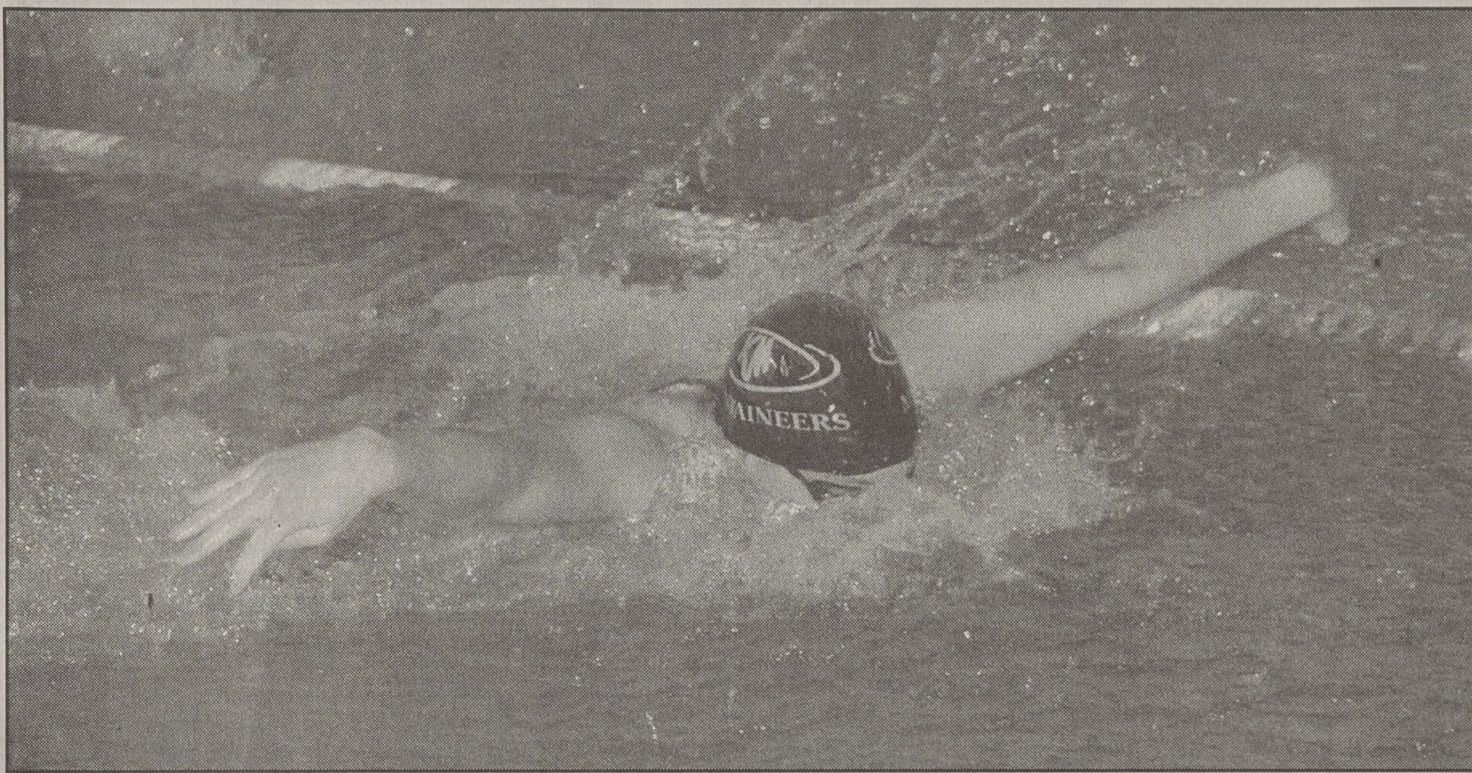


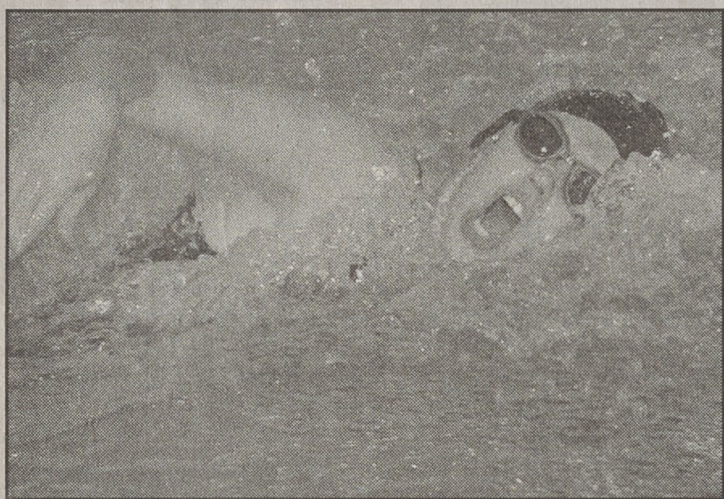
**SPORTS**



**Kings Mountain's Michael Allen won two events in Monday's Southwestern Foothills Conference meet at Neisler Natatorium.**

GARY STEWART / HERALD

# Hickory ends KMHS reign as conference swim champ



**Kings Mountain's Jessica Yarbro finished third in the 50 free in Monday's Southwestern Foothills Conference swim meet at Neisler Natatorium**

Kings Mountain High's men's swim team saw its four-year reign as Southwestern and Southwestern Foothills Conference champions come to an end in the SWFH conference meet Monday at Neisler Natatorium.

Hickory's men grabbed the league championship by 30 points over the Mountaineers. The Red Tornadoes compiled 246 points to KM's 216. St. Stephens was third with 209, followed by Crest 174, R-S Central 154 and Fred T. Foard.

Swimmers that finished in first place were named to the All-Conference team. Swimmers of the Year were Gata Miycizaki of St. Stephens and Micah Penley of Fred T. Foard. Cathy Hitchcock of Hickory was coach of the year.

Defending State Champion Michael Allen led the Mountaineers with first place finishes in the 200 freestyle and 500 freestyle.

Kings Mountain's 200 and 400 freestyle relay teams

also won first place.

Michael Sabetti was second in the 50 free and third in the 100 fly, and James Gladden was third in the 200 free.

