



Coach Diane Dooley congratulates Jackie Houston on winning state championship

Houston wins state tennis crown again

Very few athletes ever win a state championship. But Kings Mountain High's Jackie Houston isn't your usual high school athlete.

Houston, a KMHS junior, won her third straight state singles tennis championship - and her fourth state title overall - last week at Elon College when she defeated Brooke Skeen of Burlington Williams 6-1, 6-2.

Houston brought her season's record to a perfect 20-0 and her overall high school record to 64-0. During her stellar prep career, she has lost only four games in regular season matches, and she lost only four games in state tournament matches this year.

In fact, according to her coach, Diane Dooley, one of Houston's toughest matches came against her teammate and doubles partner, Kristin Koenig, in the Western Regionals Championship match played at the KMHS courts. Houston won 6-2, 6-1.

Houston, who won the state 400-meter championship in track last spring, could become just the second high school girls tennis player to win four consecutive state titles. According to the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Record Book, Laura Cowman of Charlotte Catholic won the 1A/2A singles titles in 1989, '90, '91 and '92. If Houston wins the state crown her senior season she will become the first 3-A player to win four state tennis crowns.

Dooley says there is very little coaching she can do with Houston, who was a junior tennis champion even before she entered the high school ranks.

"Jackie was already great when she came here in the ninth grade, but her level of play just keeps going up and up and up," says Dooley. "It is hard for a lot of girls to play Jackie. When you know you're going to play her you panic. She hits every ball, she's very determined. She's the type of athlete that doesn't get down on herself a lot. If the person is playing well against her she automatically picks her game up because she gets more determined. That's a big part of her success."

One of Houston's victims in the earlier rounds of the state tournament this year was Christine Caldwell of Wilson Hunt, who lost to Houston in the state championship match last fall. This time Houston won 6-0, 6-0.

Dooley said Houston has the knack of blocking out crowd noise and focusing on the task at hand.

"In the finals of the state the crowd bothered her the first couple of games," Dooley noted. "But she didn't let that get to her like a lot of athletes do. She got it out of her system. She knows what she has to do and gets her mind focused. Her play is very consistent."

Houston has already won more matches than any other girls tennis player in KMHS history and could become the first Lady Mountaineer to never lose a match.

"Jackie's a real joy to be around," Dooley said. "It's a real pleasure to coach her. I don't know that I coach her a lot. She knows what she needs to do and goes out there and does it."

WILDCATS

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of last Friday's heavy rains. He said he was well-pleased despite over 200 yards in penalties.

"We're tickled to win this one," he said. "I didn't know how we'd react after the layoff but I thought we handled it fairly well. We came out strong early and that was a big plus for us."

The Mountaineers scored on their second offensive play. After C.C. Smith returned a North Gaston punt to the Wildcat 34, Logan hit the middle for two yards and then Smith rambled 32 yards on an inside reverse for the touchdown. Chris Wallace's extra point gave KM a 7-0 lead.

On their second possession, the Mountaineers drove 65 yards for another touchdown with Smith going over from 18 yards out and Wallace kicking the PAT again to make it 14-0 with 1:49 still showing on the first quarter clock.

"They really had a lot of people up on the line of scrimmage trying to take Shane out of the game," Massey said. "That's what opened up Marcus for the two touchdown runs. We were fortunate to jump out real quick."

Linebacker Emory Brown recovered a fumble at the North Gaston 32 with 27 seconds left in the first quarter, and on the first play quarterback Lance McClain hit Smith with a 20-yard pass and a first down at the 12. After a clipping penalty and an illegal procedure penalty pushed the Mounties back to the 30 with a first and goal, Logan hit the middle twice for a total gain of 12 yards and then McClain threw an 18-yard touchdown strike to Smith to make the score 20-0.

At that time it appeared the rout was on, but because of an enormous amount of penalties against the Mountaineers and the passing of quarterback Justin Cloninger the Wildcats were able to stay in the game. Cloninger hit 9 of 23 passes for 115 yards, including a touchdown pass with 3:35 left in the third period and a two-point conversion pass which cut the KM lead to 20-8.

