

NORTH

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The Mountaineers abandoned their traditional I-offense for a wishbone in the second half, and the improved running game sparked by sophomore C.C. Smith almost resulted in a big comeback victory. Smith and Kasey Holland scored on runs of three and one yards, respectively, in the third period to cut the margin to 13-12. A 65-yard punt return by Smith to the Wildcats' one-foot line set up Holland's score.

Two crucial extra point misses would come back to haunt the Mountaineers, though. LeFevers' kick following Smith's TD was blocked, and following Holland's score the Mountaineers faked a kick and tried a two-point conversion pass but it was off the mark also.

With nine minutes remaining in the contest - and still trailing 13-12 - the Mountaineers faked a punt on their own 27 yard line, but tailback Marcus Bell juggled the snap from center and it resulted in a seven-yard loss. The Wildcats took possession on the KM 20 and Fulcher scored on a one-yard plunge for a 20-12 Wildcat lead.

The Mountaineers drove the ensuing kickoff 80 yards for a touch-down, with Smith, Bell, back-up fullback Shane Logan and Littlejohn all making impressive runs out of the wishbone attack. Logan scored from three yards out with 55 seconds left, but Bell was knocked out of bounds just short of

the goal line on a two-point conversion run around right end. An onside kick attempt failed and the Wildcats were able to run the clock out.

"I guess that game pretty much exemplifies our season," said a disappointed KM Coach Denny Hicks afterward. "It seems like we do some things very well, but when it comes down to the final analysis we just leave too many things undone to create a winning situation for us."

"Most people do not give North Gaston enough credit for being as good as they are this year," he continued. "They have the best team I've seen over there since I've been here."

Hicks said he was pleased with the way his players responded to the new offense, as well as a new 5-3 defense installed during last week's practice to try to slow North Gaston's high-powered running game. The Mountaineers did accomplish some good in that area, as the Wildcats had only 181 yards rushing as a team and Brandon was held below his 150-yards per game average.

"We had been unable to put the ball in the end zone, but the kids responded well to the wishbone," Hicks said. "We probably should have gone to it earlier in the game but we had moved the ball pretty well in the first half. We moved the length of the field and had a good opportunity to score but didn't get any points, and that turned out to be very crucial."

"In the second half, we had several good drives and our offensive

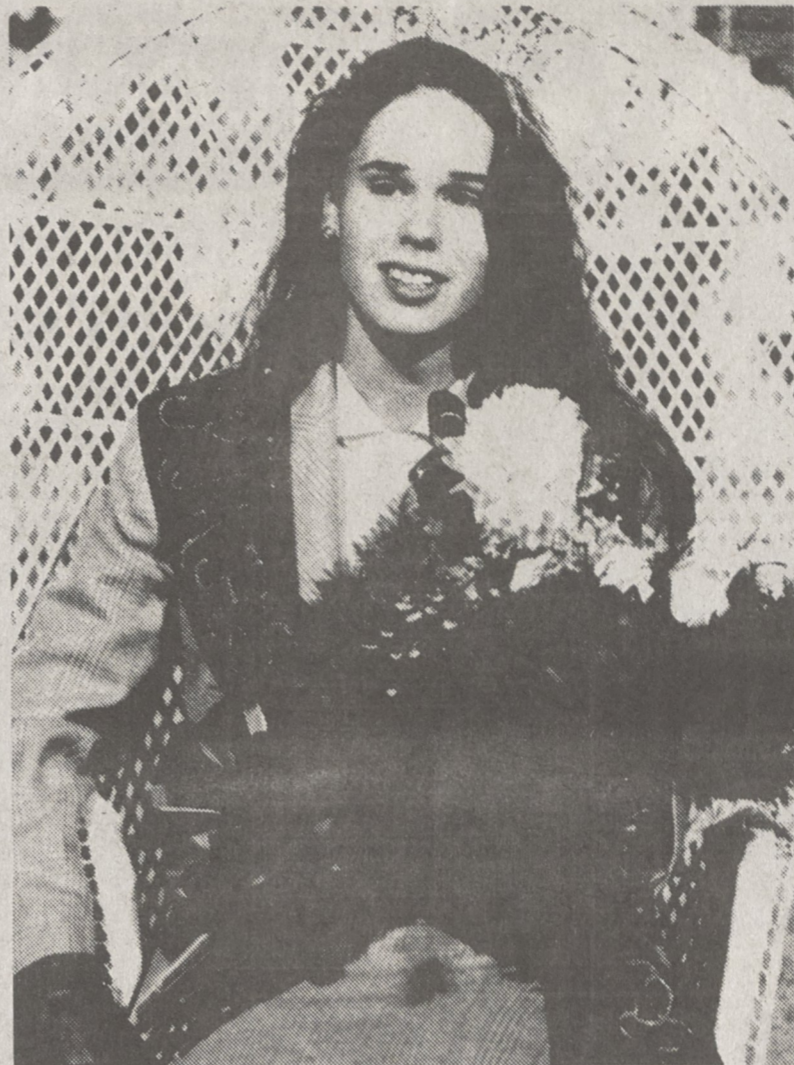
line came off the ball as well as they have all year. Our three seniors inside - Travis Smith, Jody Putnam and Cedric Moore - did an excellent job. In the last two or three weeks Norris McCleary has played as good as any offensive tackle we've had in a while."

