

# Mounties get ready for Fall

by CHUCK BRIDGES  
Summer Intern

The glory of Friday night football in the fall begins during the off-season, and Kings Mountain players have already started earning it.

Weight training is a big part of any football program.

The Mountaineers work out three times a week at the field house at John Gamble Stadium under the supervision of strength coach Aubrey Hollifield.

"Part of the stuff I learned at Wake Forest University I've implemented here," Hollifield said.

A card file in the weight room keeps track of players' progress and allows them to see what they have been doing, he said. It also lets Hollifield make sure each player is doing his best.

"It's basically a total-body workout," Hollifield said. "We do a lot of squats. I like squats."

The new pull-down machines have got a lot of use as well, he said.

Head Coach Dennis Hicks said the weight program is three days a week to allow the players to have some of their summer to themselves.

"We have tried to condense our skills program to our mini-camp," Hicks said.

Mini-camp starts July 11 and is only one week this summer because the coaches clinic is a week earlier than in the past.

The kickers have been practicing all year, Hicks said, but the kicking game is one of the areas the Mountaineers will work on in mini camp.

"Our philosophy is basically the shorter distance you have to go, the easier it is to score," he said. Good field position means good defense and kick returns. Hicks added that it takes a committed group of young men to realize that opportunities granted by defense and kick returns must be capitalized on.

The off-season is a time of work for the coaches too. Hicks said the

new defensive coordinator, Dave Ballenger, wants to start working with the defense next week because the defense is different this year.

Chris Johnson is the new defensive secondary coach and will also be in charge of motivation and morale, Hicks said.

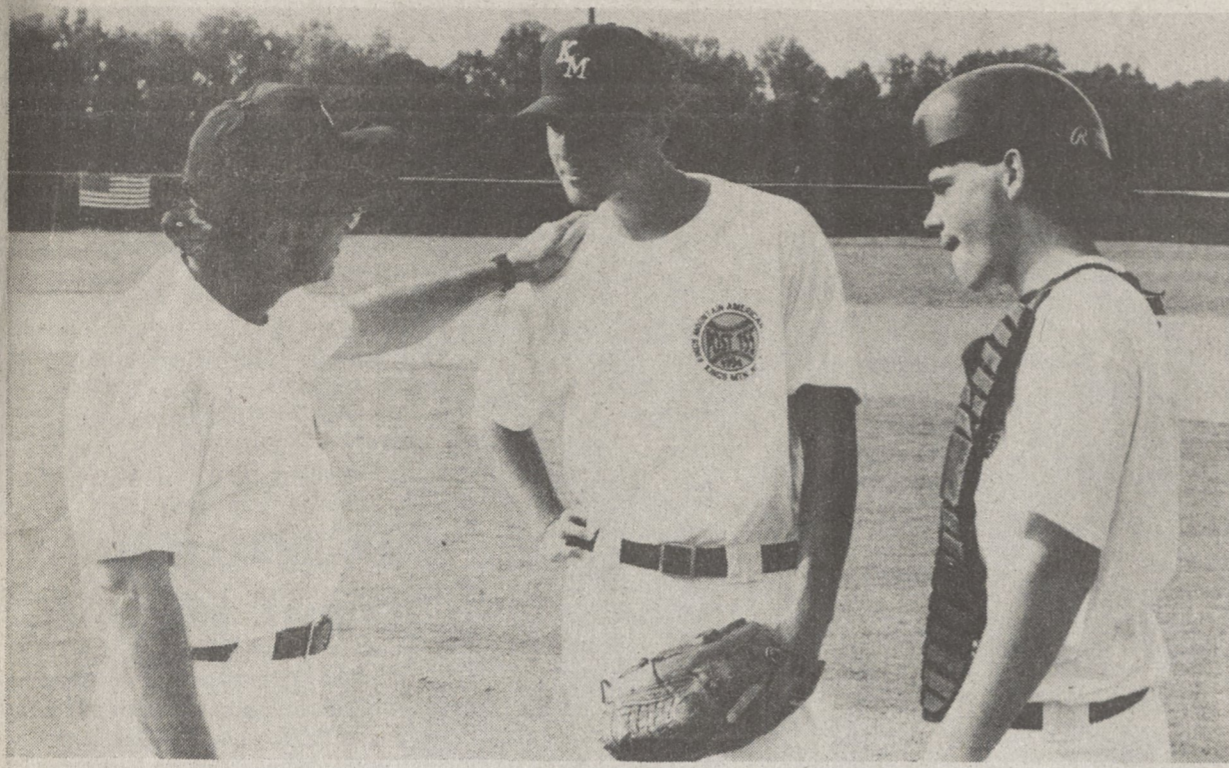
"We're real excited about getting Johnson," Hicks said. "He'll bring

some new ideas with him."

The other new coach this year is Alfred Ash, the offensive line coach and discipline and rules coordinator.

"We were impressed with the way he worked with the kids," said Ash.

"We feel like all three of these coaches are going to be a great addition for us."



Coach Nelson Connor, left, gives some instructions to pitcher David Jenkins and Jeff Moses before the game against Shelby Tuesday at Kings Mountain.

## Post 155 ends season with win

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Kings Mountain's American Legion Post 155 baseball team finished their season last week with a win at Belmont, two losses against Gastonia at home and a tough loss at Cherryville. They finished the season with a 3-13 record.

Kings Mountain beat Belmont 8-2 on Thursday, with Sharee Hopper pitching a 5-hitter and going 4-5 himself at the plate.

On Friday, Gastonia swept a doubleheader at Kings Mountain, 11-2 and 8-0.

Saturday's game against Cherryville went into 10 innings, with Cherryville winning, 3-2.

"We faced two excellent pitchers and held our own," coach Nelson Connor said of the last game. "We played an excellent game defensively, and against a team of that calibre, I was very pleased with our play."

Cherryville finished only half a game behind first in the Area IV, Central Division.

Kings Mountain has had its problems this year, Connor explained. Kings Mountain is one of

the few legion posts that only draws from one high school, he said.

"American Legion is a pretty good level of baseball," he said, "theoretically, you're getting the cream of the crop from several high schools."

Pitchers are limited to pitching 12 innings in three days in American Legion ball. With as many as four games in a three day period, that can put a strain on any team's pitching staff, but especially a small team.

Connor said the KM team had two pitchers who really had to step up and play a lot.

"In any baseball situation," he said, "whether it's the Major Leagues or Little League, when you don't have good pitching, you start out behind the eight ball."

There were a few injuries in Connor's young team this year, including a shoulder injury that left a catcher unable to catch.

"You have to have a real commitment and love for the game to play American Legion; you play almost every night, it's hot, you're not getting paid."

"Young men of lesser character

would have quit," Connor said, "and unfortunately, some did, and that's their loss."

Connor said the boys have been great and that assistant coaches Stephen Fisher and Tony Leigh have been a big help. He also expressed his appreciation to the Legion and the Kings Mountain High School.

American Legion Baseball is open to players aged 15 to 18, and was started by the American Legion in 1925 as "a program of service to the youth of America."

### Wildcats win pair to run mark to 11-0

Kings Mountain's Babe Ruth baseball team remained undefeated with two big wins last week.

First, the Wildcats trounced Union Road Optimist 18-1. David Clark pitched a one-hitter with seven strikeouts. Leading hitters were Clark and Scottie Martin with three hits each.

The Wildcats defeated Mount Holy 15-8. Clark, Ty Toney and Jeremy Cooke combined for the win. Cooke hit a grand slam home run and Clark had three hits to lead a 13-hit attack. Toney and Trip Roark added two hits each.

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