



Kings Mountain quarterback Brandon McClain (11) rolls out in Friday's NCHSAA playoff game at T.C. Roberson. Below, KM's Darik Gary gets a drink of water after returning a kick 90 yards for a touchdown.

GARY STEWART / HERALD

Clark hero in Western's win over ASU

Cleveland County native David Thompson is one of four North Carolina sports legends that will be inducted into the Greater Charlotte Sports Hall of Fame on April 16 at the Panthers Den at Bank of America Stadium. Thompson was a standout basketball player at Crest High School, NC State and the ABA. Other inductees are former South Mecklenburg, UNC and NBA standout Bobby Jones, the late major league relief pitcher Hoyt Wilhelm, whose knuckleball was probably the hardest pitch to hit (and catch), and Charlotte racing executive Bruton Smith...



Gary Stewart Editor

Justin Clark, son of former KMHS coach Bruce Clark (now at North Gaston) was the hero for Western Carolina in its 30-27 upset of Appalachian State Saturday. Clark came into the game when the regular WCU quarterback was injured with five minutes remaining, and the Catamounts trailing 27-15. Clark threw two touchdown passes to lift the Catamounts to victory. It was just the second time in 18 years that the Catamounts have claimed the Old Mountain Jug...

The gear is barely put away, but two area high schools are already looking for football coaches. West Lincoln, which started the season 4-0 and then lost seven straight games, fired coach Butch Parker. Randy Page, long-time head coach at Chase, resigned after his team completed a 3-8 season...Two Crest High standouts have signed to play football in the ACC. Shrine Bowl center Andy Barbee is going to NC State and running sensation Travis Padgett is going to Clemson...

Kings Mountain's loss to T.C. Roberson in the opening round of the State 3AA playoffs Friday wasn't unexpected, although I don't think anyone would have believed the Mountaineers would go down to the tune of 77-21. A lot of other results in the area were unexpected, though. Certainly, not many people in this neck of the woods thought Big South co-champion South Point would lose to Franklin, which by the way was blown out by T.C. Roberson 47-7 a week earlier. For South Point to be held to five yards rushing was even more surprising. But as the old saying goes, the reason you play the game is to see who's going to win.

Other area games that could be labeled mild upsets were East Henderson's 29-13 win over Forestview and Bessemer City's 28-21 win over Murphy. On paper, East Gaston's 35-14 win over Hickory might be considered an upset, but after seeing Hickory a few weeks ago I felt pretty good about East Gaston's chances. Hickory is not the power it used to be.

There are some interesting matchups this Friday. Former KMHS Coach Ron Massey will bring his A.L. Brown Wonders into Gaston County to face Big South co-champ Ashbrook. A lot of KM fans will probably attend that game. I look for the green and white to win.

T.C. Roberson will host some folks with KM connections when they face East Gaston Friday. The Warriors' head coach Mark Latham is a former KM defensive coordinator and assistants Tony and Andy Leigh are KM residents. Both are former Mountaineer football and baseball players, and Tony was on the KM coaching staff for many years.

Crest, which survived a determined Trinity team last Saturday night, will host a good Monroe Piedmont team and Coach Rusty Jester this week and Burns will entertain Anson County.

Shelby will have a tough test in the 2A playoffs as Brevard brings a typical hard-hitting mountain team to Shelby, and Lincolnton and East Rutherford will face off for the second time this season in Forest City.



Susie Potter, left, and Baxter McGregor received cross country All-Conference awards at last week's KMHS fall sports banquet. Potter was also selected team MVP, and McGregor was named most improved player.

BATTERING RAMS

T.C. Roberson humiliates Mounties 77-21 in opening round of State 3-AA playoffs

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

During the early part of the first quarter of Friday night's Kings Mountain-TC Roberson 3AA state playoff game in Skyland, it looked like an old west shootout.

But after KM's Darik Gary rambled 90 yards on a kickoff return to cut the Rams' lead to 21-14 with 4:28 showing on the clock, the Mountaineers ran out of bullets and Roberson continued to fire away and handed the Mountaineers their worst defeat ever in 3A football, 77-21.

From that 21-14 advantage, the undefeated Rams scored six unanswered touchdowns to build a 70-14 lead. Kings Mountain finally scored another TD in the final four minutes against the Rams' reserves.

The victory improved T.C. Roberson's record to 11-0. The Rams will host East Gaston, a 35-14 winner over Hickory, in a second round game Friday night.

Kings Mountain, making only its second trip to the state playoffs in six years, finished its season with a 4-8 overall record.

Despite Kings Mountain's early success, it was obvious to most in the sparse crowd that made the trip up the mountain on a damp, foggy night that T.C. Roberson's talent and speed far exceeded that of the Mountaineers.

Led by one of the state's top running backs, De'Von Mills, the Rams totaled 463 yards of total offense, led by Mills with 201 yard rushing on 16 carries.

Kings Mountain's offense was completely shut down by a Roberson defense that featured extremely quick linebackers and defensive backs. Kings Mountain managed only three first downs and 87 yards rushing, with 70

of those yards coming on a late fourth quarter touchdown run by fullback John Gwinn.

"We played a very good football team, probably one of the better teams we've played all year" said KM Coach Dave Farquharson. "They had athletes all in the right places. They executed well."

"We knew going in that they were going to be good," he continued. "I

yard touchdown run, putting the Rams on top 6-0, and moments later Jackson intercepted a pass and returned it 29 yards for a touchdown and a 14-0 lead with just 3 1/2 minutes gone off the clock.

Kings Mountain, which had been held to three and out on its first three possessions, got a break when Roberson fumbled a Brad Moffitt punt and the Mounties recovered at the Rams' 14. Three plays later Darik Gary made a spectacular leaping catch over the outstretched hands of a Roberson defender in the back corner of the end zone for a 7-yard touchdown play that cut the score to 14-7.

The Rams drove 63 yards in just two plays and Jackson scored on a 6-yard run to put the Rams up 21-7, but Gary returned the ensuing kickoff 90 yards for a touchdown to make the score 21-14 with 4:42 still remaining in the first quarter.

The Rams added two more first quarter scores on a 90-yard kickoff return by George Holmes and a 9-yard run by Jackson to stretch the lead to 35-14, and the rout was on. The Rams scored three more times in the second period on runs of one and 13 yards by Mills and a one-yard quarterback sneak by Cameron Underwood to make the score 56-14 at the break.

Early in the third period, Underwood hit Pless on a 53-yard touchdown play across the middle to make the score 63-14, and the Rams' reserves took over. Paul Gilmore caught a 33 yard pass from reserve quarterback Devon Mullis to make it 70-14. After Gwinn's 70-yard TD run for KM's final touchdown of the year, Chance Bartell got loose on a 35-yard run to close out the scoring for Roberson.



thought we'd be able to move the ball a little better than we did. I thought we had some matchups on the offensive line versus their defensive line that would help us move the football, but their overall team speed was better than ours. Their kids with speed weigh 180 pounds and our kids that have speed weigh 120. That does make a difference, but I thought our kids played hard. I don't think they quit. I think they played as hard as they could play and played to the best of their ability. That's all you can ask them to do."

Two quick touchdowns gave the Rams the momentum on the muddy field. Fullback Coti Jackson followed up a 17-yard run by Mills with a 14-

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