

CELEBRATION TIME - Kings Mountain's Dixie Youth Major League all-stars greet Chris Hutchins at home plate after he slammed a long home run in state tournament last week in Bessemer City. The KM team defeated Leland Friday for the state title and a berth in the World Series beginning Saturday in Mississippi. Kings Mountain faces Greer, S.C., Monday at 7 p.m. in the opening round.

McCarter Helps Florida Team Win Majors Crown

Kings Mountain not only won the Dixie Youth Major League (11 and 12 year old) state championship this year, but the town can also claim part of Bay County, Florida's state championship in the Dixie Majors (17-18 year old) division.

Christian McCarter, son of former Kings Mountain resident Jerry McCarter, who played sports at Kings Mountain High School, was the ace pitcher for the Bay County team which won the Florida title and is participating this week in the Majors World Series in Laurel, Miss.

Christian lives in Panama City, Fla., with his mother, Mrs. Elaine Cunningham, and Jerry lives in Detroit, Mich. Christian is a rising senior and plays all the sports and has been contacted by several colleges about playing for them. He

attends Bay County High School in Panama City.

McCarter hurled the state championship 11-3 victory over Brooksville last Friday night at Gulf Coast Community College's Commodore Stadium.

"It feels terrific," McCarter said after the win.

Coach Mike Wolfe's Bay County team carried a 32-21 overall record into the World Series.

Bay County's starter, Tyrone Miller, lasted only five batters in the championship game but McCarter came on to stuff a potential first-inning disaster with a strikeout of Jose Maura. McCarter had thrown 130 pitches in a seven inning victory just two days earlier, but the right-hander met the challenge, mowing down Maura with a pair of belt-high fastballs.

"When I walked out to the

mound, I could see Christian out there getting his arm loose," said Coach Wolfe. "He's that kind of kid. He wants to meet a challenge head-on."

The strikeout was the key to the game, noted losing Brooksville starter Greg Woods. McCarter scored a run during the rally and then went back to the mound in the bottom of the inning and fanned the side.

Bay County scored five runs in the top of the fourth to break the game open.

McCarter finished with a six-hitter, three of those coming in the last inning.

ISA World Series Scheduled

The annual Independent Softball Association Major Open World Series will be held at Gastonia's Sims Legion Park August 18-20.

Carl Champion of Kings Mountain and Art Shoemaker of Belmont are coordinating the event in cooperation with the Gastonia Rangers and the Gastonia Jaycees. All profits from the double-elimination event will benefit Holy Angels Nursery in Belmont.

The tournament will feature some of the top slowpitch softball teams in the nation. Heading the list of entries is Steele's Silver

Bullets, which has won several world titles.

Steele's will battle the Gaston County All-Stars, some of the top slowpitch talent in the area, in a special exhibition game on August 18 at 7 p.m. Regular tournament action will get underway at 8:30 with the Gaston All-Stars facing Action Awards of Atlanta, Ga. The final game on Friday at 10 p.m. will see Cannon's of Savannah, Ga., battle Ritchie's of Harrisburg.

Saturday's action gets underway at 10 a.m. and runs throughout the day and night. Winner's bracket

games will be played on the Sims Park baseball diamond and loser's bracket games will be played on the softball field behind the Sims Park parking area.

Sunday's action will get underway at 9 a.m. The championship game is slated for 4:30 p.m.

Some of the other nationally-known teams in the event are Sunbelt Plastics of Centerville, Ga., New Construction of Shelbyville, Ind., Maraoidi of Pittsburgh, Pa., Lighthouse of Atlanta, Ga., Starpath of Monticello, Ky., and Bell Corporation of Tampa, Fla.

Next Stop: World Series

Dixie Youth Stars Win State Tourney

Kings Mountain's Dixie Youth All-Stars defeated Leland 19-10 Friday night in Bessemer City to win the State Tournament and earn a berth in the World Series beginning Saturday in Hattiesburg, Miss.

The KM entry will face Greer, S.C., in its opening round game next Monday at 7 p.m. All KM games will be broadcast by Scott Neisler and Jonas Bridges on WKMT Radio.

The KM team, which was handed its only loss by Leland three nights earlier, bounced out of the loser's bracket Wednesday to defeat Albemarle 19-7 and earn a bye into the finals. Leland defeated Columbus County Thursday night to earn a title shot against KM.

Leland struck for seven runs off KM starter Bryan LeFevers and relief pitcher Sidney Bridges in the second inning to take a 7-5 lead, but KM came back to grab an 8-7 lead on a three-run homer by Bridges in the third and the locals never trailed again.

