



Chris Hutchins, one of the leading hitters on Kings Mountain High's baseball team, and his teammates are looking forward to the stretch run of the Southwestern 3-A Conference season. Even though the Mountaineers lost all of their starters off last year's state championship team, they are still in the battle for a state playoff berth. They host Burns in a big game Friday and travel to Forest City Tuesday to take on league-leading East Rutherford.

Mounties eye big games against South Point, Burns

The weather man was the big winner in high school baseball during the past week.

Kings Mountain's non-conference game with South Caldwell last Wednesday was cancelled because of the rain, and Tuesday night's scheduled Southwestern 3-A Conference game at South Point was postponed by rain.

The Mountaineers were scheduled to play at East Gaston Wednesday night, but if weather permitted that game was to be cancelled and the South Point game played.

Kings Mountain is scheduled to host Burns Friday at 7:30, and the Mountaineers travel to East Rutherford next Tuesday at 7:30. They are scheduled to end their regular season on Friday, May 13 at home against North Gaston.

The final four SWC games will be big ones for the Mountaineers, who are fighting for one of the three state playoff berths from the SWC. East Rutherford appears to have a lock on first place with an 8-1 record and a two-game lead over South Point (6-3). Kings Mountain is in third place with a 5-3 record, followed by R-S Central 4-4, Shelby 4-5, North Gaston 3-6 and Burns 0-8.

The Mountaineers' game with South Point is a crucial one. Since the Mountaineers defeated South

Point earlier, another KM victory over the Raiders would give the Mountaineers the higher playoff seed if they finish in a tie with South Point.

The top two teams from the SWC automatically qualify for the state playoffs. The number three team qualifies unless a team that finishes lower than third place wins the conference tournament. In that case, the tournament champion goes to the playoffs and the number three team stays home.

The Mountaineers hope their bats remain alive during the stretch run. The hitting got off to a slow start but has come around in recent games. The Mountaineers are now batting .228 as a team with infielder Brian LeFevers leading the way with a .355 mark.

Pitcher-outfielder Robert Wingo is hitting .289, and outfielder Chris Hutchins and third baseman Michael Bell are each hitting .286. Bell has the team's only home run and also has six runs batted in. Sharee Hopper leads in RBI with seven.

The Mountaineers, 6-6 overall, have outscored their opponents 52-51. Hopper leads the mound staff with a 3-1 record and 3.30 earned run average. Duane Patterson is 2-1 with a 2.70 ERA, Wingo is 1-3 with a 4.56 ERA, and Bryan Leftwich is 0-1 with a 3.98 ERA.

Police participating in Torch Run

Kings Mountain Police are participating in the annual Torch Run for North Carolina Special Olympics and will relay the Olympics Flame of Hope in Kings Mountain about 11 a.m. on Wednesday, May 11.

Over 2,500 officers in the state will participate as the flame makes its way from Atlantic Beach and Wilmington in the East on May 9, in Asheville in the West on May 11 and from Boone on May 12.

Gail Garrett, of the local police department, says that runners may join local police by calling her at 743-0444. She said that t-shirts promoting the event are available

from the police department for a \$12 donation.

Garrett says the goal of \$250,000 is the highest ever for the Run.

Over the course of two weeks, law enforcement officers will cover over 2,000 miles relaying the flame of hope to the summer games opening ceremony on May 20 in Grimsley High School's Jamieson Stadium in Greensboro.

Other sponsors of the Torch Run include Branch Banking and Trust Company as a gold sponsor, SAS Institute as a silver sponsor and Motel 6 as a bronze sponsor.

KM little leagues need sponsors

Because it is trying to serve more youngsters than ever before, Kings Mountain Parks and Recreation Department is in dire need of sponsors for youth baseball and softball leagues.

Recreation Department officials said leagues have been expanded from 31 to 45 teams this year which will give 540 youngsters an

opportunity to participate in organized ball.

Teams needing sponsors include T-ball, Coach Pitch, Minor League, Major League, Pre-Majors, Dixie Boys, and girls softball.

The season begins tonight, so sponsors are needed immediately. Anyone interested in helping may call Recreation Director Bruce Clark or Athletic Director Dale

Greene at 734-0449.

Sponsor costs run from \$150 to \$850 per team and include the cost of uniforms, equipment and sanctioning fees. Businesses and/or individuals who cannot afford to sponsor a team on their own may join forces with other businesses to sponsor a team.

At present the Recreation Department is about \$10,000 short

of the \$35,000 needed to sponsor all of their teams. Clark said sponsorship fees won't be as expensive next season because uniforms will have already been purchased.

Sponsors are especially needed in T-Ball, girls softball for ages 10-12 and 13-15, and Dixie Boys (ages 13-14) and Pre-Majors (ages 15-16).

Neill in Wake Academic Hall of Fame

Stephanie Neill of Charlotte, a standout golfer at Wake Forest University, has been named to the WFU Academic All-American Hall of Fame.

Only 14 Wake Forest students since 1959 have attained the honor. Stephanie, a junior, was selected Academic All-American the last two years.

Stephanie is the daughter of David and Cleone Neill of Charlotte, and the granddaughter of B.S. and Elizabeth M. Neill of Kings Mountain. She is the niece of Robert and Betty Neill of Charlotte.

A product of Charlotte Country Day High School, Stephanie was a second team All-American as a freshman and a first-team selection as a sophomore. She is the first two-time All-American in the his-

tory of Wake Forest women's golf, and is expected to repeat the honor her final two seasons.

Recently, she was awarded the prestigious Edith Munson Award, presented to the women's collegiate golf All-American with the highest grade-point average. She has been named a Scholastic All-American by the National Golf Coaches Association and is a Dean's List student at Wake Forest, in addition to being named the Wake Forest Female Student-Athlete of the Year.

Stephanie has placed in the top

ten in all of her college tournaments and recently won her sixth tournament at the University of South Florida. Competing against golfers from 21 colleges, she shot a 67-76-73-216 to win the event at Tampa.

Stephanie has been chosen for Omicron Delta Kappa as a junior, and she is one of five students from the business school to be honored in Beta Gamma Sigma. This week she was selected to the Morton Board at Wake Forest for high achievement.

Her coach, Dianne Dailey, calls

her a "complete package" golfer. "She has the drive, the motivation and the discipline necessary to be a great player," she said.

Neill placed eighth last year to lead Wake Forest to a seventh place finish at the NCAA championships, and the nationally-ranked Deacs have their sights set higher this year.

Huffman qualifies for state tournament

Kings Mountain's Chad Huffman qualified for next week's state high school golf tournament at the Western Regionals Golf Tournament Monday at Cleghorne Golf Club near Rutherfordton.

Huffman's seven-over-par 79 was good enough to tie him with three other golfers who were not members of qualifying teams.

R-S Central won the team title with a 311 score, followed by Hickory at 323 and Fred T. Foad at 327. St. Stephens was fourth at 331, followed by KM 343, Shelby 345, T.C. Roberson 347, South Caldwell 348, Pisgah 350, Burns and South Point 352, Enka 354, North Buncombe 358, North Gaston 361, Franklin 375, East Lincoln 378, Asheville 387, East Rutherford 388 and Brevard 416. The top three teams qualified for the state.

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