

SPORTS

KM girls upset R-S

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It was just a matter of time before the improving Kings Mountain High's women's basketball teams pulled a big upset.

In their regular season finale Thursday night at Donald L. Parker Gymnasium, Coach Donna DeWitt's Lady Mountaineers stunned R-S Central 48-46 to finish 5-5 in the split Southwestern 2A/3A Conference.

The win created a tie between KM and R-S in the 3A bracket head-to-head meetings, but R-S Central finished 6-4 in the SWC and 19-5 overall in the regular season to nail down the SWC's only 3A playoff berth. KM still has an outside shot at a wild card berth but with their rugged preseason schedule and 9-15 overall mark it will be tough to achieve.

The big victory left Coach DeWitt and her returning players excited about the prospects for next season.

Kings Mountain went into this year having won only one game over the previous two seasons. From day one of practice, DeWitt saw signs of good things to come, and especially since the Christmas break the Lady Mountaineers have been sensing a big turnaround.

"Over Christmas we worked on our man-to-man defense and the help defense coming off the man-to-man, and it's turned around our whole season," Coach DeWitt noted. "We play everybody a full-court man-to-man. It's definitely distracting these other teams from being able to run their offense. We've gotten more aggressive. In the zone we sort of laid back and didn't go after it."

The Lady Mountaineers defeated Burns and Chase twice each, and R-S once in the SWC. R-S also beat Chase and Burns twice each, but also pulled an upset of Shelby to finish one game ahead of KM in the conference.

Kings Mountain players feel good that they still have a shot at the playoffs.

"There are some possibilities. Head-to-head it looks good, but we may not get one if we have to depend on a wild card because of our overall record," DeWitt said. "We played some of the toughest teams around in preseason and I knew it would come back to bite us before it's over with. But nothing's for sure right now and we still have hope."

Regardless of the outcome of the season, DeWitt says she is extremely proud of her players and their dedication to getting better.

"We've been in every game except for one or two," she said. "Our record is not an indication of how well they've developed and how hard they've worked. We always had the opportunity to win in the fourth quarter."

DeWitt credits some of her younger players for coming up big in last week's win over R-S. In the fourth quarter, when the game was on the line, LaRonda McClain was the only senior on the floor for the KM team.

"Angel Smith fouled out in the third quarter, and Lucy Cleveland wasn't having a good game, so LaRonda was the only senior out there," she noted. "These young girls withstood the pressure and came out with that victory. That's a perfect indicator of what they're going to be able to do next season."

Calling up several players from the JV team at the Christmas break paid big dividends for DeWitt's team. The JV team, which finished 16-1 overall for the best record in the SWC, had only four games after Christmas because two of the SWC schools do not have JV programs.

"I was intending to keep them initially, but sent them back down to help develop the JV program," DeWitt said. "After Christmas with the JV girls being 13-1, their season was pretty well set. I went ahead and moved those kids back up and it gave us a big support coming off the bench. One of them, Brooke Avery, is now one of our starting guards. Kelisha Goodson is getting a lot of minutes at the point position, and Jordan Doty is getting a lot of time at the small forward position."

Thursday's game was up and down for both teams, and in the end KM's defensive pressure was the difference. R-S bolted to a 12-4 first quarter lead but KM forced numerous turnovers in the second quarter that enabled the Mountaineers to go into halftime leading 23-16.



JOSEPH BRYMER / HERALD
Gerica Vinson had a big game for Kings Mountain High's girls in victories over R-S Central and East Rutherford

R-S Central charged back in the third quarter to trail by only 33-32, and the Hilltoppers actually took the lead early in the fourth quarter. KM moved back out front midway of the fourth quarter and never relinquished the lead.

Marsha Meeks led the KM offense with 17 points, hitting 8-of-16 from the floor. Smith added 11 points.

Kings Mountain's defense dominated inside with 32 rebounds. Brittany McClain pulled down seven and LaRonda McClain, Gerica Vinson and Meeks had six apiece.

Kings Mountain's men also pulled off an upset Thursday, defeating the Hilltoppers 66-52 to end their regular season with a 3-7 SWC and 3-20 overall mark.

