

# Sports



**GARY STEWART/HERALD**  
Dylan Smith hauls in a pop-up to third in recent KMHS baseball game. Smith clubbed two home runs Thursday at Forest City to lead the Mountaineers to a 6-0 win over East Rutherford.

## Mountaineers beat Shelby; East to hold onto first place

By **GARY STEWART**  
Sports Editor

Kings Mountain defeated Shelby 8-5 Tuesday and East Rutherford 6-0 Thursday to go into spring break with a 7-1 conference record and a two-game lead over Chase for the regular season crown.

Senior third baseman Dylan Smith had the best game of his varsity career Thursday at East, slamming two home runs and driving in five of the six runs. Tyler Ross hit a solo home run for KM's final victory margin.

Jeffrey Howell went the distance on the mound, scattering seven hits and striking out eight. Drew Reynolds pitched the first six innings and took the loss for the Cavaliers.

Smith hit a three-run homer over the left field fence to put the Mountaineers up 3-0 in the top of the second inning. An East error and walk preceded the blast.

Ross homered to left with one out in the fourth to increase the margin to 4-0, and Smith added his second blast of the game - and fourth of the season - with Brent Hunt aboard in the sixth.

Smith was the only KM player with two hits. Hunt, Ross, Brantley Blalock and Chris Allen added one apiece.

Howell posted his second complete game victory of the season over the defending champion Cavaliers. Tyler Byers and Jordan Mabe had two hits each for East.

Ross clubbed a three-run double and Blalock and Cody Austin drove in a run apiece as the Mountaineers posted their second win of the year over Shelby Tuesday night in Shelby.

Ross, double highlighted a four-run first inning for the Mountaineers but Shelby battled back to tie the game at 4-4 with three runs in the first and one in the second.

Chris Allen singled and scored what turned out to be the winning run on Austin's triple to right-center in the top of the fourth. Austin scored when Blalock reached base on an error, putting KM up 6-4.

The Mountaineers added their final two runs in the sixth. Smith singled to right and his pinch-runner, Kyle Bell, scored when Brian Brown reached base on an error. Blalock singled home Brown.

Blalock pitched the first six innings to get the win. He scattered eight hits and struck out eight before giving way to Howell in the seventh. After a shaky first two innings, Blalock retired the Lions in order in the third through fifth innings.

Austin and Smith led a seven-hit KM plate attack with two hits each. KJ Dotson had two hits and two RBIs and Austin Trice had two hits and one RBI for the Lions.

### Childers pitcher of week

Morgan Childers of Kings Mountain and USC Upstate last week was voted A-Sun Pitcher of the Week for the second time this season.

Childers was honored for winning all four of her games during the week ending April 5.

Childers leads Upstate with a 19-7 pitching record, including 18 complete games. She has a 1.84 ERA and has 226 strikeouts in 167 innings.

### McClain leads offense

Kings Mountain High graduate LaRonda McClain leads five offensive categories for the Wingate University softball team.

McClain leads the team in at-bats (129), total plate appearances (141), runs (35), hits (48) and stolen bases (23).

The junior outfielder has a .372 batting average. Wingate is 10-2 in the SAC and 25-10-1 overall.

## KM bounces back to beat Chase 11-7

Kings Mountain came back from an early 8-0 deficit to defeat Chase 11-7 in a SWC softball game Tuesday afternoon at the KMMS field.

Lea Zwick hurled the win and Jessica Burton and Hayley Hoyle collected four hits each to lead the KM offense. Megan Hoyle went 3-for-4, including a three-run home run. Tori Glass was 2-for-5 with two RBIs.

On Monday, Kings Mountain defeated Burns 11-2. Shea Cogdell got the win and Taylor Faris led the plate attack with 3-for-4 and three RBIs. Hayley Hoyle was 2-for-3 with two RBIs, and Megan Hoyle had a three-run triple.



**GARY STEWART/HERALD**  
Megan Hoyle hit a 3-run home run to help lead KMHS to victory over Chase in SWC softball action last week.

## KM beats Shelby in SWC softball

Kings Mountain defeated Shelby 12-1 in a SWC softball game Thursday.

