

# Pruett to coach KM American Legion team

By GARY STEWART  
Editor of The Herald

Tommy Pruett, longtime successful coach in North and South Carolina, has been named head coach of the Kings Mountain American Legion baseball team for the 2001 season.

The announcement was made today by former coach Tony Leigh, who has assumed the manager and athletic director's duties for Post 155.

Pruett, who lives at Moss Lake, is in his second year as head baseball coach, assistant football coach and assistant athletic director at Blacksburg High School. Last spring, the Wildcats, who had gone 1-17 the year before, finished 12-9 overall and won the Region 2A

Conference championship in Pruett's first season as coach.

Pruett, whose Wildcats will scrimmage Kings Mountain High February 21 at Lancaster Field, began his high school teaching and coaching career at Kings Mountain in 1970. He spent three years here as head JV football coach, assistant varsity coach, freshman basketball coach and middle school head baseball coach. His middle school baseball team compiled a three-year mark of 32-1, losing its last game of the third season.

He later spent 24 years as head baseball and girls basketball coach at Burns High School, accumulating 275 wins in baseball and 375 wins in basketball. He also served as an assistant football coach with the Bulldogs.

He completed his 30-year teaching and coaching career in North Carolina as head football coach at East Gaston High.

He served 10 years as American Legion baseball coach in Shelby, but he hasn't been active in legion coaching since the mid-1980s.

"I'm excited about getting back into it," he said. "I think it's going to be a challenge. Legion baseball in that area is extremely strong and very competitive. I'm just looking forward to the challenge and hope we can get out there and play well and do a good job."

Post 155 will draw most of its players from Kings Mountain, but also hopes to pull a few from Bessemer City and Blacksburg.

Pruett hopes to be able to

bring at least three pitchers from his Blacksburg team, including his son, Ryan, who posted an 8-2 record in 55 innings of work last spring. He struck out 106 batters and posted a 1.31 earned run average. He was also a first team All-State running back in football and is being recruited by a number of colleges.

Pruett's older son, Rodney, who recently graduated Western Carolina and plans to go into the coaching profession, will probably serve as his assistant coach.

Leigh and Pruett have coached together in the past and led a Kings Mountain Babe Ruth team to the state championship and a berth in the Southeast Regionals in Clearwater, FL in 1973.

"We're fortunate to have Tommy," Coach Leigh said. "He has a tremendous knowledge of the game and a lot of experience."

It will probably be near the end of the high school season before Pruett and Leigh get the Legion program cranked up, but Pruett said he will have a couple of opportunities to take a look at the KM players in action.

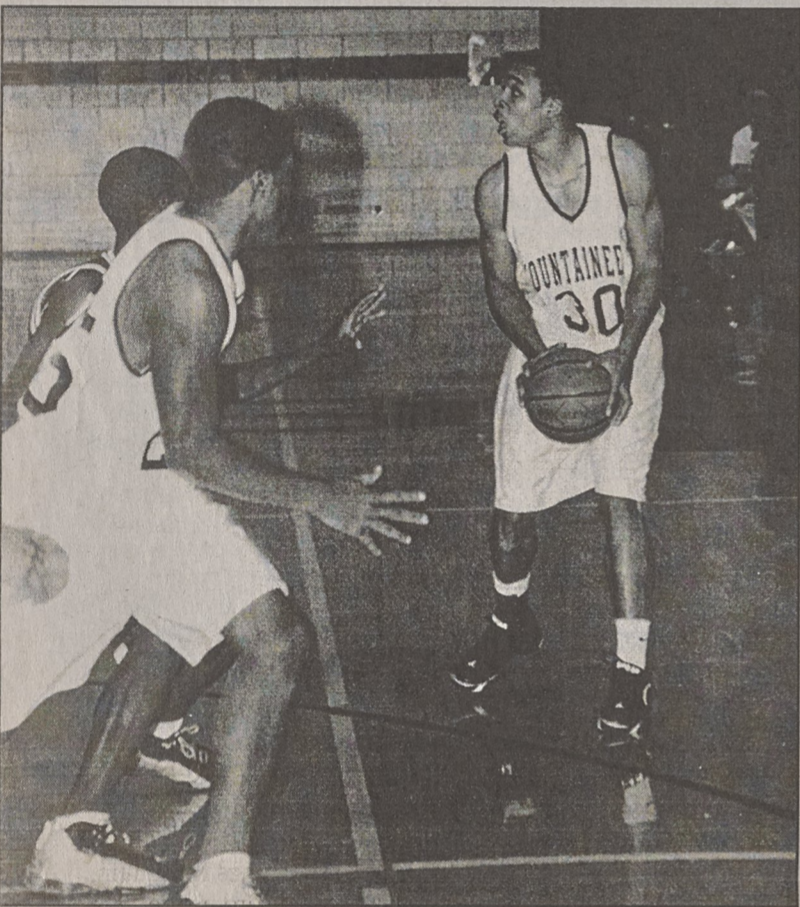
"Of course, we scrimmage them in February and we'll also be playing Kings Mountain in the Shelby Easter Tournament," he noted. "In talking with Tony, I know we're going to be pretty young."

