

SPORTS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Front row, left to right, Colby Crisp, Dustin King, Zach Melton, David Gamble, Dylan Ervin, Shad Johnson. Second row, l-r, Hunter Fulbright, Tristan Davis, Dalton Horney, Alex Grooms, Brandon Bell, Cole Clampett, Austin Stewart. Back row, l-r, coaches Phil Smith, Chip Fulbright, Ed Grooms, John Gamble.

KM All-Stars head to state

The 11/12-year-old Kings Mountain All-Star team recently finished first in the Dixie Youth Double Elimination Tournament. The team won first place and the sportsmanship trophy.

The team had a rocky start as they dropped their first game to Tryon 8-0. But the team rebounded the next night with a 3-2 win over Bessemer City. Brandon Bell only allowed two runs in six innings of pitching.

Alex Grooms provided the offense needed as he hit two homeruns accounting for all three runs batted in Brandon Bell. The second homerun came in the fifth inning. Each team played a flawless game, as no errors were committed.

The next game the team came alive and walloped West Lincoln 14-6. Alex Grooms pitched all six innings. Alex, Grooms, Austin Stewart, and Dusty King led the hitting attack each hitting a homerun.

Zach Melton went three for four and Brandon Bell, Alex Grooms, Austin Stewart, Dusty King, Colby Crisp, David Gamble, and Shad Johnson each had two hits. The team again played a great defense.

The next game was a revenge game against the undefeated Tryon team. Kings Mountain took the lead in the first inning 1-0 as Zach Melton and Brandon Bell both hit the ball.

Zach and Brandon moved to the next

base on a passed ball and Zach scored on a wild pitch. Kings Mountain scored again in the second inning. Tryon rallied back in the bottom of the second scoring two runs.

Tryon then took the lead in the third inning 6-2. Tryon held that lead until the bottom of the sixth. Shad Johnson and Cole Clampett singled, followed by a bunt by Zach Melton. Tryon pitching then struggled as the next three batters, Brandon Bell, Alex Grooms, and Austin Stewart walked and runners scored on wild pitches tying the game at 6-6.

With the two outs and the go-ahead run on third Colby Crisp singled up the middle to score Alex Grooms and Austin Stewart - forcing a championship game to be played against Tryon on Thursday. Colby Crisp and Brandon Bell combined for the pitching in Wednesday's game.

In the championship game Kings Mountain struck in the first inning when Brandon Bell singled and Alex Grooms homered in the first two runs. Tryon struck back in the next three innings taking a demanding 8-2 lead. In the third inning Tristan Davis hit a double to left field but was left stranded. In the fourth Brandon Bell and Alex Grooms then repeated their performance as Alex homered again.

David Gamble then homered to make the score 8-5. In the top of the fifth Cole Clampett, Zach Melton, and Brandon Bell

loaded the bases with consecutive singles.

Alex Grooms was walked allowing Cole Clampett to score. Austin Stewart then hit the ball off the top of the fence scoring Zach and Brandon. The top of the sixth was a near repeat of the fifth as Shad, Cole, and Zach reached base safely. Brandon Bell and Alex Grooms were walked giving Kings Mountain the lead of 10-8.

In the bottom of the sixth Tryon didn't go down without a fight. The first batter hit the ball to pitcher Alex Grooms who fielded it cleanly and threw the batter out to first baseman Brandon Bell.

The next batter hit a shot between first and second but second baseman Dusty King made a driving stop and from his knees threw the runner out at first. The second batter hit a homerun making the score 10-9 then Alex Grooms struck out the last batter. Colby Crisp, Dustin King, Tristan Davis, and Alex Grooms pitched in the championship game.

The Kings Mountain team will now travel to Robeson County for the state playoffs, which begin Friday, July 17. The team is in need of donations to help cover hotel and food expenses. If anyone would like to donate funds to help curb the team's expenses please send checks or money made out to the Kings Mountain YMCA and be sure to designate the funds to the 11/12-year-old All-Stars.

Short cuts from the world of sports:



Coach Clark needs our prayers

Former KMHS baseball coach and current Boiling Springs, SC High football coach Bruce Clark is undergoing therapy in an Atlanta rehab center after having serious neck surgery July 1 in Spartanburg.

Clark's injury traced back to a football injury during his senior year of high school. He had three discs repaired and it resulted in him being paralyzed from the neck down.

Since beginning therapy Clark has improved tremendously but still has a long way to go. Keep him in your thoughts and prayers. With his faith and determination, I'm sure he will recover. It will be nice to see him back on the sidelines.

To track his daily progress, go to caringbridge.org/visit/coachbruceclark

Gary Stewart
Herald Sports Editor

Mountaineer football notes

Kings Mountain's Mountaineers recently had a successful 7-on-7 efforts against Boiling Springs (once in BS and once at KMHS).

The KM-BS matchup in KM was exciting, even though Coach Clark wasn't able to take part. The teams were about even as far as scoring. Clark's son, Justin, the Bulldogs' offensive coordinator, led the team. They have a very impressive quarterback who has committed to South Carolina, and several good receivers who will be playing college ball next year. Kings Mountain's quarterbacks and receivers were also very impressive.