Several players had big days at the plate for the Mountaineers. Megan Hoyle was 4-for-6 with two RBIs and Kelisha Goodson was 4-for-5 with two RBIs. Haley Hoyle was 3-for-5 with three RBIs and Emily Gates was 3-for-4.

Lea Zwick was the winning pitcher.

The Mountaineers completed pre-Easter play with a 4-3 conference and 5-5 overall mark. The Mountaineers were scheduled to play West Lincoln and South Caldwell in the opening round of the South Caldwell Spring Break Tournament yesterday. The

Mountaineers will face Bunker Hill and Freedom today.

### Thornburg hitting over .300 at Catawba

Kings Mountain High graduate Brittany Thornburg continues to be one of the leading hitters for the Catawba Lady Indians.

Thornburg is hitting .321 with 11 doubles and 24 runs batted in.

Kings Mountain graduate Kristyn Funderburke has a .295 batting average with five doubles and five RBIs.

The Indians are 7-5 in the SAC and 20-16 overall.



**GARY STEWART/HERALD**  
Brooke Hayes played outstanding defense as Kings Mountain High scored two shutout wins last week.

## Kickers enter break at 11-1

The KMHS soccer team defeated R-S Central and Porter Ridge last week to enter spring break with a 4-0 conference and 11-1 overall record.

The Lady Mountaineers defeated R-S Central 3-0 Wednesday for their sixth shutout of the year, and extended that shutout string to seven Thursday night with a 3-0 win over perennial state power Porter Ridge in Monroe.

The Mountaineers scored very early in the RS match as Ashley Witherspoon blasted a left footer past a diving RS keeper just 2 and a half minutes into the opening period. Megan Loftin slid a perfectly placed diagonal pass to the streaking Witherspoon.

The Mountaineers got several other good runs down the field but the Hilltopper defense stood tall.

"RS really played a tough man to man defense and then they dropped a couple of defenders on us to clog up the penalty area," noted Coach

Dan Potter.

Ramey Kerns scored the second goal at the 14 minute mark as Meagan Reynolds hooked her up with a nicely played cross.

The KM defense stood tall all evening as the hosts rarely pressured the Mountaineer goalkeeper. Heather Stevens recorded five saves on the night as the Mountaineers peppered the Hilltopper goal with over 30 shots.

In the second half, Sarah Mauney crossed a perfectly placed ball to the far post where Kerns drilled a header for the final 3-0 margin.

"Tonight was a bit frustrating for our players as they were continually attacking and had several good chances to score but were just a bit off on their finishing," Potter said. "It was nice to see every player contribute to the victory as all of the players played 30 minutes of action."

Thursday, the Mountaineers gained revenge for one

of their two losses from last season. Porter Ridge came out flat and the Mountaineers controlled much of the early possession.

At the 14 minute mark, Ashley Witherspoon took a shot off the goal post from Ramey Kerns and hammered back the rebound for a 1-0 advantage. Prior to the shot, Meagan Reynolds beat two defenders down the left flank and placed a nice cross to Kerns.

The match continued along the same pattern with KM controlling possession about two to one.

"Megan Loftin did a fantastic job along with Chelsea Champion in controlling the midfield for us," Potter said. "Brooke Hayes, Mallory Mansfield, Jordan Doty and Alex Edwards would solidify the defense and once again help protect our goal real well."

The Mountaineers went up 2-0 just three and one half min-

utes into the second period. Champion made an outstanding ball up to Reynolds, who beat two defenders and drilled the ball in the net.

Kerns got a couple of good crosses and hit a great direct from 40 yards that just missed. With 16 minutes left, Reynolds got an insurance goal as she took a great pass from Witherspoon to go in all alone on a break away. The host keeper made a supper effort and nearly stopped the ball, but it barely trickled into the net.

The match was far from over as each team got a couple of late looks. KM keeper Heather Stevens came up big as she deflected a corner kick and then was cleared out of danger by Doty.

"This match presented our girls with some good challenges and they met those challenges," Potter said.

The 10th ranked Mountaineers return to action Monday, April 20 at Burns.