

Baseball: Mountaineers look to contend in Big South

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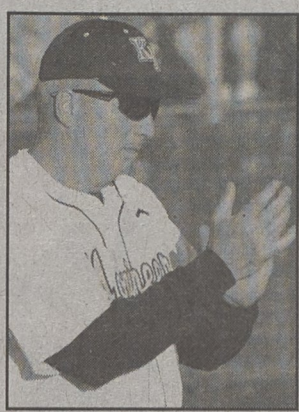
noted. "Pitching is always ahead of hitting at this point but we're looking for the hitting to come around."

King has five returning players with varsity pitching experience. They include Dallas Conner, Heath King, Wil Sellers, Jonathan Borchert and Mitchell Cloninger. All start at other positions when they're not on the mound.

Sophomore Alex Reynolds, who starred on the JV team last year, will also see some time on the mound as well as in the outfield.

Others who started last season, either on JV or varsity, are third baseman Tyler Gilliam, second baseman Seth Ferrell, catcher/outfielder Chris Webster, second baseman Gary Bennett, first baseman Trey Fulbright, outfielder/second baseman Andrew Moore, catcher Addison Stinnett, pitcher William Ruffalo and second baseman/outfielder Daniel Barrett.

Conner, who was the ace of the mound staff last season and also an All-Big South catcher, will draw the starting assignment Wednesday at Shelby. Heath King will start Friday's home opener against Burns. Coach King said he will wait and see how things go in the first two games before deciding on Saturday's starter, but he



GARY STEWART/HERALD
Kings Mountain High baseball coach Eric King. Play begins Wednesday at Burns. The Mountaineers host Burns Friday and Fred T. Foard Saturday.

is leaning toward Sellers.

The three opening non-conference opponents are traditionally strong baseball programs that King feels will help get the Mountaineers ready for what shapes up to be another rugged Big South schedule. Defending state champion South Point, pitcher-loaded Forestview, Crest and North Gaston will also be strong, King says. He looks for Ashbrook and Hunter Huss to be much improved as well.

"South Point is always tough and will be again, even though they lost some people," King said. "Forestview is very good and Crest is always good. North Gaston lost some people but they're still good, too. Huss is always a team to

KMHS BASEBALL ROSTER

Name	No.	Position	Class
Mitchell Cloninger	23	OF/SS/P	12
Jonathan Borchert	13	3B/P	12
Seth Ferrell	2	2B	12
Dallas Conner	19	C/P	12
Chris Webster	25	OF/C	12
Tyler Gilliam	10	3B	12
Gary Bennett	4	2B	12
Heath King	1	OF/P	12
Trey Fulbright	14	1B	12
Colton Wade	11	OF/2B	12
Wil Sellers	18	SS/P	11
Andrew Moore	22	3B	11
Addison Stinnett	9	C	11
William Ruffalo	3	OF/P	11
Alex Reynolds	5	OF/1B/P	10
Daniel Barrett	7	2B/OF	10

Head Coach - Eric King
Assistant - Trey Robinson

watch. Ashbrook played a lot of young people last year so you don't know about them."

Frankly, King expects his Mountaineers to compete for the championship and will be disappointed if they don't make a regular season and playoff run.

"The key for us will be the bottom third of the lineup," he predicts. "They have to produce. I'm not too worried about the top four or five. We have to get hits when we need them."

King also looks for the team to cut down on errors this year. "We made 68 er-

rors last year and that killed us," he said. "But so far in 20 scrimmage innings (against East Gaston, Olympic and West Lincoln) we've only committed three or four."

"We started hitting the ball in Saturday's three-way at West Lincoln and tied Olympic 2-2 and beat West Lincoln 6-3," he noted. "We hit pretty good and the pitching and defense did good too."

"Another plus for us is that the players get along real good," King said. "We have good team chemistry so far. That might help us in tight games."

Middle School Baseball Young Patriot baseball team hosts Shelby in 2012 season opener

There are no coaching "breathers" for Kings Mountain Middle School's Monty Deaton.

Deaton serves as head coach of the Patriots' football, girls basketball and baseball team; and, especially this time of year it seems one season begins before the other one ends.

Deaton has been busy of late coaching his Lady Patriots to the Tri-County Conference basketball championship. That season ended Thursday with a 30-28 victory over R-S Central in the Patriots' gym.

So, for the first two weeks of baseball practice he saw very little of his team. Assistant coach Kevin Ash worked with the pitchers and catchers each afternoon and Deaton sometimes made it toward the end of practice to see how things were going.

Deaton and the infielders and outfielders joined the team for the first time Monday, so they have little time to get ready for Friday's season opener with Shelby at the Patriots' field.

Since this is a non-division game, Deaton said he will look at it as a scrimmage and get as many players into the game as possible.

One thing he knows up front is that this year's team is extremely small and young. Most of the starters on last year's team have moved on to Kings Mountain High and will be part of that school's JV team.

"We only have two starters back," he noted. "The seventh graders last year were alright defensively. We need to find some pitching."

On paper, one would not expect the Patriots to be among the favorites in the Tri-County. But Deaton has

been around baseball all of his life and he knows anything is possible.

"We're young and we're little," he said. "But if you get good pitching and put the ball in play that doesn't matter. You can make things happen."

Deaton knows Shelby will present a big challenge.

"Tommy Wease, (who served as head coach of the Shelby High team the past several years) is back as their head coach and you know he will have them ready," Deaton said.

KMMS is traditionally one of the strongest teams in the Tri-County. Despite the youth, Deaton feels that can continue.

"We've been pretty good in baseball," he said. "If we find the pitching I think we'll be alright."

Members of the team this year are Matt Absher, Bryson Bailey, John Bell, Madison Bolin, Hunter Champion, Palmer Davis, Austin Fleming, David Gamble, Colby Hughes, Jarret Ledford, Brian Lysek, Omar Petty, Steven Russell, Hunter Ward and Will Wilson.

THE SCHEDULE

MARCH
2 - Shelby; 5, at Lincolnton; 8 - at North Lincoln; 12 - East Lincoln; 14 - at West Lincoln; 19 - at East Lincoln; 22 - Lincolnton; 27 - at Shelby; 29 - North Lincoln.

APRIL
2 - at Burns; 5 - West Lincoln; 16 - Burns; 19 - First round of playoffs (TBA); 23 - Conference championship game (TBA).

*All regular season games begin at 4 p.m.

Scholar Athletes: announced for fall/winter sports seasons

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Nicole Ford, Annamarie Fulbright, Alyssa Greene, Taylor Halvorson, Caroline Hardin, Emily Harris, Tiffany Harris, Daria Hart, Kayla Heisler, Katie Holland, Jordan Hollifield, Katherine Holmes, Chelsie Humphries, Talajah Hutchens, Allison Ingra, Casey Johnson, Hanna Johnson;

Ethan Anderson, