he's been equally pleased with the performance of his pitchers and defense.

"Pitching, for the most part, has been very much overlooked due to our offensive performance," he said. "The kids who have carried us with their pitching have responded well and gotten very little credit."

"Stuart Spires is 11-2, Todd McDaniel 9-4 with nine saves, and Keith Allen is 2-1 with three saves," he said. "Obviously, that's good pitching. At the same time, you have to say that the reason they've got those records is that, for the most part, we've played very solid defense, and that was our number one priority going into the season. We wanted to learn how to play good defense."

Clark said he spoke of only two goals to his team early in the season. First, he wanted to see the program turned around, and secondly, he wanted to qualify for the state playoffs. The Mountaineers qualified for the state by finishing in the top three in the conference.

"Then, we knew that when we got into the state, anything could happen," said Clark. "All of this has been gravy, and now we just want to go out there this week and play good, solid baseball and, hopefully, win the state championship."

Clark credits much of the success of the team to its senior leadership. "This is the best group of seniors I've ever worked with," he said. "They show tremendous leadership...not really vocal, but by example. Toby Deaton, who hit .056 last year, is still leading off and hitting .446, is second on the team in stolen bases and has just had a super year. Dale Greene continues to be Mr. Consistent at third base and with the bat, and Stuart Spires and Todd McDaniel have done an excellent job on the mound. Ken Crook has been a marathon guy behind the plate. Chris Morris has accepted his role as a backup catcher and pinch-hitter and every time he's called upon, he does a great job. The seniors have made the difference this year."

Of course, when Clark begins talking about his underclassmen, he has to lead off with Brannon.

"He's just a phenomenal worker when it comes to hitting the baseball," said Clark. "He works hard every day, both in practice and on his own. He holds a state high school home run record and we hold one as a team because of the fact that he's hit so many himself, and all that's worth the extra time he's put in."

"Chris Henson may not be the finesse player that you might look for in a second baseman, but he's a hustler, and a competitor, and he very well may be the toughest out that we have. He's been to bat 101 times and has only struck out five times. He's a tremendous competitor at the plate and has 10 stolen bases. He's a little big man."

"Chad and Chris Plonk are probably the two hardest swingers in high school ball today," Clark added. "When they make contact they make things happen. Chad's coming off an injury and seems to be well now. Chris's home run Saturday night may have been just what he needed to really scorch in the state championship series."

"Chris Bullock has had a tremendous defensive year in leftfield," Clark went on. "He's also been very con-

Tennis Clinic Slated At KMHS

Kathy James, Diane Dooley and Brad Jones will sponsor a tennis camp June 13-17 at the Kings Mountain High courts. The camp will run from 9 a.m. until noon and youngsters in the third grade and above are eligible to participate. The fee is \$25.

Each participant will receive instruction in the basic fundamentals of tennis. At the end of the week there will be a mini-tournament and trophies will be awarded.

For information, see Kathy James at 900 North Ramseur Street or call Brad Jones at 739-7263.

Field Day Held

The annual Field Day and Family Picnic for Head Start students and their families attracted 300 to Shelby City Park recently.

The 140 children enjoyed stories by Bill Hager, Community Schools Coordinator with Kings Mountain District Schools, musical entertainment by Rogers Sisters and magical fun by Keith West, "The Wizard."

Special guests included Mr. Hager, Joey Hopper, principal of North School, Linda Hendricks, principal of Lattimore School, Tropzie McClune, principal of Number Three school and Mayor Arrie Ellis of Earl.

Head Start staff and children wore t-shirts printed with the Head Start logo.

A picnic lunch was served at the Jaycee Picnic area, courtesy of the Fraternal Order of Police, One-Stop Stores, Cleveland County, Shelby City and Kings Mountain Schools. Beverage was provided by McDonald's of Kings Mountain and Gastonia. Door prize drawings were sponsored by Carowinds. The two winners each received two free passes to Carowinds.

Head Start is only partially funded by federal funds and depends on local volunteers and contributions to make up 20% of program costs required from the community.

sistent as far as making contact with the ball and we need him to continue to come through.

"Chip Cash is getting better every day. He got off to a slow start because of some discipline problems and an injury, but he has fought back and worked into the starting lineup, and he's as big a homerun threat as anybody on our team. Chip's arm has helped us a lot. He's thrown a lot of people out on the bases. He and Toby Deaton have the two best arms on our squad, and they've made some pressure packed throws."

Clark also had high words of praise for his reserves, who have contributed a lot both during the regular season and the playoffs.

