

# TOURNEY

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son games with the Cavaliers, the Mountaineers led at halftime and matched the Cavaliers in field goals, but East Rutherford's size advantage and free throw shooting meant the difference in the end.

This time, the Mountaineers again grabbed the early lead and were on top 31-26 at halftime. Again, East Rutherford staged a second half comeback. But this time the Mountaineers had enough power to hold on.

Sipe employed a packed zone defense which forced the Cavaliers to attempt more shots that usual from the outside. Even when the Cavaliers took the lead in the fourth quarter, Sipe stuck with the defense.

Bryan Leftwich gave the Mountaineers their final lead at 65-64 with two minutes remaining; and sophomore center Sharee Hopper grabbed a couple of key rebounds, forced a turnover and hit a big free throw down the stretch to preserve the win.

Leftwich led the KM scoring with 18 points. Marquize Williamson added 15 and Justin Jones 10, and Hopper grabbed 10 rebounds. James Miller scored 20 for East Rutherford.

■ The zone defense worked so well against the Cavaliers that Sipe went to it again Friday against Burns. And, again, it worked. The Mountaineers grabbed the early lead and held on, even as Burns missed a shot at the buzzer which would have given the Bulldogs the victory.

Kings Mountain led 26-23 at the half and seemed to be widening the gap in the second half. But Burns scored on five straight possessions in the fourth quarter to pull within 48-46 with two minutes remaining.

Williamson hit a free throw with 1:43 to play to give the Mountaineers a 49-46 lead and Freddie Lovelace scored for Burns with 1:30 remaining to cut the margin to 49-48. Burns missed its final three shots, including the last one with five seconds left when Hopper claimed the rebound to clinch the victory.

Burns had beaten the Mountaineers twice by one point during the regular season, including a game in Kings Mountain when the Bulldogs scored on a three-point shot from half-court at the buzzer.

Williamson led the KM scoring with 15 points. Hopper added 12 points and Marcus Bell contributed nine rebounds. Antwan Phelps scored 12 points for the Bulldogs.

■ Shelby burned the nets from the outside Saturday night and appeared to be on the way to an easy victory over the Mountaineers. The Lions built a 43-29 halftime advantage, but Sipe and the Mountaineers weren't about to give up.

"At halftime, I told them not to

be satisfied just to be here," Sipe said. "We went back and started playing man to man after playing two and a half games in the zone. I think Shelby got a little shell-shocked and didn't look at the basket. We took some chances by fouling them and putting them on the line and, luckily, they missed."

Bryan Leftwich's three-point shooting (he scored six threes for the game) got the Mountaineers back into the game, and Marcus Bell, a 50 percent free throw shooter, canned two pressure free throws with 11 seconds left to give the Mountaineers the winning points.

Leftwich popped a three-pointer with 35 seconds left to pull the Mounties within 66-65; and after Shelby increased its lead to 69-65 Leftwich nailed another three to cut it to 69-68.

Shelby's Robert Williams missed two free throws with 11 seconds left, and Bell grabbed the rebound and was fouled. He hit both to give the Mountaineers the lead. A final Shelby shot failed.

Leftwich finished with 20 points, Williamson had 17 points and nine assists, and Jones added 11 points to lead the KM scoring. Robert Moore led Shelby with 18 and Jock Degree added 17.

"I don't know if another team will ever experience what we did in those three games," Coach Sipe said. "When you have to beat the third, second and first place teams within four days, that's a big task for anybody. You go back to the size of the heart - the size of the fight in the dog. That's what counts."

Sipe said he was especially pleased for his five seniors - Williamson, Jones, Jerry Black, Chad Huntsinger and Lewis Nantz.

"This will be something good for them to look back on," he said. "I've talked a lot about the pride that these players have. Last year when they were juniors, we won only nine games, and this year we had won only 11 going into the tournament. I'm glad something like this happened so they can have some good memories of playing basketball at King Mountain High School."

### TUESDAY GAME

KM (74) - Black 8, Leftwich 18, Williamson 15, Perkins 2, Jones 10, Bell 6, Mathis 5, Hopper 10.

ER (70) - M. Miller 2, O. Miller 3, Watkins 5, McEntyre 8, J. Miller 20, Hamilton 16, Weeks 12, Landrum 14.

### FRIDAY GAME

KM (49) - Williamson 15, Hopper 12, Bell 6, Jones 6, Mathis 4, Black 3, Leftwich 3.