North Gaston was driving again in the fourth quarter when C.C. Smith intercepted a Cloninger pass at the KM 27 and returned it to the 25. From that point, despite 30 yards in penalties, the Mounties launched a 65-yard drive which put the victory in the bag. Logan had runs of 21 and 10 yards and, after a 10-yard holding penalty ripped off a 36-yard run for a first down at the 12. Still another penalty for clipping pushed the Mounties back to the 22 yard line, but McClain found Corey Jones behind the defense for the touchdown and threw

a two-point conversion pass to Marcus Smith for a 28-8 lead with 7:23 left.

Moments later, Justin Champion intercepted a Cloninger pass at the North 20 and returned it to the 10 to set up an 11-yard touchdown pass from McClain to senior wide receiver Chris Henderson.

"In the second half they started loosening up a little bit and we were able to get the ball to Shane," Massey said. "Lance did a good job making some key checks on the line of scrimmage, and he threw the ball well when he had to." For the night, McClain hit 4 of 10 passes for 71 yards and three touchdowns - his most TD tosses in a single game. Logan gained 84 of his 126 yards in the second half.

"Our offensive line did a pretty good job," Massey pointed out. "I was pretty well pleased overall with the offense even though the penalties hurt us."

"Defensively, I thought we were very aggressive. We gave them some different looks that caused them some problems. We shut their run down completely. Anytime you

throw the ball as much as they do you're apt to get a big play every once in a while, and they did. But overall we controlled them pretty much the way we wanted to."

"Our defensive front put a lot of pressure on (Cloninger). Our linebackers were real active and I thought C.C. Smith had a good game in the secondary."

Massey said playing on a Monday night, plus the unusually large number of penalties probably took some of the thrill out of the game, but clinching a state playoff berth and going unbeaten (5-0) at home were outstanding accomplishments for his young team.

"I think it will set in and we'll have good practices the rest of the week and the players will be excited," he said. "They've worked real hard to get to this point. I'm just happy for the kids. As far as a group of kids working and coming to practice and doing what they're supposed to do, this is one of the best groups I've ever been associated with. I'm glad they're seeing some dividends from their hard work."

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Sports Briefs

Boys/Girls Club basketball registration to begin

Registration is underway for the 1995-96 basketball season at the Kings Mountain Boys and Girls Club.

Anyone ages 7-16 may join. There is no fee.

Registration will be held each Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from November 2-December 7. The club will be closed Thurs., Nov. 23 for Thanksgiving.

Team selection will be held Saturday, Dec. 9 at 12 noon at the Central School gym.

Club hours are 5-8 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday and 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday.

For more information call Danny McDowell at 739-7026, Tom Bennett 739-3667, R.A. Bell 739-0102, Jerome Parker 739-

1867, Judy Bowen 739-7000, Dena Allen 739-6461, or James Smith 734-0398.

Bulldog Golf Days set at River Bend

Women's Bulldog Golf Day will be Tuesday, Nov. 14 and Men's Bulldog Golf Day will be held Wednesday, Nov. 15 at River Bend Golf Club, Shelby. Proceeds will support the Garland Allen Scholarship Fund and the Gardner-Webb University golf team.

There will be handicap and scratch divisions. Prizes will be awarded to the top three individual scores as well as closest to the hole on every par three, closest to the line on 17 and longest putt on 18.

Tee times will be a 10 a.m. shotgun start for women and will begin at 8 a.m. for men and will be given on a first entered basis. For preferred tee times call the River Bend pro shop at 482-4288.

Entry fee is \$50 for women and \$55 for men and includes lunch. Checks should be made payable to Gardner-Webb University and entry forms returned to River Bend Golf Club, P.O. Box 1939, Shelby, NC 28151.

Brawl for it All set at Fairgrounds

The Piedmont Brawl for it All (Tough man contest) will be held November 10-11 at the Shelby

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