

SPORTS

Cleveland-Rutherford split conference proposed

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Although playing in a six-team split 2A/3A conference in the 2005 realignment period may present some scheduling challenges, Kings Mountain High athletic director Dave Farquharson said the league will also have its benefits.

It will put the Mountaineers in a more compact conference geographically, with all teams coming from adjoining Cleveland and Rutherford counties. The longest trip for KM would be to R-S Central, whereas in the present Southwestern Foothills Conference setup the Mountaineers have to travel

to three schools in Catawba County.

Farquharson said the shorter trips will result in lower gasoline costs for teams and fans and will also cut down on loss of school time for students.

In the latest realignment draft which was released last week, Kings Mountain was placed in a split conference with 3A teams Burns and R-S Central and 2A teams Shelby, Chase and East Rutherford.

Crest, which will be moving to the 4A ranks, was placed in a split 3A/4A conference with Gaston County 4A schools Ashbrook and East Gaston, and Gaston 3A teams South Point, Forestview, North Gaston

and Hunter Huss.

There was some hope that Kings Mountain could be included in the Gaston league, but it didn't pan out. In almost every scenario offered, splitting up Burns, Kings Mountain and R-S Central would have created a geographical hardship for Burns and R-S.

The realignment shouldn't hurt Kings Mountain at all financially, Farquharson said.

"I think we're in a good conference," Farquharson said. "It will make us scramble a little bit for a non-conference schedule but it gives us the opportunity to still play Crest, South Point and Forestview (in non-conference games). I've already

been contacted by some of the other Gaston schools like Ashbrook and Hunter Huss that would like to set up some playing dates for the new realignment.

"I thought we had a good chance of getting into the Gaston County league, but this right here keeps us traveling up and down 74 with R-S being the furthest trip. That's a plus with the cost of gas and amount of traveling time our teams have."

Although it will be a first for Kings Mountain, playing in a split conference shouldn't be a negative experience, Farquharson said.

"I think split conferences were going to be a thing that's just going to have to happen," he said. "When

you start looking at where people are playing and traveling expense, it just makes sense that you try and geographically keep people where they're going to be able to play and cut down travel and loss of school time. It puts us back a little bit to the old Southwestern Conference. We used to play East Rutherford and Chase, and it also puts Shelby back in our conference. So I think as far as football goes there will be a return of tradition and some rich rivalries. I don't think it takes anything away from us in football."

Bringing Shelby and East Rutherford into the league should improve it competitively and financially, Farquharson believes. Catawba County schools in the present SWFH should also benefit because they are being placed in a split 2A/3A league comprised of mostly Catawba County teams.

As soon as the conferences are officially approved by the NCHSAA board of directors, schools will get busy developing a schedule.

"Right now we've got five

conference games and you're allowed 11 games," Farquharson said. "You don't really know if you can play 11 until you have that first conference meeting and find out when your open date is. But we'll still play Crest, South Point and Forestview, and I think there's room for expanding by keeping East Gaston or adding Ashbrook and Huss. The state's going to allow us two-year contracts now so there's some more flexibility. There's a possibility that we could pick up some South Carolina teams. Clover has always wanted to get something together but we've always been on four-year contracts and they've been on two year contracts, so we've always managed to miss each other. So now there's an opportunity to pick up Clover."

"I don't think you're going to make everybody happy, but when you can put people in close proximity and cut down on the amount of travel and loss of school time, I think you've started to make some strides in the right direction."

JV Mountaineers close in on title

Kings Mountain High's JV baseball team won four games during the past week to run its record to 8-2 in the Southwestern Foothills 3A.

The Mounties were scheduled to face Fred T. Foard in Newton last night, and will host Burns in their final conference game Friday at 4:30. KM carries a one-game lead over Crest going into the final two games.

The Mounties beat Bessemer City 10-4, R-S Central 19-9, Crest 7-2 and Hickory 8-1 during the past two weeks.

Matt McKillop hurled a one-hitter and struck out eight in the win over BC. Drew Martin, Alan Breakfield and Daniel Humphries led the hitting with two hits each.

Cole Moore got the win in relief of Philip Ruff in the win over R-S. Ruff worked 3.1 innings, giving up four hits, and Moore worked 2.1 innings and gave up two hits. Kevin Bell came on to strikeout the final batter. Moore, Ruff, Breakfield

and Cannon led the hitting with two hits each.

Bell pitched a complete game 8-hitter in the win over Crest. He struck out eight.

Miles Galloway led the hitting with 2-for-4.

McKillop pitched a complete game 3-hitter in Tuesday's win over Hickory. He struck out five.

Ruff led the hitting with 4-for-4 and Adam Sellers went 2-for-3.

"We're starting to play real solid defense," said Coach John Warlick, "and our pitching is really coming through. The last three or four games we haven't given up many hits, and most of them have been singles."

"The kids are just on a roll. Everybody is putting the bat on the ball and making the other team make plays."

Kings Mountain closes out its season on Friday, May 7 in a non-conference game with East Gaston.

KMHHS girls whip Crest

Kings Mountain broke open a close game with six runs in the fifth inning to defeat Crest 9-1 in a Southwestern Foothills Conference softball game Friday at KM's Lancaster Field.