"We got good movement up front, and we were pleasantly surprised with C.C. Smith's running in the second half. We gave him the ball in a very crucial fourth and six play and he converted it and we kept the ball and went on down and scored."

"Defensively, we changed our defense for the first time in 23 years. We haven't been able to hold people down, so we went to a 5-3 because of North Gaston's full-house backfield and strong running game. To have only worked on it for a week, our guys did pretty good with it."

Hicks said the key factors in KM's loss were not getting any points out of their first drive, and the missed fake punt and extra points.

"Both the fake punt and fake extra points are part of our offensive scheme," he said. "We work on them two or three days a week, just like we do with every play we've got. We were real disappointed that at least one of them didn't come through for us. If we had executed either one of those successfully the game would have been different."



Kings Mountain High senior Courtney Goforth, daughter of Pam and Bo Goforth, was crowned homecoming queen during halftime of Friday's football game with North Gaston.

THE YARDSTICK

	NG	KM
1st downs	14	13
Yds. rushing	181	193
Passes	1-1-0	1-4-0
Yds. passing	12	11
Punts	3-38	2-41
Fumbles lost	0	1
Yds. penalized	45	55

Score by quarters: T
 NG 7 6 0 7 --20
 KM 0 0 12 6 --18
 NG - Stuart Fulcher 12 pass from Freddie Kromis (Lance Martin kick)
 NG - Marion Brandon 1 run (kick failed)
 KM - C.C. Smith 3 run (kick failed)
 KM - Kasey Holland 1 run (pass failed)
 NG - Fulcher 1 run (Martin kick)
 KM - Shane Logan 3 run (run failed).

RUSHING
 NG - Brandon 27-119, Fulcher 15-50, William Bel 4-19, Ricky Williams 3-1, Kromis 4(-8). KM - Marcus Bell 13-49, Lamont Littlejohn 6-45, Smith 9-43, Holland 9-40, Rodney Brown 2-13, Shane Logan 3-3.

PASSING
 NG - Kromis 1-1-0-12. KM - Littlejohn 1-4-0-11.

RECEIVING
 NG - Fulcher 1-12. KM - Bell 1-11.

EAST

From Page 1-B

Hicks said the Mountaineers will stick with their new wishbone offense, hoping it will allow them to control the ball and take a lot of time off the clock.

"One of the teams that had the most success on East Rutherford this year was North Gaston, and it was because of their power running game going straight at them," he said. "They were able to use the clock and keep the ball out of East Rutherford's hands. That's the best thing you can do against them, and that's pretty much our game plan. We're going to stick with the wishbone. It's a very simple offense but it requires a lot of work on everybody's part. We hope our kids respond well to it. If they don't, East can shut us down."

"We need to control the ball with 15 and 16-play drives," Hicks added. "And when we get in position to score we need to get some points. If we can do that and keep the ball out of their hands we have a good chance to win the game."

Despite the disappointing 3-6 season, Hicks said he hopes the Mountaineers' fans don't abandon them.

"This is our last game, and for

the coaches, players and fans, we need a win," he said. "It always helps to carry over into your off-season program. It leaves you with a positive attitude and a good taste in your mouth."

"Our kids have worked hard and have tried to do what we've asked them to do," he said. "Sometimes things just don't fall together for you. We hope our fans will stand behind the kids and give them the positive support they need. When you're getting beat and you feel like everybody's against you it makes it even harder to win."

"We felt all along there was a lot of potential for this team if everything fell into place," he added. "That's one of the things that has made this a disappointing season. But I've been in coaching long enough to know that a lot of things have to click, and they just didn't click this year."

"You need strong leadership from your players - something that holds 38 young men together and gets everybody headed in the right direction. And it just didn't happen for us this year. But these kids are capable of playing some real exciting football, and we're hopeful this Friday night they can put some things together and show what they're really capable of doing."

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