

SPORTS



GARY STEWART / HERALD

Brantley Blalock takes a turn on the mound in recent Kings Mountain High School baseball game. The Mountaineers travel to West Lincoln Friday and host Chase in their first Southwestern Conference game Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Mountaineers lose to Crest Monday

Kings Mountain took a 2-0 lead in the top of the first inning but Crest came back to win 5-2 in a non-conference baseball game Monday at Crest.

The Chargers cracked eight hits against two KM pitchers and also took advantage of a pair of Kings Mountain errors.

Kyle Nanney pitched five innings to get the win for Crest. He gave up only three hits but walked six batters. Jeffry Howell started for the Mountaineers and took the loss. He gave up seven hits over four innings and struck out eight. Luke Proctor worked the final two innings, giving up one hit and fanning three.

Leadoff batter Tyler Ross, who got two of KM's four hits, led off the game with a single to center. After Cody Austin walked and Brantley Blalock popped up to second, Brent Hunt walked to load the bases. A bases-loaded walk to Howell forced in Ross for a 1-0 lead, and Proctor's single to right drove in Austin for the Mounties' final run.

Crest trimmed the margin to 2-1 in the bottom of the first when Kyle Kendrick singled

and later scored on a single by Adam McFarland.

The Chargers took a 3-2 lead with two runs in the third. With one out, Kendrick walked and later scored when Tisdale reached base on an error. An out later, Tisdale scored on a single by Corey Cline.

The Chargers added their final two runs in the fifth on consecutive singles by Julian Ridings, Kendrick, Tisdale, and McFarland.

After the first, the Mounties got only two players in scoring position. In the third Howell singled to center with two outs and his pinch-runner, Chris Allen, made it to second on a passed ball but was stranded as Proctor struck out.

In the seventh, Ross singled with one out and Austin walked. But Blalock struck out swinging and Hunt grounded to the pitcher to end the game.

Kings Mountain travels to West Lincoln Friday at 4 p.m. for a JV/varsity doubleheader before opening its conference schedule Tuesday at 7 p.m. against Chase at Lancaster Field.

Mountaineers open baseball season with losses to Gaston County teams

Kings Mountain's Mountaineers fell to East Gaston 6-1 Thursday and South Point 3-1 Friday in non-conference games.

The Mountaineers managed just three hits in each game. Against East Gaston, they committed three errors and left 10 men on base.

Brantley Blalock singled home Justin Heinbach with the Mountaineers' only run in the fifth inning. Heinbach opened the inning with a walk and moved to second when Tyler Ross singled to center.

Jeffry Howell took the loss. He struck out the side in the first and second innings but three Mountaineer errors and a balk led to three East Gaston runs in the third inning.

Kyle Bell pitched the final 2 2/3 innings, giving up one hit and fanning one.

Puckett pitched five innings to get the win. He walked two and struck out six. Russell pitched the final two innings, walking two and fanning five.

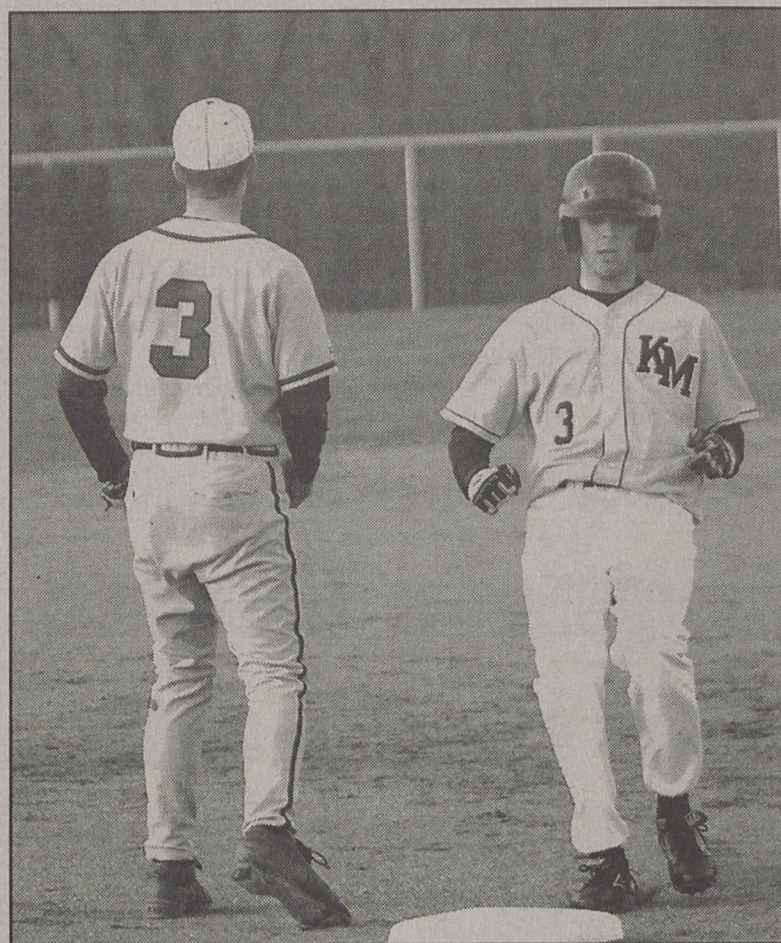
Kings Mountain's only other hit was by Brent Hunt.

■ South Point tagged Brantley Blalock for three runs in the bottom of the second, and they were enough to defeat the Mountaineers on Friday. The Raiders and Mountaineers finished with just three hits each. Kings Mountain committed two errors and left six men on base.

Blalock retired the first four batters he faced before an error and hit batsman opened the floodgate in the second. With two outs, Derek Tiefinger laced a run-scoring single to right for a 1-0 Raider lead. Blalock quickly worked an 0-2 count on Matt Darnell, but on a 2-2 count Darnell ripped a two-run single to center. Proctor came on and got Ryan Honeycutt to ground into a fielder's choice to end the inning.

Hunt, Howell and Rai Robinson had a hit apiece for the Mountaineers. Their only run came in the top of the third when Ross reached base on an error, moved to second when Cody Austin walked, and scored on Hunt's single to center.

Blalock gave up two hits over 1 2/3 innings. Proctor pitched the final 4 1/3 innings and gave up no runs and one hit while striking out three.



Kings Mountain's Justin Heinbach (3) pulls into third base following a hit by a teammate in recent scrimmage with East Gaston's Warriors.

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