Bridges withstood a three-run rally in the third as Leland cut the margin to 11-10 and the KM batters broke the game open with three runs in the fifth and five in the sixth.

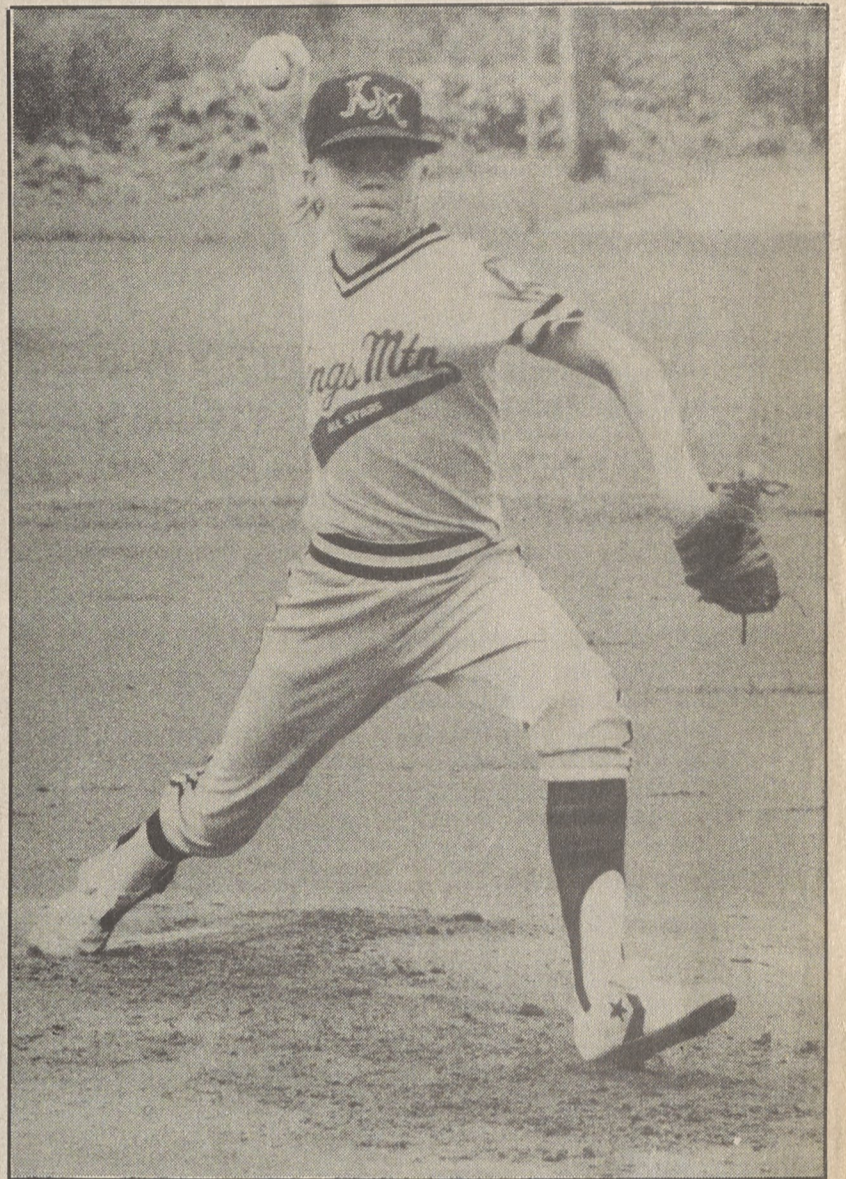
Sharee Hopper, who had a strong showing in each of his mound appearances during the double-elimination event, came on to pitch in the bottom of the fifth and no-hit the Leland nine the rest of the way. He walked one batter in the fifth but he was erased on a double play, and another reached on an error with one out in the sixth but was erased on a fielder's choice.

Kings Mountain came up with several good defensive plays during the contest to keep the Leland team in check. Catcher Michael Cobb gunned down a runner who was trying to steal second with the score at 11-10 in favor of KM in the fourth. KM's defense committed only two errors.

Meanwhile, the KM bats, which are swinging at a near .400 clip in tournament action, collected 13 hits, including two each by Bridges, Kevin Melton, Hopper and Duane Patterson, and one each by LeFevers, Cobb, Chris Hutchins, Todd Martin and Timmy Harrelson.

Kings Mountain smashed three home runs, including back-to-back dingers by Hutchins and Martin in the second inning.

KM had grabbed a 2-0 lead in the first on Patterson's two-run single and scored three in the top of the second to make it 5-0 before Leland came back with seven in the bottom of the second to take the lead. Hutchins' homer, his second of the tournament, also scored Cobb, who had singled, and Martin's solo shot made it 5-0.



