

Kings Mountain cross country runner Chad Pearson checks in with a record time of 16:06 to win last week's Southwestern 3A Conference championship at John Gamble Stadium.

## Pearson runs record time to win second SWC crown

Winning the state cross country championship is a goal that has been on Kings Mountain High senior Chad Pearson's mind for a year. He has worked hard in the off-season and in Southwestern 3A Conference meets this year, and he may be peaking at the right time as he prepares for this week's Western Regional Meet at West Henderson High School. and next week's State 3A Meet at McAlpine Park in Charlotte. Pearson ran his best time ever (16:06) last Thursday over the 3.1-mile KMHS course to win his second straight SWC championship. By winning that meet, he also earned Conference Runner of the Year honors for the second time, and All-Conference for the third straight season. That time beat his old course record by 1:42. "Things are going pretty good," said Pearson. "The hard work is finally paying off." Pearson can be seen almost every day running around town, whether with the other KM cross country runners in practicing or on his own. He said he averages running 60 miles a week during the off-season and 40 to 45 miles during the season. "During the season I do a lot of speed work and hill work," he noted. "I don't put in as many miles but it's more quality miles." Quality running is what Pearson will need if he attains his goal as state champion. Last year, he

finished second to North Buncombe's Darrell Metcalf in the West, and rebounded the next week to beat Metcalf but still came in second in the state finals. "I ran a 17:05 last year in the Regionals," he noted, "and a 16:10 in the state. The winning time was 16:04." Pearson said he hopes to better that mark in this year's state event. "I think I'm getting a lot stronger," he says. "My time is coming down and I don't think I've peaked yet." Pearson thinks it will take a 15:30 to win the state championship. "I've ran a 15:30 in a road race before, but there's a lot of difference in a road race and a cross country course."

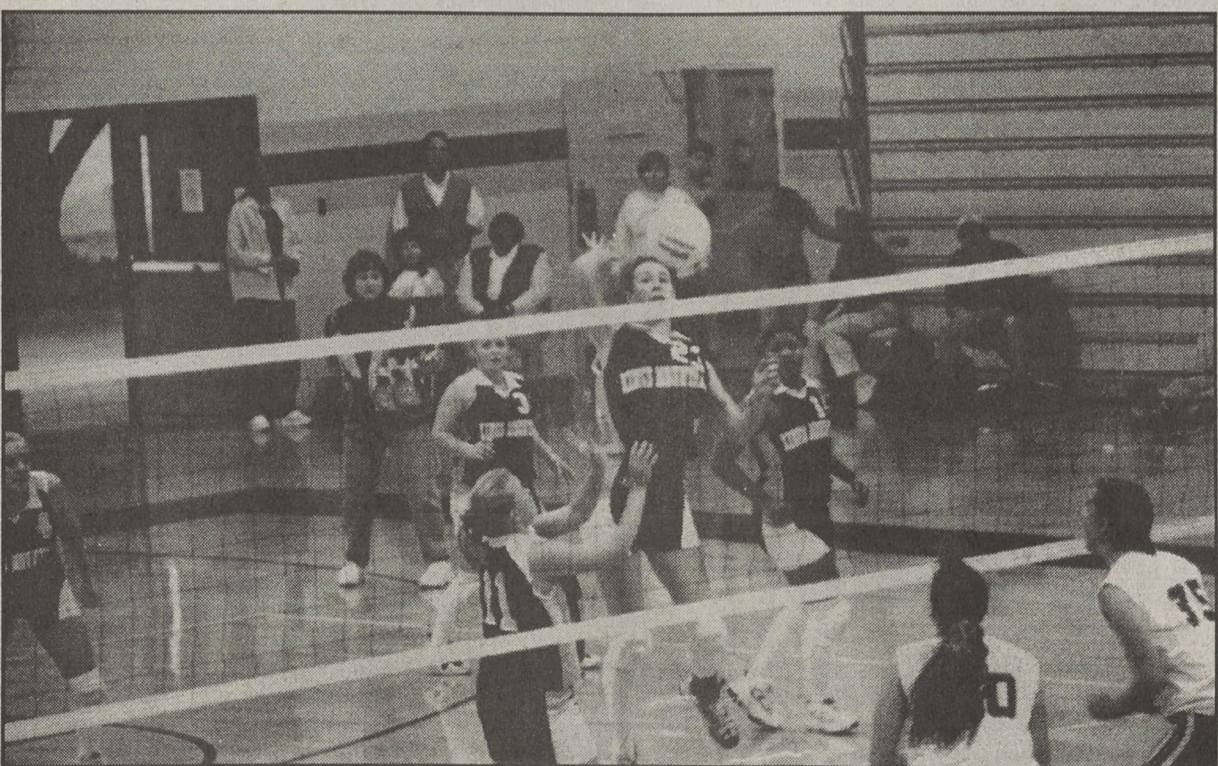
Pearson's running ability and good grades have gotten the attention of several colleges, and soon after the end of the season he hopes to get serious about his college plans. ACC powers North Carolina, Wake Forest and Florida State are among the schools showing interest. "Florida State called the other day and they're going to send me some stuff on scholarships," he said. "I plan to visit them if I'm offered anything. But right now I'm just excited about going to the state and regionals and hope I do well at it."

