

Mounties host state playoff game Tuesday

Kings Mountain's Mountaineers held off a determined Burns team in the final inning to defeat the Bulldogs 11-7 in the two teams' final regular season Southwestern 3-A Conference baseball game Thursday night at Burns.

The victory gave Coach Bruce Clark's Mountaineers a final 11-1 conference record. The Mountaineers won the title by three games over Shelby and East Rutherford, who tied for second place. Kings Mountain finished the regular season with a 17-3 overall record.

The Mountaineers were scheduled to face North Gaston last night in the semi-finals of the SWC tournament at Shelby. The Mountaineers had a first round bye. North Gaston defeated Burns 12-8 in the first round while Shelby edged R-S Central 4-3 and South Point nipped East Rutherford 10-9.

The Kings Mountain-North Gaston winner will face the Shelby-South Point winner Friday at 7:30 at Shelby for the tournament championship.

"It would be nice to win the tournament but we're not going to get all tied up in winning it," said Coach Clark. "What we're excited about is the state tournament which begins next week."

The Mountaineers will host a first round game next Tuesday night against the #2 team from the Foothills Conference, either West Iredell or Wilkes Central. At this point, West Iredell is #2 but still has a chance to overtake Wilkes Central for the conference championship.

"It's been super fun getting ready to play in the state again," said Clark. "We took a year off last year even though we felt like we got jipped. But it's fun being there again and our kids are really excited. Everybody's looking forward to it and we're looking forward to get-

ting back home."

The Mountaineers grabbed a 5-0 lead after two innings Thursday at Burns but the Bulldogs' Eddie Wellmon wouldn't allow the Mountaineers to break the game open. He accounted for all seven Burns runs with a three-run homer in the third inning and a grand-slam in the seventh.

But the Mountaineers, who collected 11 hits, had enough power to hold the "Dogs back. David R. Jenkins continued his torrid hitting pace with a home run and double, and Damon Putnam and Robbie Ruff went 3-for-4 each with Ruff getting his ninth hit in his last 11 at-bats.

David C. Jenkins worked the first six innings for the Mountaineers to get the win, and Shane Webb came on in the seventh to get a save.

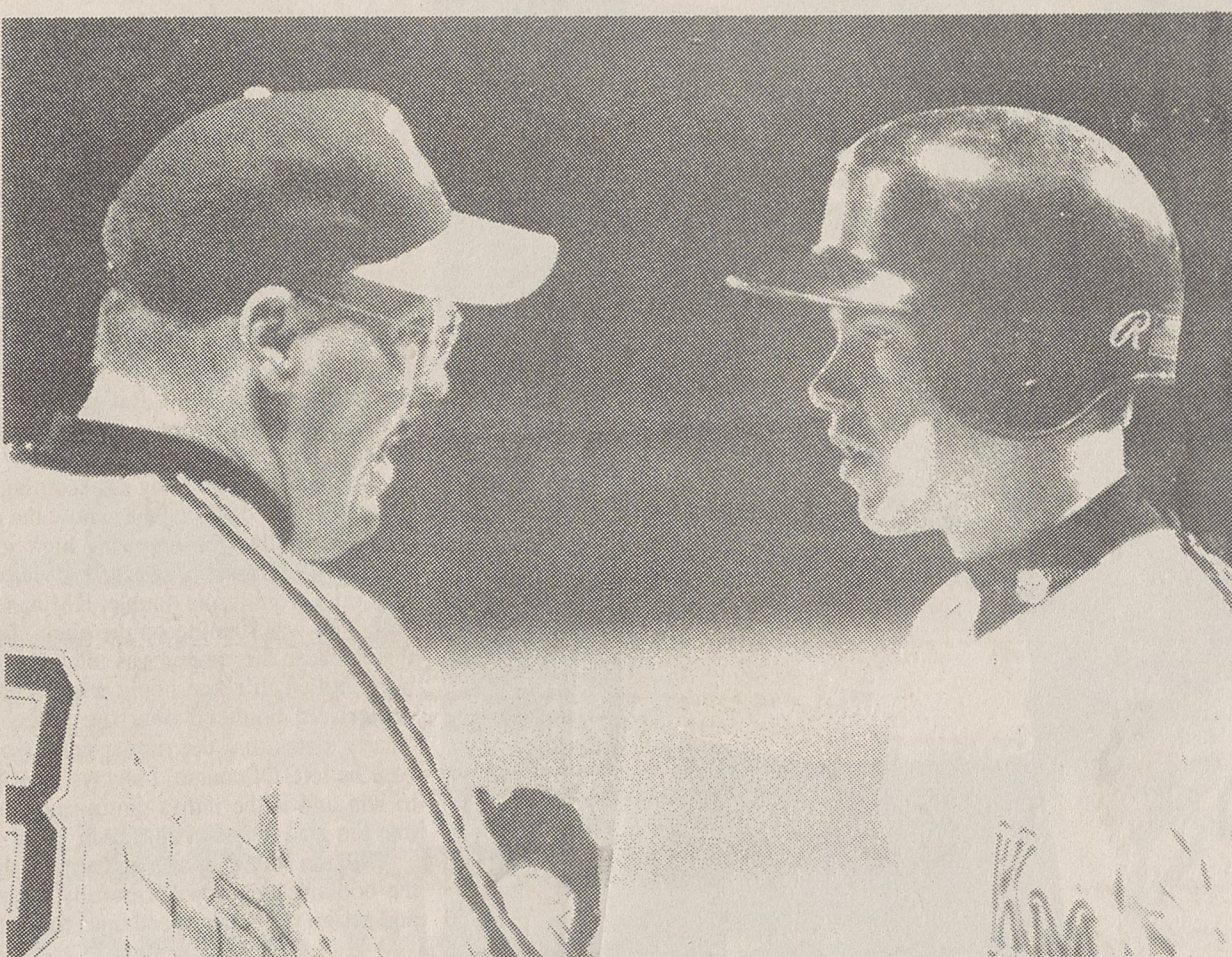
"David C. Jenkins looked as good as he has all year," said Clark. "He kept the ball down but made a mistake with Wellmon. Then Shane did the same thing with him in the last inning. They both got fast balls up in the strike zone where he could drive it."

