

KMHS baseball team opens Monday

Kings Mountain's Mountaineers will open their 1993 baseball season next Monday at 5 p.m. at East Gaston.

The Mountaineers are defending Southwestern 3-A Conference champions and are looking for their fourth trip to the state playoffs in five years under Coach Bruce Clark.

East Gaston will be a formidable

opponent. The Warriors, like Kings Mountain, have most of their players back from last year's state play-off team and have their top four pitchers back.

Mountaineer fans can get a sneak preview of the team Thursday afternoon at home when they host Fred T. Foard in a scrimmage. The scrimmage was postponed from Tuesday afternoon.

Clark has 18 players back from last year's 20-4 team which won the SWC and went three rounds in the state playoffs before falling to eventual state champion West Henderson.

Returning players are pitchers Stephen Fisher, David R. Jenkins, David C. Jenkins, Shane Webb, Benji Ingle and Robert Wingo; catchers Kevin Melton and Chris

Rider; infielders Damon Putnam, Lewis Nantz, Mike Smith, Todd Ware and Rick Marr; and outfielders Robbic Ruff, Doran Moore, Johnny Bunch, TG Goforth and Caju Ormand.

Five of those players - David R. Jenkins, Fisher, Smith, Ware and Ormand - were All-Conference last year. Fisher led the mound staff with a perfect 12-0 record and Jenkins, a designated hitter, led the hitting with a .479 mark.

All of the players have worked out on their own during the off-season, and Clark expects the team to be much improved.

"I think this group will surprise a lot of people with their offense this year," he said. "This is as strong a bunch as we've had here."

Everybody around the SWC is picking the Mountaineers as the team to beat, and rightly so. With Fisher leading the way, the Mountaineers have as strong a mound staff as anyone in the area.

"The pitching's as good as it's been since I've been here," said Clark. "The mystery of the whole thing is if David R. Jenkins is going to be able to return from his shoulder problems. If he does, we really strengthen our pitching staff. If he can become a starter again we can relieve with people like David

TarPack, Naggers lead in duckpins

The TarPack and Naggers continued to run 1-2 in Mixed Duckpin Bowling League action Thursday night at Dilling Heating.

The Pack sept four games from the Flufs to run their record to 23-13. The Naggers won four from the Alley Cats to improve to 18-14. The Cats hold third place with a 15-17 mark and the Flufs are last with a 12-24 figure.

R. W. Hullender and Tommy Barrett both flirted with 400 sets to lead the Pack. Hullender had a 145 line and 383 series and Barrett had a 146 line and 382 set. John Caveny led the Flufs with a 118-312.

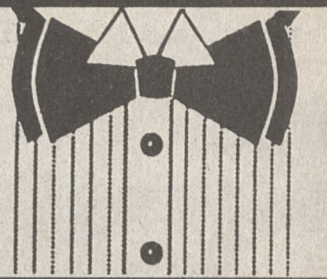
Jack Barrett rolled a 132 line and 359 set and Bill Myers added a 123-341 to lead the Naggers over the Cats. Bob Rathbone led the losers with a 110-295.

C. Jenkins and Robert Wingo, and have Shane Webb as a closer-type pitcher."

Clark will likely play all of his players during the non-conference games. The conference opener is March 23 against R-S Central.

Clark expects to see a tough race in the SWC as most teams are improved and all will be gunning for the Mountaineers. He says his players will have to play to the best of their ability in every game because they will likely always face the opposing team's best pitcher.

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The 'Greengrass' of summer

Spring training is here again and all is right with the world.

I've been waiting on baseball season since the last World Series game in October. It's time for an American team to give those Canadians their come-uppance.

The only thing I dread about baseball season is all those so-called baseball writers and broadcasters telling us that Joe Dimaggio's 56-game hitting streak is the one that will probably never be broken. They may be right, but I can tell you about one record that will definitely never be approached: Cy Young's record of career wins.

Young, who started his career with the old Cleveland team of the National League, won 511 major league games, and he didn't throw his first pitch until age 23.

Cy Young was a major league pitcher for 22 years and compiled double-digit win seasons in all but four, his first year when went 9-6, and his last three years when he pitched very little.

During the 14 year stretch between 1891 and 1904, Young won 393 ball games. That's an average of 28 victories per season. At age 41 he won 21 games for the Boston Red Sox. Cy pitched 76 shutouts placing him fourth on the all-time list. He pitched in 906 major league games, sixth all-time and started in 815, first on the list, 59 ahead of Braves broadcaster Don Sutton.

Young accumulated a couple of other records that will never be topped. He tossed 749 complete games in 815 starts and pitched 7357 innings. His career earned run average for all those games stands at 2.63.

Pitchers today are lifted from games after throwing 100 pitches. That alone assures Young's records will stand forever, unless someone invents a robot with a decent slider.

Does anybody remember Jim Greengrass. I don't know how it would be possible for anybody to have a better baseball name. Anyway, Jim Greengrass set a record that can never be broken, only tied.

Greengrass, a native of Addison, New York, came up to the Cincinnati Reds from the farm system in September of 1952. Teams are allowed to expand their rosters after September 1, and most of them bring up minor league prospects to look them over at the major league level.

The Brooklyn Dodgers had a lock on the National



JIM HEFFNER
Columnist

League pennant in 1952, so many of the other teams inserted their rookies right away. Such was the case with the Reds.

Greengrass, on this particular day, was making his debut against those same Dodgers, who would go on to win the pennant, then lose the World Series once again to the New York Yankees.

Somehow the Reds had managed to load the bases and Greengrass, the raw rookie stepped to the plate, nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs. Greengrass, as are most sluggers, was a fast ball hitter. I don't know who was pitching for the Dodgers, but he grooved a burner and Greengrass crushed the pitch into the upper deck at old Crosley Field, becoming the only man in history to hit a grand slam homerun in his first major league at bat.

The following year, Greengrass compiled a good first full season with 173 hits, 22 doubles, 7 triples, 20 homeruns and 100 RBI's. His batting average was .285.

In addition to his offensive performance, Greengrass was a good outfielder with a strong arm. Unfortunately, injuries shortened his career and he was able to log just five years in the big leagues.

He was the last Cincinnati Red to knock in 100 runs as a rookie, but nobody can better his record of hitting a bases-loaded homerun in his first time at bat as a major leaguer. They can only tie him.

That little Greengrass tale is one you'll never hear the broadcasters mention. Chances are they don't even know about it. They like to talk about Joe D's hitting streak and Reggie Jackson's three homers in a World Series game.

I've yet to hear one of them mention Cy Young's unbeatable records, and they never talk about the obscure little stories that make baseball history so fascinating.

I could write a book about it, and maybe I will some day.

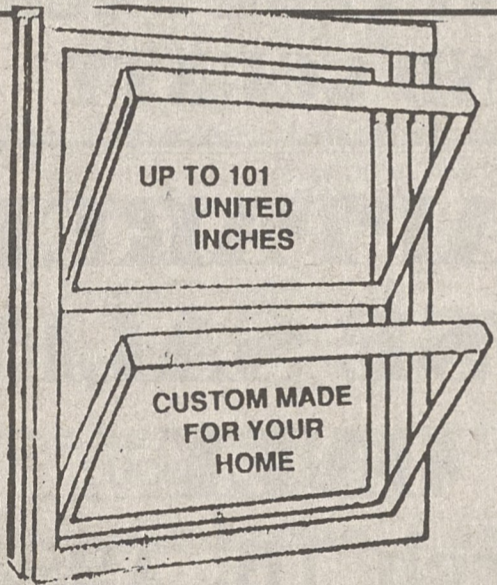
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