

Mounties capture Regional

Kings Mountain High's boys track team won its first-ever North Carolina High School Athletic Association Western Regionals championship Saturday at Shelby High.

John Bumgardner's Mountaineers scored 67 1/3 points to edge county rival Shelby, which scored 64 1/3. Shelby had edged the Mountaineers by three points earlier in the week for the Southwestern 3-A Conference championship.

T.C. Roberson finished third with 63 points, followed by Franklin 61, North Buncombe 48, Hibriten 40, North Gaston 40, Enka 34 1/3, East Henderson 32, West Caldwell 27, East Rutherford 26, Pisgah 24, Smoky Mountain 10, R-S Central 9, South Point 7, Brevard 3, and West Henderson 2.

Diron Bell led the Mountaineer effort with first place finishes in the 100 and 200 meters. He also ran a leg on the first place 800-meter relay team.

Pat Ross ran third in the 100 and second in the 200, and participated on the first place 800 relay team and the second place 400-meter relay team.

Calvin Logan finished second in the long jump and was a member of the second place 400 relay team.

Kyle Sellers and Marcus Bell also were members of the 800 and 400 relay teams and Ronnie Yarbro ran fourth in the 800 meters.

All of the above qualified for the state meet for finishing in the top four in their event. The state event is scheduled for Saturday at Chapel Hill.

Others who added to the Mountaineer point total last week but did not qualify for the state event were Kevin Brown in the 3200 relay, Antwan Brown in the 1600 relay, Jody Putnam in the 3200 relay, Shawn Byers in the discus, Clay Corry in the 3200 and 1600 relays, Mike Davis in the 300 intermediate hurdles, and Jeremy Martin in the pole vault and 300 hurdles.

"I'm real proud of all of our guys," said Coach Bumgardner. "We had lost the conference championship by just a couple of points each of the past two seasons and that's what made this championship so nice. We had had some disappointment but this was just a big boost for our program."

"Our kids' excitement level is up now," he said. "When you go out like this it makes it better for the coming year."

GIRLS RESULTS - Kings Mountain's girls finished 16th in a field of 18 in Saturday's Regional meet at Shelby.

T.C. Roberson won with 92 points, followed by Franklin with 83 and Shelby with 667. Pisgah was fourth with 50, followed by Enka 38, Hibriten 34, Burns 30, North Buncombe 23, East Rutherford 20, West Henderson 20, North Gaston 16, R-S Central 15, West Caldwell 14, East Henderson 12, Brevard 11, Kings Mountain 6, and Smoky Mountain and South Point 0.

Nikki Williams ran fifth for the Mountaineers in the 100 meter dash, and Rebecca Henson was sixth.

Gina Lewis was fifth in the 200 meter dash.



Kings Mountain's Michelle Fujita won the 1600 meter run in last week's Southwestern 3-A Conference girls track meet.

Girls fourth in SWC

Kings Mountain High's girls track team finished fourth in the Southwestern 3-A Conference track meet Tuesday at Shelby.

The Lions won the event with 202 points. North Gaston was second with 88, followed by R-S Central 72, KM 67, East Rutherford 41, Burns 34 and South Point 13.

Kings Mountain captured two first places. Michelle Fujita won the 1600 meter run and Dawn Hardin won the 800 meter run.

Rebecca Henson and Nikki Williams of the Mountaineers ran fifth and sixth in the 100 meter dash; Shani Smart was second in the 400 meters, Henson was fifth in the 200 meters and Jenn Halter was fourth in the 3200 meter run.

Tennis clinic set

Barbara Jones and Kathy James will sponsor their annual tennis clinic for rising third through ninth graders June 8-12 and June 15-19 at the KMHS tennis courts.

Basic fundamentals will be taught. Each student is responsible for a racket. Balls will be furnished. During the clinic, a mini tournament will be held and trophies will be awarded. Students may take a snack, a container of water or drink, and a hand towel.

The clinic will run from 9 a.m. until noon. The cost is \$30 and includes insurance.

For more information, call Barbara Jones at 739-7263 or Kathy James at 864-8117.

Throw to the spot

Baseball has always been my favorite sport. I can enjoy it at any level...even when the Atlanta Braves are blowing almost every game in the late innings.

I like wild, high-scoring games, especially when my team is scoring the runs.

But, one thing that's becoming more obvious on almost every level of play is that the umpires are forcing the pitchers to throw an almost perfect pitch to get a strike.

I've been amazed this year, especially on the high school and major league level, with the lack of consistency on the part of the umpires. I always thought the strike zone was from your knees to your armpits--or the letters, as they say. But it seems every game I've watched either in person or TV, anything above the waist is a ball.

High school officiating is becoming a joke. It is obvious that you don't have to know the rules of baseball to get a sideline job umpiring high school baseball. I saw Kings Mountain awarded a victory earlier in the year on a ground rule double. KM had a runner on first base who was running on the pitch. The umpires ruled that because the runner was already to second base he was entitled to come home when the fly ball to deep centerfield bounced over the fence. The rule book clearly states that the runner gets two bases from the base he left. Of course, I always want Kings Mountain to win and if the ump's going to make a blunder like that I'm glad it was in our favor.

With the state playoffs just around the corner, I hope the booking agents will carefully screen their umpires and assign the experienced ones to the big games.

CHANGE OF PACE - Kings Mountain's Eric Peppard is off to a good start in his collegiate career at Southeastern Community College in Whiteville.

Peppard, a centerfielder on Kings Mountain High's 1989 state championship team and 1990 conference championship outfit, originally signed with Seminole Community College in Florida.

