

Patriots clinch title

Kings Mountain scored two runs with two outs in the bottom of the seventh inning to defeat Pumpkin Center 7-6 Monday and clinch the Tri-County Conference baseball crown.

Monty Deaton's Patriots are 12-0 and hold a three-game lead over Pumpkin Center heading into their final game Thursday at East Lincoln.

"Our goal now is to win the final game and finish undefeated," Coach Deaton said. "I don't know when the last time we did that; I know it was before I took over as coach. East Lincoln has a good team and hopefully we'll be ready to play and not think that since we've won the conference we don't have to play hard."

Kings Mountain trailed 6-5 going into its last at-bat, and the first two Patriot batters struck out. Stacy

See Patriots, 7A



Tanner Putnam, seated, signs letter of intent to play football as his parents Jeff and Sharon Putnam, front, and coaches David Farquharson, Tony Leigh and Principal John Yarbrow, left to right back row, look on Monday at KMHS.

Putnam signs with L-R

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain High senior Tanner Putnam Monday signed a national letter of intent to play football at

Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory.

Putnam was a two-year starter at linebacker for the Mountaineers and expects to play that same position with the Bears.

He chose L-R over Appalachian State and Mars Hill.

"I feel great about going up there," said the 5-9, 185-pounder who was the Mountaineers' leading tackler with 56 tackles in 2001. He had over 100 tackles during his varsity career.

Putnam has his priorities in order as he begins preparing for his college days.

"The main thing is to get a good education," he said,

"and hopefully get to play a little football."

Putnam expects to major in computer science.

"I think Tanner has a great opportunity," said Mountaineer coach David Farquharson. "He's going to a program that's starting over with new coaches and new facilities. LR is a place that if Tanner goes in and does what he's been able to do here at Kings Mountain - and takes that same work ethic with him - then he'll be able to contribute to that program. I like his chances of being able to go in and work hard and put some weight on and give them some quality playing time in the years to come."

Although he admits he's "small" by college linebacker standards, Putnam said he hopes to see some playing time his freshman year.

"That would be great," he said. "Just getting some playing time and making the traveling team would be my goal for this year. I know by the time I'm a junior and senior I should be starting."

At LR, Putnam will join his high school teammate, defensive back Travis Clark, who signed earlier with the

Fifth-ranked Lady Mounties win three more

Kings Mountain High's 5th ranked women's soccer team ran its record to 14-1-2 with three more victories during the past week.

On Wednesday night, the Lady Mounties battled 90-degree temperatures and a strong East Rutherford team, but prevailed 5-0.

Sophomore Jenni Wilson began the scoring with 10 minutes left in the half off an assist from Lesley Potter. Four minutes later Blair Heffner scored on a penalty shot after being tripped in the box.

The Mountaineers increased the pressure in the second half and outshot East 15-1. Selena Owens scored twice off passes from Stephanie Edwards and Meghan Potter, and Emily Owens scored the final goal of the match on a hard shot that was deflected off an East Rutherford defender.

Stacey Spicer recorded the shutout at goal.

On Friday night, the Mountaineers blanked Newton-Conover 4-0 in a game at Gamble Stadium.

Although the KM kickers applied most of the early pressure, they were frustrated by a stingy Red Devil defense.

Lesley Potter put the Mounties ahead off a perfect "bang-goo" pass from Blair Heffner 36 minutes into the half. Katie Bennett scored a minute later off a long throw from Meghan Potter as she headed a ball so hard that it was in the back of the net before the keeper could put her hands up.

"That was one of the prettiest goals we have scored all season," said Coach Dan Potter. "We have been able to get some great scoring chances all season long due to the runs of Bennett out of the back, and far post runs of Emily Owens and Jenni Wilson from the long throw-ins of Meghan Potter. The entire team contributed much better in this game than on Wednesday."

In the second half, Wilson scored off a beautiful assist from Heather Kubu. The final goal was recorded by Alex Dawson. Selena Owens fed Blair Heffner, who tipped it to Dawson for the blast.

The shutout was the ninth in 16 games for KM. The Mounties got back into Southwestern Football Conference action Monday and defeated a young but good Hickory team 4-1.

"They start six freshmen and they have gained a lot of confidence since our first meeting," Potter noted.

Although the Mounties held the Tornadoes without a shot on goal for more than 20 minutes, they were stymied by a tough defense until the 16 minute mark. Wilson took a pass deep into the penalty box and found Meghan Potter wide open 10 yards from the near post, and Potter hammered the shot past the keeper for a 1-0 halftime lead.

Early in the second half the Mounties jumped out front 2-0 on a break away from Lesley Potter. Blair Heffner fed her with a perfect through ball.

But Hickory countered with a fast break goal of their own to cut the margin to 2-1.

"The most important part of this game was how our girls responded to Hickory scoring," Coach Potter said. "They didn't just answer the bell but started playing with a whole melody."

Heffner scored off another great feed from Wilson, then Wilson tallied the final goal with a great run as Stephanie Edwards set her up on a wonderful switch of the field pass.

Jackie Jarvis came in late as Stacey Spicer took a hard hit to the shin and made a super kick save late in the half.

The Mounties were scheduled to play host to Crest last night, followed by Polk Central away on Friday. They play at Burns Monday and at Shelby Wednesday, and host St. Stephens Friday, May 3 in a match that should decide the SWFH championship. The two teams tied 1-1 in their first meeting.



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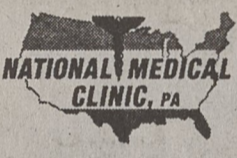
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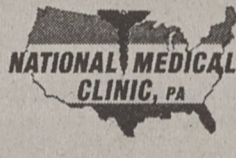
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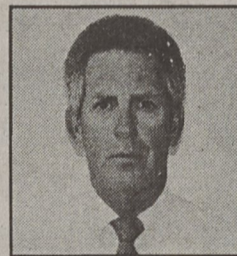
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