Pruett said Legion ball is always a challenge, especially for a small town like Kings Mountain which basically

draws from one high school. Many of the other teams draw from many different high schools.

"It's going to be tough," he said. "Shelby draws from Shelby, Crest and Burns; Cherryville draws from all around, including Cherryville, Bessemer City, West Lincoln and Burns; Rutherford County draws from Chase, East Rutherford and R-S Central. We're just going to go out and do our best and try to put the best nine we've got on the field and just hustle and play hard. If we can get good pitching and play good defense we can keep the games very close and competitive."

Area IV preseason meetings are scheduled to begin soon.



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD  
Kings Mountain's Courtney Smith (30) plants for an outside jump shot in victory over North Gaston.

## Mounties sweep North Gaston

Kings Mountain High's varsity basketball teams swept North Gaston in Southwestern 3A Conference action Friday night at the KMHS gym.

The Lady Mountaineers maintained their strong hold on second place with a 52-35 win, running their record to 7-2 in the conference and 14-4 overall. Kings Mountain is two games behind unbeaten Forestview in the race for the regular season championship, but two games ahead of the rest of the competition in the battle for the SWC's #2 playoff berth.

The Mountaineers kept their slim playoff chances alive in the nightcap, defeating the last place Wildcats 89-78 behind a career-high 31-point effort from 6-5 senior center Qwenshon Goode. The Mountaineers are now 4-5 in the conference and one game out of fourth place. Only the top four teams qualify for the playoffs.

With three regular season games remaining, the

Mountaineers need to win at least two games to have a strong shot at the playoffs. Otherwise, they would probably have to win the upcoming SWC tournament to make the state field.

Kings Mountain hosts South Point Friday night in its final home game, then closes out the regular season with games at R-S Central on February 6 and Burns on February 9.

The Lady Mountaineers continued their recent habit of starting slow and finishing fast to defeat the last-place Lady Wildcats. North Gaston led 10-8 after the first quarter and 16-15 at halftime but the Lady Mountaineers held the visitors to just two points in the third period to take a commanding 29-18 lead.

North Gaston forced the Lady Mountaineers to win the game at the foul line. North Gaston committed 28 fouls and four of their players fouled out. They played the final minute of

the game with just four players. Kings Mountain hit 20 of 36 free throws to just four of 11 by the Wildcats.

Cherlyn Cole led the Mountaineer scoring with 14 points, including 6-of-11 from the charity stripe. Shonda Cole added 13 points and Anna Ramey scored 12, including a perfect 6-of-6 from the foul line.

Jessica Cabe and Johnika Garden scored eight points each for North Gaston.

"We are continuing to have slow starts," noted KM Coach Kevin Moss. "It's good that we respond and play much better in the second half, but in the four losses that we have we have started slow and could not catch up. We need to do a better job starting games."

In the boys game, the Mountaineers built a big lead, saw it evaporate, and then finished strong to post their seventh win against 13 losses.

KM led 21-18 after the first quarter, 45-38 at intermission

and 66-63 going into the fourth quarter.

The lead was still only three points (75-72) with 2 1/2 minutes to play, but the Mountaineers went on an 11-0 scoring run that put the victory on ice.