In the girls division, St. Stephens won with 281.5 points, followed by R-S Central 228, Hickory 220, KM 190.5, Fred T. Foard 171 and Crest 61.

Swimmers of the year were Meredith McBride of St. Stephens and Emily Powell of R-S Central. Cathy Schiffel of St. Stephens was coach of the year.

Lorri Plyler led the KM ladies with a first place finish in the 200 free and a second place in the 100 breast-stroke.

Jessica Yarbro finished third in the 50 free.

Swimmers and divers who met qualifying times during the regular season will advance to the Western Regional next week at Huntersville. The top finishers there will qualify for the State Meet which will be held February 11 in Chapel Hill.

## Ducks, Strike Force take bowling lead

M.R. Ducks regained the lead in mixed duckpin bowling league action Tuesday night at Dilling Heating, defeating Dream Team 6-2.

M.R. Ducks (28-12) got a 148 line and 368 set from Greg Evans. Pernell Byars had a 134 line and Mark Abernathy a 335 set for Dream Team (24-16).

Mighty Ducks and Duck Masters split 4-4. Ed Philbeck led the Mighty Ducks (16-24) with a 147 line and 383 set. Zeke Rybczyk led Duck Masters

(12-28) with a 159 line and 367 set.

On Thursday night, the KM Warriors swept Allen's Raiders, knocking them out of first place, and allowing Tommy's Strike Force to move into a tie following a 4-4 split with Merck's Murderers.

Joey Whitaker led the Warriors (16-16) with a 123 line and 317 set. Allen Myers led the Raiders (16-16) with a 114 line and 338 set.