Burns (48) - Phelps 12, Lovelace 10, Leslie 9, Pruett 9, Scott 5, Beam 3.

### SATURDAY GAME

KM (70) - Leftwich 20, Williamson 17, Jones 11, Mathis 8, Hopper 8, Bell 6.

Shelby (69) - Moore 18, Degree 17, Macopson 15, Barnes 12, Davenport 4, Rempson 2, Williams 1.



Calvin Mathis (45) scores tap-in in Tuesday win over Franklin.

# PLAYOFF

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press forced Franklin turnovers and five-second violations.

"Our defensive intensity was very good," Sipe said. "They didn't want to get in a fast paced game with us."

Kings Mountain's lead continued to build in the fourth quarter and Sipe began clearing his bench. Reserves got into the fun late in the game and actually built the lead to its biggest spread. Marcus Bell scored two baskets and a free throw as the lead jumped over 30 (76-44) and Lewis Nantz hit his second three-pointer of the night to give the Mountaineers a 40-point lead (86-46) with 24 seconds left.

Jones finished as the KM scoring leader with 22 points. Mathis and Leftwich added 14 each and Williamson 13.

It was an exciting final home game for the Mountaineer players and fans, and for Sipe, but he cautioned against over-confidence.

"This is only the first step," he

said. "I'm sure the second step will be much harder. Smoky Mountain is their conference champion, so I'm sure they will be tough."

"Last week, we were playing to stay alive," he said, referring to the SWC tournament which the Mountaineers had to win to qualify for the state playoffs. "This week we're playing to advance."

FRANKLIN (47) - Martin 8, McCall 6, Jones 4, Sutton 11, Wall 4, Morgan 3, Awtry 8, Arvey 1, Blanton 2.

KM (86) - Huntsinger 3, Black 4, Leftwich 14, Williamson 13, Perkins 1, Nantz 6, Jones 22, Bell 7, Mathis 14, Hopper 4.

# Girls fall to East in SWC tournament

Kings Mountain High's girls basketball team was eliminated from the Southwestern 3-A Conference tournament Friday when they lost a semi-finals game to East Rutherford, 59-37.

The sixth-seeded Lady Mountaineers, who had upset third place R-S Central in the opening round last Tuesday, finished their season with a 9-13 overall record.

The KM ladies gave the second place Lady Cavaliers all they wanted in the first half, but East Rutherford's experience paid off in the second half.

The game was tied at 27-all at intermission but the Lady Mountaineers' and SWC's leading scorer Tameeka Anderson, was

held scoreless in the second half as the Cavaliers broke the game open. Kings Mountain managed just six points in the third quarter and four in the fourth.

Tammie Allen led the East attack with 23 points and Lindsay Spratt added 18. Heather Harrison scored 16 and Anderson eight for Kings Mountain. It was the first time this season Anderson had been held under double figures.

### FRIDAY GAME

KM (37) - Harrison 16, Anderson 8, Halmess 5, Queen 2, Smart 2, Goforth 2, Whitaker 2.

ER (59) - Allen 23, Spratt 18, McEntyre 9, Surratt 5, Morgan 4.

# AAU basketball tryouts Slated at KM Boys Club

Tryouts for the Kings Mountain 16 and 17 year old AAU Junior Olympics basketball team will be held March 20-21 at 2 p.m. at the Kings Mountain Boys Club. Players born after August 31 are eligible. The Boys Club is located at the Central School gym.

Pool play for 16 year olds will be held April 30-May in Fayetteville. Pool play for the 17 year olds will be held April 16-18 in Charlotte.

The State finals for the 16 year

olds will be held May 7-9 in Greensboro. The 17 year old state finals will be April 23-25 in Charlotte.

All players trying out must take birth certificates.

For more information, call Danny McDowell at 739-7026 after 3:30 p.m., Tom Bennett at 739-3667 from 8:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., Jewel Watson at 739-9374 after 5 p.m., and Dan Rankin at 865-8624 or 865-5607.

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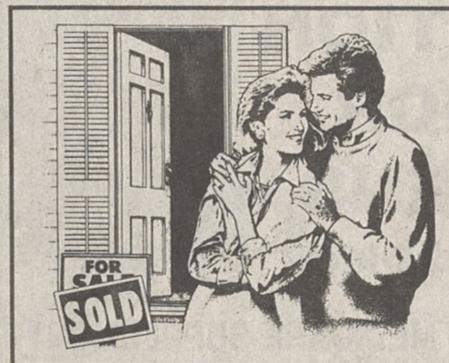
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