A 20-9 scoring advantage in the fourth quarter broke the game open for Ric Franklin's Mounties. KM led 16-13 after the first quarter, 33-29 at halftime and 46-45 going into the fourth quarter.

Xavier Whittenburg led four double-digit scorers for the Mounties with 14 points. Johnny Phillips scored 13, Joel Guyton 12 and Darrick Marable 10.

Najee Greene of R-S led all scorers with 27 points.

Kings Mountain's JV girls ended their season with a 16-1 record with a 33-8 victory over the Hilltoppers.

Angel Burris led the Lady Mountaineers with 16 points and Sacia Washington led R-S with six.

BOYS GAME

RS (52) - Greene 27, Hines 10, Davis 5, Carson 4, Miller 2, Young 2, Ledbetter 2.
KM (66) - Whittenburg 14, Phillips 13, Guyton 12, Marable 10, Gill 7, Ross 6, Asgari 4.

GIRLS GAME

RS (46) - Morse 12, Thomas 12, Hernandez 10.
KM (48) - Meeks 17, Smith 11, Avery 6, Vinson 6, L. McClain 4, Doty 4.

and 280 set.

In Thursday night league action, first place Buckshot Bowlers (29-11) swept PJs (17-23) 8-0. Jack Barrett led Buckshot with a 121 line and 344 set and Pernell Byars led PJs with a 115 line and 326 set.

Lucky Ducks (23-17) swept KM Warriors (11-29). Tommy Barrett led the Lucky Ducks with a 140 line and 355 set. Allen Myers had a 137-342 and Ed Philbeck a 113-325 for the Warriors.

KM girls stun SWC champion, go for tournament title Friday

Kings Mountain's girls state playoff hopes are still alive after the Lady Mountaineers shocked regular season champion East Rutherford 55-49 Tuesday night in the semifinals of the SWC tournament.

The Lady Mountaineers, 9-15 overall, will play R-S Central Friday for the tournament title. R-S stunned second place Shelby Tuesday.

This is the third game of the year for KM and R-S. They split their first two but R-S nailed down the only assured SWC playoff spot with a 6-4 overall conference record. KM, 5-5 in the conference, is improving its chances for a wild card berth.

The Mounties won the game with a 17-6 scoring advantage in the fourth quarter. KM had led 15-12 after the first quarter but trailed 28-27 at halftime and 43-38 going into the fourth quarter.

Gerica Vinson had her best game of the year, hitting 9-of-14 shots from the floor and 19 points. Angel Smith and Marsha Meeks added 12 points

each. Meeks had nine rebounds and Vinson and Brittany McClain had seven each.

GIRLS GAME

KM (55) - Vinson 19, Smith 12, Meeks 12, L. McClain 4, Doty 4, Burris 2, B. McClain 2.
ER (49) - Mayse 19, C. Smith 14, Watkins 6, Battle 4, Hughes 2, N. Mayse 1.

Kings Mountain High's basketball teams both pulled off home court victories Monday in the opening round of the Southwestern Conference tournament.

The Lady Mountaineers defeated Burns 65-48 and the Mounties beat Chase 68-55.

Smith led the KM scoring with 16 points, hitting 6-of-11 shots from the floor. Meeks had eight points and six rebounds and LaRonda McClain had seven points and seven rebounds.

Kings Mountain got off to a fast start, building a 18-4 first quarter lead. Burns trimmed the margin to 30-24 at halftime,

but KM got hot again in the See KM Girls, 7B

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Evans bowls another 400

Greg Evans turned in yet another 400 set in mixed duckpin bowling league action Tuesday night at Dilling Heating.

Evans' 167 line and 460 series led Blind Ducks (37-19) to a 4-4 split with Zeke's Zingers (21-35). Ed Philbeck led the Zingers with a 126 line and 356 set.

Mark Abernathy's 129 line and 346 set led S&M (27-29) to a 6-2 win over Dead Ducks (27-29). Pernell Byars led the Ducks with a 105 line

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