Tommy Barrett led Strike Force (18-14) with a 130 line and 353 set. Zeke Rybczyk led the Murderers (14-18) with a 133 line and 363 set.

**NOTE TO COACHES**

Report sports scores to The Herald by faxing 739-0611 or e-mail [gstewart@kingsmountain-herald.com](mailto:gstewart@kingsmountain-herald.com)

# KM playoff hopes alive after win

There's still a little light at the end of the tunnel for Kings Mountain's Mountaineers in their quest for a state 3A playoff berth.

The Mountaineers knocked off fourth place R-S Central 73-62 Tuesday night in Rutherfordton to keep alive their hope of tying the Hilltoppers for the fourth Southwestern Foothills playoff berth.

If Kings Mountain, 4-6 in the conference, can beat winless St. Stephens on the road Friday night and then knock off third place Hickory in their regular season finale Tuesday at home; and if R-S Central loses its final two games the Mountaineers and R-S would both finish 6-6 and the Mountaineers would own the tie-breaker because of their two wins over R-S. Otherwise, they'll have to win the conference tournament to qualify.

The Mountaineers had perhaps their most complete game of the season Tuesday with five players scoring in double figures. David McClish led the way with 16 points and added 11 rebounds. Heath Walker had 12 points and 12 rebounds, Antonio Feaster added 12 points and 11 rebounds, D.J. Byrd had 11 points and 10 rebounds, and Brandon McClain scored 10 points. McClain was playing his first game in over two weeks after suffering an injury that put him on the sidelines for two games, and then taking an educational trip that took him out of the lineup for two more.

One of the big keys to the Mountaineer attack was freshman guard Xavier Whittenburg, who did an outstanding job pushing the ball up court and dishing off to other players for easy baskets. Whittenburg had 11 assists.

"He jump started our offense," said Coach Danny McDowell. "We had a lot of easy baskets and lay-ups because of the way he was pushing the ball up the court. A lot of guys got snowbirds because of him."

The Mountaineers had their best shooting night of the year, hitting 73 percent

from the foul line, 62 percent from two-point range and 50 percent from three-point range.

"To have five guys in double figures and career highs with assists and rebounds from people was just a pleasant surprise," McDowell said.

Unlike past games - and especially during their five game losing streak going into the R-S gym - the Mountaineers didn't have a letdown at any point of the game. Kings Mountain got off to a 14-12 lead in the first quarter and didn't let up. The Mountaineers built a 38-29 halftime lead and 57-41 lead going into the fourth quarter.

"The kids played hard," McDowell said. "They just hustled and talked on defense and offense the entire night. That's something you'd like to bottle up and keep."

"This was a big win for us," he added. "We know we have to win out to even get there (to the playoffs). We definitely need to win Friday and then get Hickory (Tuesday), and we've got an outside chance."

Kings Mountain's girls grabbed a 12-10 first quarter lead but couldn't keep pace with R-S in the middle two quarters and lost their 19th straight game, 54-40. The Lady Mountaineers haven't won a conference game in two years and have a 1-40 overall record during that span.

Angel Smith led the KM scoring with 14 points and Nataisha Cannedy added 11.

**GIRLS GAME**

KM (40) - Smith 14, Cannedy 11, Meeks 5, Vinson 4, Sims 4, McClain 2. RS (54) - Flack 14, Hernandez 11, Jackson 9, Ross 6, Morse 4, Hamrick 4, Ross 4, Bean 2.

**BOYS GAME**

KM (73) - McClish 16, Walker 12, Feaster 12, Byrd 11, McClain 10, Whittenburg 6, Love 3, Gary 3. RS (62) - Green 14, Abrams 11, Byers 10, Lytle 9, Sadler 7, Hines 5, Young 3, Lopez 2, Whitesides 1.



**Kings Mountain's Laura Weigle, right, tries to steal the ball from a Crest player in Friday's JV game at Donald L. Parker Gymnasium.**

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