## MOUNTIES

From 1B

"I thought that was the best effort we've had as a team all year," Bridges said. "We had to have a strong five-setter offense. They're an excellent team so I felt good about the victory. I felt like we didn't just win, we beat them." The two teams battled tooth and nail all night long. Kings Mountain grabbed an early 2-0 lead in the first game only to see Foard come back with eight straight points to go up 8-2. But the Mountaineers battled back time and again and finally took a 13-12 lead on back-to-back blocks by 6-foot-3 Jacquie Hall. The score was tied again at 14, 15 and 16-all before the Mountaineers closed out the victory on a serving point by Toni Loftin and a kill by Csharian Coleman. The Mountaineers grabbed an early 3-0 lead in the second match but, again, Foard battled back to tie it at 5-all. But Kings Mountain scored the next four points to take command and built a 13-8 lead before Foard rallied briefly near the end. After Foard's win in the third set, Kings Mountain came out smoking in the fourth and final game, building a 5-0 lead and getting the home crowd very much involved. With the crowd standing and cheering every good play, the Mountaineers went on to build a 10-2 lead. Foard rallied on a couple of occasions and finally cut the margin to 14-8 before Kristie Brinkley's kill just inside the back-line closed out the match and the KM victory. Brinkley, the SWC's Player of the Year, finished with 26 kills, Coleman had 24, and Jacquie Hall 16. Senior D Chapman played an exceptional

floor game and recorded 60 assists. Brinkley had 19 defensive digs, Coleman 18, and Chapman and Loftin 15 each. Renee Hall and Lee Putnam were outstanding along the nets, Hall with 12 solo blocks and Putnam with 10. Kings Mountain Assistant Coach Susie Hughes, a former SWC Player of the Year for the Mountaineers, also praised the team for its great all-around effort. "Coleman, Kristie Brinkley and Jacquie Hall all played one of the best games I've ever seen them play," she said. "And we had exceptional blocking from Renee Hall and Lee Putnam. They all played so hard and with a lot of heart." "It was a great win - something they had set their minds to do. They wanted this very badly." Kings Mountain had perhaps its toughest battle Thursday night at Asheboro, going five games before defeating the Comets 15-3, 11-15, 12-15, 15-13 and 15-3. The Mountaineers faced elimination when they fell behind Asheboro 3-11 in the fourth game, but Bridges called out and urged the team to concentrate on getting the two points necessary to tie the game. "We did just that," she said, "and that forced them to call a time out. went went out and talked about our plans to take the lead. I saw a team that wouldn't quit. The team had a lot of focus and confidence in their ability. It tore the other team apart and we were able to jump out pretty hard in the fifth game." "It was an outstanding team performance. We don't really have a solo individual star, we're just a good team." The Mountaineers fell behind early Saturday night at home in their third round game against Sun Valley but rebounded to win 16-14, 15-5, 15-0.



Kings Mountain's Lee Putnam (23) plays strong around the nets for the Mountaineers in Saturday's state playoff victory over Sun Valley at the KMHS gym.

WKMT/HERALD

## Mountaineer Tailgate Party

Kings Mountain High Cafeteria  
Friday, October 30, 1998 5:45-6:45pm  
WKMT AM/1220

Stay for Kings Mountain -South Point game  
7:30pm Gamble Stadium

Featuring KMHS Football Nostalgia, Pre-Game Interviews, Trivia, Food and Lots of Fun.  
Hosts Jay Rhodes, Joel Rountree, Joe Hord & Gary Stewart

## ROTARY CLUB SPAGHETTI SUPPER

5-7:30pm

## KMHS CAFETERIA

Sponsored by ROTARY CLUB

\$5<sup>00</sup>

## Gary's Trivia?

1. The 1979 KM-South Point game featured a KM running back who later played in the NFL. Who is he?
2. What storm caused the 1989 KM-South Point game to be played on Sat. afternoon?
3. In that '89 game a KM running back returned a kick for a record 100 yards. He later played at UNC and is now an assistant coach at KMHS. Who is he?
4. One KMHS coach has never lost to South Point. Who is he?

(For answers, tune into Tailgate Party on WKMT.) Persons answering questions win prizes from BB&T, Bridges Hardware, Chick-Fil-A, First Charter National Bank, Fred Caldwell Chevrolet, Linwood Restaurant, Mauney Hoisery Mills, McDonald's, Mike's Food Store, Sagesport, Town & CountryBar-B-Que, and Winn Dixie.

**October 22nd Answers:** 1:Anthony Hillman 2: Nobody. It was a tie. 3: Rusty Bumgardner & Aubrey Hollifield 4: KM, Burns & East Rutherford

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