"Jon Reid is the best glove man on the team," he said. "When he develops his hitting a little more, he's going to be a big threat to our opposition."

"Kevin Whittington is definitely the shortstop of the future. He's just a sophomore and is going to be a good one."

"Shane Sessions is one of the finest individuals I've ever coached. He's an inspiration to our other players."

"Eric Peppard has great speed. He has had to fit himself into a reserve role, but he's a good base stealer and when his defense comes around he'll be a fine ballplayer."

"Daniel Honeycutt is playing baseball for the first time and started several games early in the year. He's our number one guy off the bench and is getting better every game."

"Bryan Dellinger is our team comedian. He keeps everybody loose and has a good time at what he does. He has tremendous speed for a guy his size."

Raymond Couch is only a ninth grader, but he's probably the gutsiest fellow I've ever seen. He takes a lot of hits behind the plate, but in a year or so he's going to give people up here a fit."

"Keith Allen has had just a great year. He had a 12 strikeout, shutout game earlier in the year and has been Mr. Consistent when it comes to throwing strikes. The people call him Doctor K. We're looking for him to be our ace next year, and maybe even sooner than that."

Clark said he appreciates the support shown by the fans all year and urges them to come out in full force for the state championship.

"We've had great community support, both from the inspirational point of view and financial point of view," Clark said. "I just can't say enough about what people have done to get the field and facilities back to where they should have been. Dr. Robert McRae and Dr. Larry Allen have bent over backwards to help us from an administrative point of view, and Coach Denny Hicks keeps things lined up for us over there. It's been a real smooth season."

"The community support for our players and for our success has probably been more than we ever imagined," he went on. "We told our kids that if they continued to win the crowds would get bigger, but we never thought they'd get over a thousand. We're looking for ever bigger crowds starting Wednesday."

"But this is what Kings Mountain needed," he went on. "The town was hungry for another winner. It's been quite some time since we've had someone advance this far. In 1985 and '86, when the football team was in the state playoffs, we saw what community support would do for a ball team. I think Kings Mountain is probably the best small town for backing teams that I've ever seen."

Clark praised his assistant coaches for also putting in a lot of time and effort to help turn the program around.

"It's taken a tremendous effort on their part," he said. "I don't tell them enough about the fine job they've done. I appreciate it, the players appreciate it and I'm sure the community appreciates it. A head coach is only as good as his assistants, and Ronny Funderburke, Rusty Bumgardner and Bud Bumgardner have done an unbelievable job and put in a tremendous amount of hours to make this season a success."



GOLF CHAMPIONS - Bo Ballard, left, and John Gamble won the championship A flight in the fourth annual Shrinettes Golf Tournament last weekend at Kings Mountain Country Club. Proceeds benefit Shrine charities.

Gamble And Ballard Win Shrinettes Golf Tourney

Johnny Gamble and Bo Ballard won the championship A flight in the fourth annual White Plains Shrinettes Golf Tournament Sunday at Kings Mountain Country Club. Hayne and Lee Neisler finished second.

Mitch and John Howze won a playoff over Randy Kinder and David Clary to win the first flight; Jim Lybrand and Carol Ledford won the second flight and Randy Norton and David Clary finished second.

Lib Gault and Dot Mobley won the third flight and Rick Moore and Arnold Bivins were second.

Phil Russ and Darrell Austin Jr. won the championship B flight and Brady Goforth and David Neisler were second.



BASEBALL WEEK - Mayor Kyle Smith, right, has proclaimed this week Baseball Week in Kings Mountain and is pictured presenting a copy of the presentation to KMHS Coach Bruce Clark. Clark's Mountaineers host Rockingham County tonight, Thursday and Friday in the state 3-A championship series.

Mayor Proclaims KMHS Week

Mayor Kyle Smith has proclaimed this week "Kings Mountain High Baseball Week" and urges city and area citizens to support the Mountaineers in their quest for the North Carolina High School Athletic Association 3-A championship Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

The Mountaineers will be battling Rockingham County High School of Reidsville in a best of three series. All games will be played at KM's Lancaster Field.

Smith made a personal proclamation and presented it to KMHS head coach Bruce Clark.

"I have been probably as enthusiastic supporter of Kings Mountain High School athletics as anybody in our city," Smith noted. "I have witnessed football, basketball and baseball games at their finest since I have been a citizen of this fine city."

"Kings Mountain's current baseball team is playing this week in the state finals. I urge all of our citizens to go out and support the team Wednesday, and perhaps Thursday will be the final night."

See Mayor, 4-B

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