



HEAD BUTT AT THIRD BASE - Kings Mountain's Robbie Ruff, left, slides head first into third base while East Gaston's third baseman Alan Bolin tries to dive back to third to apply the tag in first round game in Gaston Neighbors Baseball Tournament Monday at

Hunter Huss High School. The Mountaineers scored four runs in the bottom of the seventh to win 8-7. KM was slated to play South Point Wednesday and will play again Friday at either 5 p.m. or 7:30.

Gaston Neighbors Tournament

Melton's double gives KM 8-7 win

Pinch-hitter Brad Melton drilled a two-run double to deep center-field with two outs in the bottom of the seventh inning to give Kings Mountain's Mountaineers an 8-7 victory over East Gaston in the opening round of the Gaston Neighbors Baseball Tournament Monday afternoon at Hunter Huss High in Gastonia.

The Mountaineers were to battle South Point, a first round winner over Cherryville, in the second round Wednesday at 5 p.m. The tournament continues through Friday night.

Kings Mountain rallied for four runs in the bottom of the seventh to score their first win over East Gaston this year. The Warriors had beaten the Mountaineers in two earlier non-conference contests.

Tommy Payne, the third of three KM hurlers, got the win and also started the winning rally with a leadoff home run over the left field fence. It was the first home of the year for the Mountaineers, who had clubbed 90 home runs over the past two seasons.

After Payne's blast, which cut the East Gaston lead to 7-5, the Mountaineers got back into the game on East Gaston errors. After Donald Bell fanned for the first out, Mike Smith drew a base on balls. He tried to steal second and was a dead out but the East Gaston second baseman dropped the throw from the catcher.

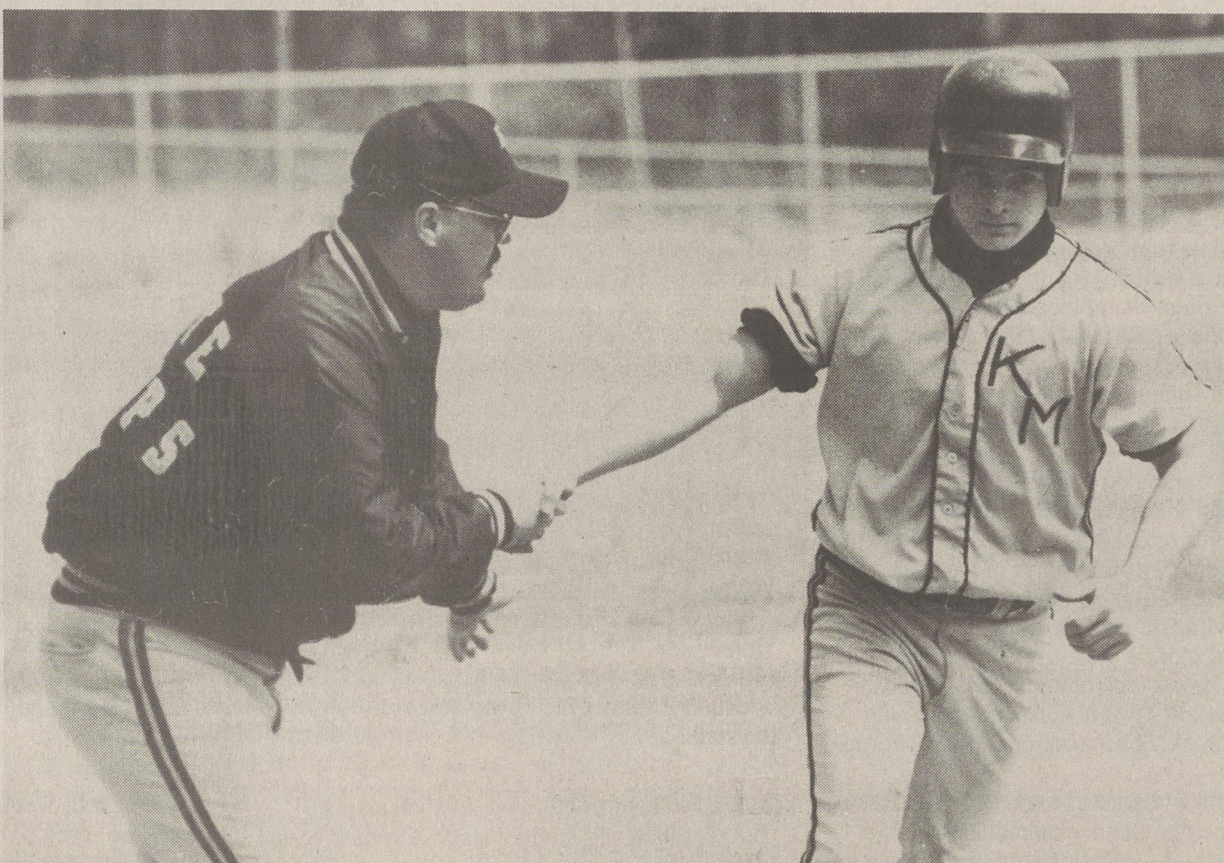
Rick Marr and Stephen Fisher reached on errors to load the bases. Robbie Ruff's grounder to short forced Fisher at second and scored Smith from third and then Melton, pinch-hitting for T.G. Goforth, slammed the first pitch to him deep over the centerfielder's head and off the 360-foot sign in dead centerfield to drive home Marr and Ruff with the winning tallies.