Last week, the Mountaineers took part in a three-team 7-on-7 in Gastonia against Forestview and West Lincoln. All three teams were impressive. It was nice to see Mark Latham's WL team in action since we don't get to see them in the regular season. Latham is building a good program up there.

The Mountaineers will complete their summer workouts Thursday when they travel to Catawba College in Salisbury for an all-day 7-on-7 involving numerous North Carolina teams. Action begins at 9 a.m.

Members of the Mountaineer coaching staff will go to Greensboro Sunday for the annual North Carolina Coaches Clinic.

Melton joins KM JV staff

Former KMHS athlete and current teacher Brad Melton has joined the Mountaineer football staff as offensive line coach for the JV team.

Melton played baseball here under Coach Bruce Clark. He assisted Jason Bridges with the JV baseball team this spring.

Good job by KM Legion team

The Post 155 American Legion team had a successful season this summer despite a three game to zero loss to Hickory in the opening round of the Area IV playoffs.

Kings Mountain draws from the smallest area of any team in Area IV, and probably in the state. Most of the KM players come from Kings Mountain, with the exception (this year) of two players from Bessemer City and one from Shelby. Many of their opponents draw from entire counties and others from numerous high schools. Taking that into consideration, KM's 10-11 record was outstanding.

The legionnaires and others in the community who work tirelessly behind the scenes to help make the program successful also deserve our thanks. I won't attempt to name them because I would leave someone out. But you know who you are and I hope you know that we appreciate you.

Howell selected All-State

Pitcher Jeffrey Howell of Kings Mountain High School has been selected to the 2009 North Carolina Baseball Coaches Association All-State team.

Howell posted a 9-1 record and 1.49 ERA to lead the Mountaineers to the Southwestern 3A Conference championship. He pitched 70.2 innings and struck out 87 batters. He also hit .338 with eight home runs and 21 runs batted in.

Howell was earlier selected All-Conference and SWC Player of the Year. He was also the Gaston Area Player of the Year.



12-year-old Miles Robinson makes hole-in-one

Miles Robinson, 12-year old son of Holly and Greg Robinson of Kings Mountain, got his first hole in one during tournament play at the Sound of Freedom Golf Course at the Cherry Point Marine Base in Have

lock, NC.

The hole was 151 yards long. Miles plays in the 12-13 year old division of the Eastern North Carolina Junior Golf League. He spends his summers with his grandparents, Carol and Jesse Robinson, who live at Taberna Country Club in New Bern, NC.

He is a rising 7th grader at Kings Mountain Middle School and is the grandson of Lewis Dellinger of Kings Mountain.

Potter retires as KMHS soccer coach

By GARY STEWART
Sports Editor

Kings Mountain High soccer coach Dan Potter, one of the most successful coaches in KM sports history, has retired from coaching.

Potter, a former player at the University of South Carolina, organized the girls soccer program at Kings Mountain Middle School and both the men's and women's programs at KMHS. He recently completed 19 1/2 years of teaching at KM and will continue in that capacity.

Giving up coaching was not an easy decision, he said, but one that he feels is necessary at this time.

"I struggled with this for quite a while," he said. "I asked Mrs. Grayson (KMHS athletic director Suzanne Grayson) 'how did you know when it was time to retire' and her answer was 'you'll know when it's time.' I felt that way."

Potter said that one thing that weighed heavily in his decision was the fact that his oldest daughter, Meghan Wood, and her

husband are expecting their first child on February 9, 2010, which is about the time spring practice would begin.

"Several other things are going on in my life at this time, but that's the main thing," he said.

Potter's replacement, Lauren Sochacki, will inherit a team with seven returning starters who played in the 2009 state championship game against Jacksonville White Oak.

"She has a chance to have a really good team her very first year," Potter said. "Those are seven solid starters. I didn't want to leave the cupboard bare."

"I hate to leave anything," he added. "I felt the same way when I gave up the men's program to start the women's program. It always feels like you're backing out. But I think it is good for the kids. They will have a young female for a role model."

Potter started the men's program at KMHS in 1989 and his teams won 79 games and two conference championships in eight years. He then started the middle

school girls program for one year and started the KMHS women's program in 1999.

In 11 years as coach of the Lady Mountaineers, his team won 208 games, seven conference championships, one Western North Carolina Regional championship and played for the state title. Potter won numerous coach of the year honors during that time and his players also reaped many post-season awards.

During his career Potter coached all three of his daughters, Meghan, Lesley and Susie. Lesley played soccer at Pfeiffer University before suffering a knee injury. She and Meghan also followed in his footsteps as teachers. Susie recently completed her third year at Appalachian State University.

Potter played high school soccer in his native St. Louis, and played four years at the University of South Carolina. He taught school in Conway, SC for 3 1/2 years before moving to Kings Mountain.



GARY STEWART/HERALD
Dan Potter instructs his team during a time-out during Western Regional Championship game against Marvin Ridge at John Gamble Stadium.

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