Peppard started this season playing several outfield positions but was later converted to shortstop, where he started the last 20 games.

He got off to a slow start at the plate but came on strong to hit .256 (20-78) with 14 runs batted in and 21 runs scored for the regular season. He helped his team qualify for the District Ten Tournament.

"I started the season hitting balls right at somebody," Peppard noted. "I was 0-for-15 with a ton of walks, but the coaches encouraged me to hang in there."

Peppard said the team reminds him of the '89 state championship team at Kings Mountain. "We scored almost 300 runs (276) and was only shut out twice," he said. "When our pitching is right, we can beat anyone."

Twice during the regular season Peppard and Southeastern competed against Peppard's high school teammate, Keith Allen of Montreat-Anderson.

GOOD FIRST YEAR - Another Kings Mountain product, Chris Henson, enjoyed an outstanding sopho-



Gary Stewart

more season at Wingate this spring. He transferred there after playing at UNC-Greensboro last year.

Henson hit .300 for the Bulldogs and won the Coaches Award. He was moved to second base after playing outfield at Greensboro. He played second for the two championship KMHS teams mentioned above.

Henson rejoined KMHS teammate Dale Greene at Wingate. Greene, who hit over .300 his freshman and sophomore years, slipped this year after suffering an injury but is expected to be back at top form next year.

THAT'S SMOKING - Kings Mountain Coach John Bumgardner and Mountaineer fans have been amazed at the times turned in by senior Diron Bell in the 100 and 200 meter dashes this year. Bell and several of his teammates will compete in the state track meet Saturday at Chapel Hill.

"Diron's an exceptional runner," said Bumgardner. "It has been exciting watching him this year."

Bell will go against one of the fastest high school runners in the nation this week. Darius Brewington of High Point Andrews runs in the same event and he has been clocked at an almost unbelievable 10.3 in the 100 and 21.9 in the 200.

"High Point is the defending state champion, and has a real strong team," Bumgardner said. "We ran against them a couple weeks ago at Wake Forest. You don't realize how fast they are until you line up beside them. Then, you find out."

REGION PLAYER OF YEAR - Chalk up another award for University of North Carolina tennis sensation Bryan Jones of Kings Mountain.

Jones recently won the MVP award in the ACC tournament, then was named ACC Player of the Year.

Now, he has been selected as the Volvo Senior Player of the Year for Region II. He now becomes a candidate for the national award along with the seven other regional winners.

Award committees made up of coaches in each region selected the regional winners. The ITCA's national awards committee will select the national honorees.

Jones has been ranked as high as No. 19 nationally in the Volvo Tennis Collegiate rankings. He and his teammates are now competing in the NCAA tournament in Georgia.

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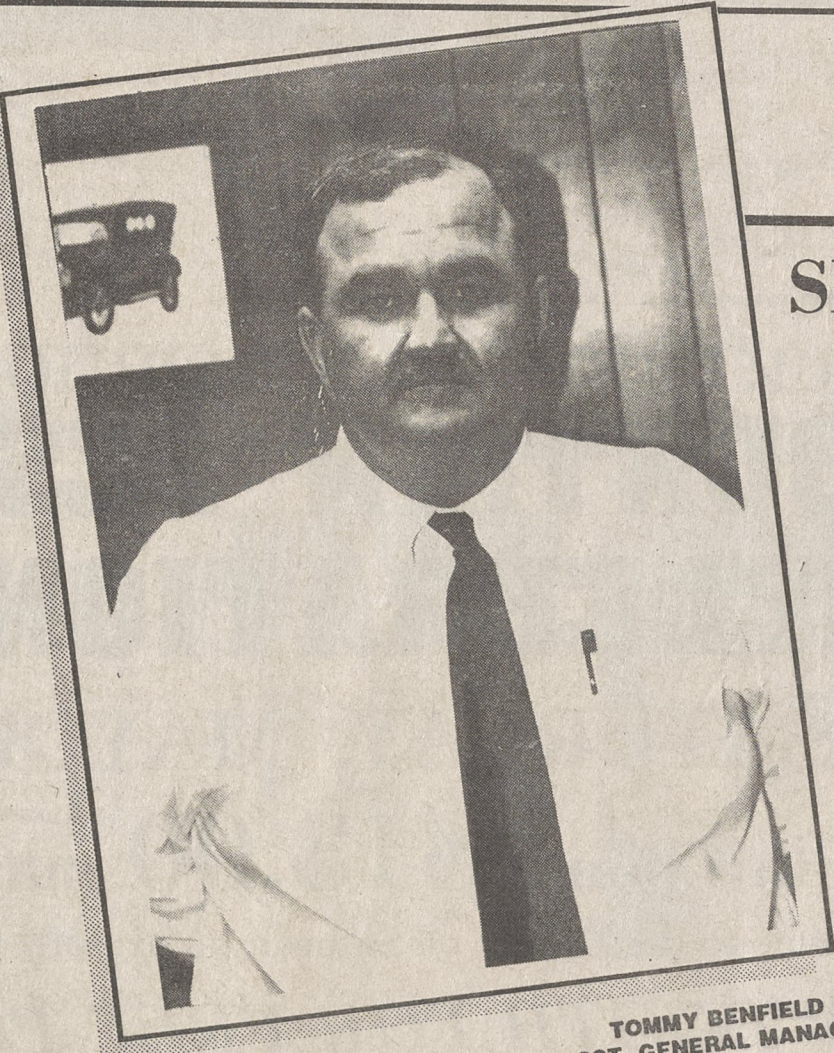
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