Kristyn Funderburke pitched the first four innings to get the win. She gave up four hits and struck out six.

Morgan Childers worked the final three innings, giving

up only one hit and striking out four.

Casey Camp, Kala Buchanan, Brittney Thornburg and Brooke Blackburn led the KM plate attack with two hits each. Buchanan, Thornburg and Blackburn each drove in a run and Camp scored twice.

LaRonda McClain had a triple and two runs scored. Funderburke had an RBI single and Jessica Yarbro also had a single.

CURRY

From 6A

about his players."

Farquharson was pleased to see Curry sign and expects him to do well with the Pioneers.

"I'm just tickled to death for him," he said. "He's been patient. He did all the right things in school and on the playing field. He just kept plugging along and I think he'll be happy up there and will do a good job for them."

Farquharson said the road to a college scholarship was sometimes rocky for Curry.

"It's been a long haul for him," he said. "He came into his senior year already a qualifier for Division I. He had been talked to and looked at by a couple of Division I schools and things didn't pan out that way. That kind of put him on the bubble, so we started looking at the Division II programs in this area."

"Orlando has been a scholar athlete for three years. He does a great job in the classroom. He has earned the respect of his teachers in the way he carries himself in the classroom and on the ball field. We're happy for him."



Come One, Come All

to the

Down Home Festival

16th Annual

Saturday, May 8 ~ 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Downtown Bessemer City

► FOOD, FUN AND AMUSEMENTS ◀

When it comes to food, fun and amusements, the 2004 Down Home Festival has it all! A wide variety of food and craft vendors will line the downtown streets as well as booths sponsored by local civic clubs and churches. Delicious hamburgers, hot dogs and speciality foods like funnel cakes, barbecue, Mediterranean delights and snow cones are just a few of the tasty treats festival goers will enjoy. A wide range of crafts will be available festival day and everyone can enjoy balloons, caricature drawings and face painting. The festival will also have its share of popular amusement rides provided again this year by McFeely Amusements. Kids will enjoy the Tsunami Wave Slide, the Jitterbug Swings, the 30-foot Ferris Wheel, the Kids Town Play Port, the Topsy Turvy Play Land, the 36-foot Tubro Tower Slide, the Barrels of Fun, the Up and Down Helicopters and the Jurassic Park adventure. The festival will also feature raffles and prize give-a-ways. Don't miss all of the festival fun and entertainment!

► ARMBAND SPECIAL ◀

Forget tickets! Buy an armband and ride all day! This year's festival offers amusement ride armbands that give children and adults unlimited access to the nine amusement rides. Armbands cost \$8 in advance and \$10 on festival day. Armbands can be purchased in advance at City Hall and at other locations around town. For more information about the armband special, call (704) 629-4176.

► DOWN HOME FESTIVAL QUEEN PAGEANT ◀

No festival is complete without a beauty queen and this year's event will have its share of pageant winners. The fourth annual Miss Down Home Festival Queen Pageant will be held on the City Stage beginning at 10:30 a.m. with girls from newborn to age 19 competing for titles in various categories. All contestants will receive a tiara and the winners become members of the Miss Gastonia queens' court. Entry fee is \$40. For pageant information and an application, call Delores Cox at (704) 827-7277 or Todd Hagans at (704) 435-6752. Applications are also available at City Hall and pre-registration is encouraged. The pageant is sponsored by the Miss Gastonia Scholarship Association, Inc. with proceeds benefiting the Miss Gastonia scholarship fund.

► FESTIVAL ENTERTAINMENT ◀

This year's festival continues the tradition of featuring top quality music and entertainment. The festivities kick off at 10 a.m. with opening ceremonies following by a gospel music performance by The Melody Masters from 10 - 11 a.m. The Contrails take to the 12th St. stage from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. with a variety of beach, country, pop and oldies tunes and the Shady Creek Outlaws perform bluegrass music from 3-4 p.m. Afternoon entertainment will also feature local dance groups and plenty of surprises!

► CAROLINA CRUISERS ◀

Bessemer City's favorite car club is back this year and expect the festival's classic car show to be better than ever! The Carolina Cruisers bring some of the hottest classic hot rods and antique cars to the Down Home Festival to create a vibrant rainbow of colors along Pennsylvania Ave. This is a don't miss event!

► MOTORCYCLE SHOW ◀

All types of motorcycles will be on display during the motorcycle show sponsored by Croft Custom Cycle in Bessemer City. If it's on two wheels, you can count on seeing it. Expect a wide variety of Harley Davidsons as well as other models that will surely catch the eye of all motorcycle lovers. The popular motorcycle show will be held in the Central Carolina Bank parking lot.

► HISTORY MUSEUM TOURS ◀

The Bessemer City History and Arts Society will offer tours of the museum located at 209 W. Washington Ave., within walking distance just one block north of all of the festival action. Tours will be held from 2-4 p.m. with a live history presentation at 3 p.m. Museum admission is free and many items of local interest will be on display. The museum, which held its grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony during the 2003 Down Home Festival, gives people the opportunity to learn more about the town's rich heritage.

Gaston County's most popular spring festival!

For festival information, call (704) 629-3900 or (704) 629-4176

A joint project of the Bessemer City Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of Bessemer City