Jamal Byers scored 16 points, and Tyler Adams and Brandon Roberts 10 each to give the Mountaineers four players in double figures, the most balanced scoring in any game thus far.

### BOYS GAME

KM (89) - McClain 6, Goode 31, Byers 16, T. Adams 10, Gash 5, Roberts 10, Gingles 1, Hardin 4, Smith 2, Houze 2, K. Adams 2.

NG (78) - Howell 20, Beard 22, Conner 2, McLean 21, Mays 3, Bolick 8, Ratchford 2.

### GIRLS GAME

KM (52) - Ramey 12, Bennett 5, C. Cole 14, E. Moore 5, S. Cole 13, Gill 1, Dee 2.

NG (35) - Cabe 8, J. Garden 8, Esiet 6, Boggs 2, Sanders 5, S. Garden 3, Sexton 3.

## KM girls beat East

Kings Mountain's girls bounced back from their disappointing loss to Forestview Monday with an impressive 63-42 win over East Rutherford Wednesday night at the KMHS gym.

Kings Mountain's boys continued their slide in the nightcap, losing 81-47 to the Southwestern 3A Conference-leading Cavaliers.

The Lady Mountaineers came out smoking and never let up in

recording their sixth conference win against only two defeats - both to the defending SWC champion Forestview five.

"The team really responded well after the disappointing loss to Forestview," said second-year head coach Kevin Moss. "We need to continue to keep improving and playing hard in order to keep second place in hand. Now that we have started the second go around in the conference, the teams we beat

the first time will be looking for revenge. We can't afford to let down at any point."

Letdown wasn't an option Wednesday. Led by the strong inside-outside leadership of Shonda Cole and Anna Ramey, the Lady Mountaineers rolled to a 17-9 first quarter lead and a 33-23 halftime advantage. KM increased the margin to 48-32 going into the fourth quarter.

Cole led the scoring with 20 points, including 12 of the Mountaineers' 18 third quarter points. Ramey contributed 14, which included a pair of long-range 3-point field goals.

Teyaunki Hardy led the Cavaliers with 19 points, with most of them coming from the outside. She hit three 3-point field goals and scored 13 of the Cavaliers' 19 points in the second half. The other six were scored by Jessica Hamilton, who finished with eight points.

East Rutherford's Logan scoring machine continued its assault on SWC opponents in the nightcap. Guards Brad and Dontay Logan combined for 47 points, with Brad scoring 25 and Dontay 22.

East Rutherford led 19-15 after the first eight minutes, then began breaking the game open with a 17-8 run in the second quarter, giving East a 36-23 halftime lead. East outscored the Mounties 28-10 in the third quarter to take a 62-33 lead into the fourth period.

The victory left the Cavaliers undefeated in the SWC with an 8-0 mark.

### GIRLS GAME

KM (63) - Ramey 14, Bennett 7, C. Cole 8, E. Moore 2, S. Cole 20, Gill 4, Miller 4, S. Moore 2, Leigh 2.

ER (42) - Hardy 19, Hamilton 8, Watkins 8, Sparrow 2, Curtis 2.

### BOYS GAME

KM (47) - Goode 19, Gash 9, Byers 7, McClain 6, T. Adams 2, Smith 2, Houze 2.

ER (81) - B. Logan 25, D. Logan 22, Stroud 10, Barnette 10, Watkins 6, Phillips 4, Petty 2, Turner 2.



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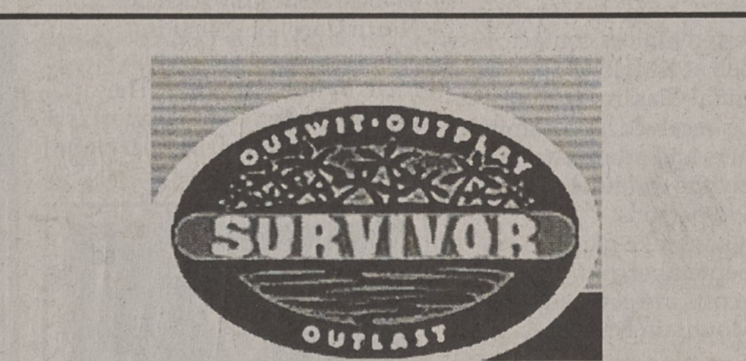


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