



Bryan Leftwich scores 21 in victory over North Gaston

Upset North Gaston 71-66

Two home games crucial for KM

Kings Mountain's next two games - both at home - will be crucial if the Mountaineers are to make the state 3-A basketball playoffs this season.

The Mountaineers pulled a stunning 71-66 victory over second place North Gaston Tuesday night on the road, and now they can see a little light at the end of the tunnel. Kings Mountain has failed to make the state playoffs only once (last season) in Larry Sipe's 10 years as coach.

The Mountaineers, 3-5 in the SWC and 10-9 overall, are tied for fifth place in the seven-team league, and the top five teams qualify for the state playoffs.

Sipe charges host R-S Central Friday and Burns Tuesday, and victories in those two games could go a long way in sewing up a playoff berth since the Mountaineers and Hilltoppers are tied for fifth and Burns is one notch above them.

Kings Mountain's only other remaining games in the regular season are at first place Shelby on February 23 and at home against winless South Point on February 26.

Key foul shooting and good defense were the keys for the Mountaineers in Tuesday's win over North Gaston. The Wildcats came from 12 points down in the second half to take a 66-65 lead, but Bryan Leftwich and Marquize Williams each hit a pair of free throws, and Williamson stole a pass and fed to Marcus Bell for a game-ending layup to give the Mountaineers the victory.

Kings Mountain jumped on top early and led by 19-14 after the first period and 33-21 at halftime. But Williamson got into foul trouble early in the third period, and with him on the bench the Wildcats

were able to get back into the game.

Leftwich led the Mountaineer attack with 21 points. Calvin Mathis added 17 and Williamson 11. Darius Stinson led North Gaston with 20.

■ Kings Mountain's girls saw a fourth quarter rally fall short as North Gaston scored a 51-43 victory to hand the Lady Mountaineers their seventh loss in eight conference outings. The KM girls are 5-11 overall.

North Gaston built a 13-6 first quarter lead and a 28-17 halftime advantage. The Lady Wildcats moved ahead 43-28 at the end of three quarters but the KM ladies got hot in the fourth quarter and trimmed the lead to five before North Gaston sealed the win at the free throw line.

Traci Caskey, who hit 10 fourth quarter free throws to lead North to an overtime victory at Kings Mountain earlier in the season, hit seven free throws in the fourth quarter to ice the game. She finished with 22 points and Phyllis McQuage added 15. Tameeka Anderson scored 21 and Heather Harrison 13 for Kings Mountain.

GIRLS GAME

KM (43) - Anderson 21, Smart 2, Harrison 13, Goforth 5, McCluney 2.

NG (51) - Vlaservich 2, McQuage 15, Caskey 22, Gibson 2, Miller 2, Jackson 8.

BOYS GAME

KM (71) - Black 7, Leftwich 21, Williamson 11, Jones 9, Bell 4, Mathis 17, Hopper 2.

NG (66) - Lynch 5, Wilson 2, Wallace 14, Stinson 20, Houser 12, Mintz 13.

Middle School girls defeat Lincolnton team

Kings Mountain Middle School's girls basketball team won one of four Bi-County Conference games during the past two weeks.

The Lady Patriots lost to East Lincoln Thursday 30-24. Kings Mountain jumped out to an 8-4 lead after one quarter and led 18-8 at halftime.

"In the second half, we did not play with the intensity we did in the first half, and East Lincoln played well," Coach Candy Albergine said.

East came on strong to outscore the KM ladies 22-6 in the second half and take the victory. Kisha Hamrick led the KM scoring with 12 points but was held to just two points in the second half. She fouled out mid-way of the fourth quarter, and without her ballhandling skills the Lady Patriots had trouble bringing the ball downcourt.

Amy Huggins and Jackie Houston played well for the Lady Patriots and scored four points each.

Monday afternoon, Kings Mountain fell to league-leading Crest 52-28.

"Although you'd never know it by the score, we played a pretty good game against a very tough team," Albergine said.

Kings Mountain was down by 21 points in the second quarter but managed to cut the lead to 13 points by halftime.

"The spurt seemed to give us a boost of confidence and we continued to play well in the second half," Albergine said. "We were not able to keep Crest's big girls off the boards and they scored easily on second and third shot attempts."

Kisha Hamrick led the KM scoring with 16 points and also played a fine floor game. Allene Barron and Dee Byers played tough inside against bigger girls, and the quickness of Tamra Webber and Jackie Houston caused problems for Crest. Byers and Barron scored five points each.

"Crest easily has more talent than any team we play, but they definitely know they were in a tough game against us," Albergine said.

Two weeks ago, Kings Mountain lost to Burns 36y-22 and defeated Lincolnton 23-21.

Against Burns, Kisha Hamrick led the scoring with 10 points.

Two teams share top

The first place Alley Cats lost three of four games to the Flufs, and the Nagggers and Tar Pack split a four-game set to move into a tie for first place in Mixed Duckpin Bowling League action Thursday night at Dilling Heating.

The Nagggers and Tar Pack now have 12-8 records while the Alley Cats dropped to 11-9. The Flufs bring up the rear with a 5-15 mark.

The Nagggers-Tar Pack match was close throughout, with the Nagggers winning the first two games and the Pack the last game and total pins. Jack Barrett led the nagggers with a 114 line and 336 set and R.W. Hullender led the Pack with a 138 line and 354 set. Tommy Barrett added a 113-317 and Dan Dilling had a 124-310.

John Caveny bowled a 115 line and 323 set and Margaret Dilling added a 108-299 to lead the Flufs over the Cats. Bob Rathbone led the losers with a 131 line and 319 set.

"We were not ready to play," Albergine said. "For the first time this season I was disappointed with our effort and intensity. We were flat out-hustled. I was proud of the way our 'white team' came in and played in the fourth quarter. This group includes Nancy Ely, Katie Subler, Shania Hillman, Kimberly Belt and Kim Parker."

Hamrick scored 13 points and Barron had five in KM's victory over Lincolnton. The entire team played great defense and out-rebounded the taller Lincolnton team.

"We played well for three quarters and led 23-14 going into the fourth quarter," Albergine said. "In the last quarter we lost some intensity and allowed Lincolnton to cut the lead to two points, but we managed to hold on for the win."

Kings Mountain, now 2-6, travels to Shelby Thursday and returns home February 16 to face West Lincoln. The Lady Patriots play at

Burns on February 18 and close out their season at home on February 25 against Lincolnton. All games begin at 4 p.m.

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