HURLS KM VICTORY - Duane Patterson went the distance in Kings Mountain's victory over Albemarle in the semi-finals of the State Dixie Youth Majors Baseball Tournament Wednesday in Bessemer City. Three KM pitchers, all running low on innings, combined for the win Friday as KM defeated Leland for the state title.

KM trailed 7-5 going into the third but Hutchins drew a walk with one out. After Martin walked, Bridges homered to put KM on top 8-7. Travis Queen walked, Melton and Hopper singled and Patterson doubled as KM scored three more runs to make it 11-7.

The KM stars added three more runs in the fifth on a double by Melton, a walk to Hopper and a Leland error, and KM closed out its part of the scoring in the sixth, scoring five runs on a single by Harrelson, double by Bridges, two walks and a Leland error.

The KM stars grabbed a 2-0 lead in the first inning and were never headed in eliminating Albemarle Wednesday night. Patterson went the distance on the mound, scattering seven hits and striking out six.

Kings Mountain collected 20 hits, including four each by Bridges and Melton, three by Travis Queen, two each by Hopper and Patterson, and one each by LeFevers, Cobb, Harrelson, Hutchins and Martin.

Bridges singled and scored on a

double by Melton, and Melton scored on Patterson's single as KM went up 2-0 in the first. Queen and Melton singled and Queen scored on a fielder's choice to make it 3-0 in the third.

Kings Mountain broke the game open in the fourth, scoring six runs to take a 9-1 lead. KM added six in the fifth and four in the sixth.

Eleven men went to the plate in the six-run fourth inning. Bridges, Melton, Cobb, Harrelson and Hutchins each had a hit.

Martin, Bridges, and Hopper had singles, Melton added a double and Patterson slammed a long homerun to highlight the six-run fifth inning rally, and Queen and Melton singled and Bridges and Hopper homered as KM closed the scoring out with four in the sixth.

Kings Mountain finished the state tourney with a .397 team batting average and 12 homeruns. Eight players are hitting over .350, led by Cobb at .583, Melton .545, Bridges .522, Hopper .471, Queen .429, Martin .400, Hutchins .385, Harrelson .375 and Patterson .368.



SIGNS WITH WINGATE - Kings Mountain High baseball standout Dale Greene signed a scholarship with Wingate College last week at KMHS. Looking on, left to right, are KMHS Coach Bruce Clark, Greene's mother, Diane Allmond, and KMHS Principal Jackie Lavender.

Kings Mountain's Greene Gets Wingate Scholarship

Kings Mountain High baseball standout Dale Greene has inked a scholarship with Wingate College.

Assistant Coach Ron Nash of Wingate was in Kings Mountain Thursday to sign the two-time All-Southwestern Conference third baseman. Coach Bruce Clark, Greene's mother Diane Allmond, and KMHS Principal Jackie Lavender witnessed the signing.

Greene was a starter for three years for the Mountaineers and this past season helped lead them to their first State 3-A championship. He led the SWC in hitting his junior year with a .400 average and five homeruns, and was the number two hitter his senior year with a .444 average and four homeruns.

Coach Clark called Greene "Mr. Consistent", noting that he averaged over .400 for his entire three-year career. He hit .375 as a sophomore.

"He had a great eye for strikes and his defense came a long way," Clark noted. "He was a leader through example and hustle. He will be missed in the clutch. When we needed contact, we could always count on Dale."

Greene struck out only five times in 104 plate appearances, Clark noted.

"It's an honor for me for Dale Greene to go to Wingate," said Clark, who is a Wingate graduate. "He can play baseball and he's also a good person. Wingate is suited for him. They have people there that care

about you and you get looked at both academically and athletically."

Clark pointed out that several former Wingate baseball players have signed professional contracts. "Many people look upon the NAIA as a lesser brand of baseball, but the NAIA has produced as many professional baseball players as the NCAA," Clark said.

Greene said he chose Wingate over several area colleges, including the University of North Carolina.

"It's close to home and I think I can play a lot there as a freshman," he said. "I think I'm going to enjoy it."

Greene said Coach Ron Christopher has told him that he'll lose his third through sixth hitters after next year, including his starting third baseman, and Greene will have a good shot at a starting position his sophomore season.

Greene has been recognized throughout the high school and American Legion scene as a heavy hitter, but he says his biggest asset is his love for the game of baseball.

"I've been playing baseball since I was five years old, and I just love to play," he said. "My parents have always supported me and I've played for a lot of coaches who care about you. I'm just happy to get the opportunity to play college ball. A lot of people love the game but never get that opportunity."