"Other than that, we played a very good game," Clark added. "We carried 19 players with us and everybody got to play. It's neat in the fact that our goal was to finish 2-0 in the conference and we did that and at the same time every player got to play a lot."

Again, Clark was pleased with his hitting attack and the Mountaineers' ability to manufacture runs.

"Robbie Ruff's 9-for-11 since the South Point game," Clark said, "and the middle of our batting order is really ripping the ball. If we can continue to get Robbie on base, with the speed he's got and the way our three, four and five hitters and hitting you have to believe good things are going to happen."

Going into last night's game, the



Kings Mountain High baseball coach Bruce Clark talks over some strategy with TeeGee Goforth during recent game at Lancaster Field. The Southwestern 3-A Conference champion Mountaineers will host the #2 team from the Foothills Conference in the opening round of the state 3-A playoffs Tuesday at 7:30.

Mountaineers had a .301 batting average with six starters hitting over the .300 mark. David R. Jenkins leads the way with a .468 average and five home runs. Caja Ormand is hitting .353, Putnam .339, Mike Smith .327, Todd Warc .319 and Stephen Fisher .306.

Fisher heads the mound staff with a 9-0 record and 1.77 earned run average. David C. Jenkins is 4-0 and Benji Ingle, David R. Jenkins, Rick Marr and Robert Wingo have one win apiece.

The Mountaineers have accomplished their goal of winning the SWC without the pitching services of David R. Jenkins, who has worked only 3 2/3 innings because of shoulder problems. But Clark reports that Jenkins has been released from the doctor and is throwing without pain and could be a big factor in the team's drive for the state championship.

Score by innings: R-H-E
KM 320 110 4 11-11-1
B 003 000 4 7-9-4

David C. Jenkins, Shane Webb (7) and Chris Rider, Kevin Melton (4); Costner, Wellman (1), Murray (4), Hoyle (7) and Blanton. WP - Jenkins. LP - Costner. HR - Burns: Wellmon 2 (5). KM - Jenkins (5).

At Burns today

Netters edge close to title

Kings Mountain High's tennis team took a giant step toward a second straight Southwestern 3-A Conference championship during the past week with key victories over South Point and East Rutherford.

Last Wednesday, the Mountaineers edged South Point 5-4 in a six-hour match which gave the Mountaineers sole possession of first place. Until that match the Mountaineers and Red Raiders were both unbeaten against conference opponents.

Tuesday afternoon, the Mountaineers swept five of six matches against East Rutherford to win 5-1 and run their conference record to 5-0.

Coach Chris Cole's Mountaineers can wrap up the title Thursday afternoon at Burns when they face the Bulldogs in their regular season finale.

The Mountaineers open state dual team tournament action Saturday at home against Concord, the #2 seed from the South Piedmont Conference. Next Wednesday and Thursday, the Mountaineers will compete in the Western Regional Tournament at T.C. Roberson High in Asheville.

"I'm real proud of the team this year," said Coach Cole. "All the players have worked hard. I also

appreciate the outstanding coaching effort of Jamie Lakey and David Dellinger. I've gone through two operations this year and their help was greatly needed, and appreciated."

KM 5, S. POINT 4 (Singles)

Price Feemster (SP) def. Pat Frei 4-6, 6-1, 7-6; Brad Burgess (SP) def. Andrew Turner 6-0, 6-2; Bo Phongs (KM) def. Travis Nixon 7-5, 4-6, 6-0; Chad Hunsinger (KM) def. Charles Goins 6-2, 6-0; Rich Martin (SP) def. Jonathan Jones 3-6, 6-1, 7-6; Trey McIntyre (KM) def. Nathan Fowler 7-6, 6-3.

(Doubles)

Feemster-Burgess (SP) def. Frei-Jones 6-1, 6-3; Turner-Hunsinger (KM) def. Nixon-Goins 6-4, 4-6, 6-3; Phongs-McIntyre (KM) def. Jones-Fowler 6-3, 6-1.

KM 5, EAST 1 (Singles)

Pat Frei (KM) def. Nick Elliott 6-3, 6-2; Matt Ellenburg (ER) def. Andrew Turner 6-1, 6-2; Bo Phongs (KM) def. Jeff Hodge 6-4, 6-2; Chad Hunsinger (KM) def. John Martin 6-4, 6-3; Jonathan Jones (KM) def. Brad Lindsay 6-0, 6-0; Trey McIntyre (KM) def. Randy Peterson 6-1, 6-2.

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