Ironically, it was Kings Mountain's errors that allowed East Gaston to get back into the game in the top of the sixth. The Warriors, trailing 4-3, struck for four runs to take the 7-4 lead into the seventh. Two errors to lead off the inning, a walk and another error got the Warrior rally going off KM south-paw Donald Bell and Coach Bruce Clark of the Mounties called on Payne for relief. David Forrester and Michael Mahadeo followed with consecutive singles which produced the runs.

The game see-sawed back and forth from the beginning. KM grabbed a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the first on singles by Ruff and Damon Putnam but East Gaston tied it off KM starter David Jenkins in the second on an error and singles by Jerry Brooks and David Hall.

KM was back in business in the bottom of the inning, taking a 2-1 lead on Rick Marr's double and Ruff's RBI single to left.

The Warriors moved ahead 3-2 in the third, scoring twice on a fielder's choice and Allen Bolin's long home run over the left-center-field fence, his sixth of the year



HOME RUN TROT - Kings Mountain coach Bruce Clark congratulates Tommy Payne as he rounds third and heads for home after slamming a solo home run which ignited a four-run seventh inning rally which gave the Mountaineers an 8-7 victory over East Gaston in the Gaston Neighbors Tournament Monday afternoon at Hunter Huss. The tournament continues through Friday.

and fourth in the last two ball-games.

Kings Mountain tied it at 3-all in the fourth as Bell singled, stole second and scored on a single to center by Fisher.

The Mountaineers scored again in the fifth to take a 4-3 lead and set the stage for the two big rallies in the final two innings. Payne walked with one away, moved to third on Bell's double to left and scored on Mike Smith's slicing single down the rightfield line.

Ruff finished with 3-for-4 to lead the KM attack. Bell had two hits and Melton, Putnam, Payne, Smith, Marr and Fisher added one apiece.

Coach Clark praised the Mountaineers for their character and never-say-die brand of baseball.

"We dug ourselves a big hole but we kept coming back," he said. "When you don't quit good things like this happen."

Score by innings: R-H-E
EG 012 004 0 7-11-4
KM 110 110 4 8-11-4

Presley, Forrester (7), Brown (7) and Davis; Jenkins, Bell (3), Payne (6) and Marr. WP - Payne (3-2). LP - Brown.

Mountaineers edge Raiders

Kings Mountain's Mountaineers regained a share of the Southwestern 3-A Conference lead Saturday afternoon with a 5-3 victory over previously unbeaten South Point in Belmont.

The Mountaineers, South Point and East Rutherford now share the league lead with 3-1 records. The Mountaineers, who are competing in the Gaston Neighbors Tournament this week at Hunter Huss High in Gastonia, will resume SWC play April 9 at 4:30 at Burns.

Kings Mountain grabbed a 2-0 lead in the first inning off Tim Brown of the Raiders. KM never trailed but had to hold off the Raiders, who scored twice to cut into a 5-1 KM lead, in the bottom of the sixth.

Stephen Fisher started for Bruce Clark's lads and got the win. David Jenkins came on in the sixth inning and earned a save.

Damon Putnam and T.G. Goforth got two hits each to lead an eight-hit KM attack. Robbie Ruff, Donald Bell, Jenkins and Mike Smith added one hit apiece.

Putnam singled home Caja Ormond, who had walked, and Jenkins doubled home Putnam to give the Mountaineers a 2-0 lead in the top of the first.

Fisher hit South Point's designated hitter Mickey Sanford to open the fourth, and Sanford later scored on a single by Brent Jones to cut the KM margin to 2-1.

The Mountaineers struck for three in the top of the sixth to put

the win on ice. Putnam led off with a single, moved to second on an error, stole third and scored when Smith reached on an error. Smith

See Mounties, 7-A

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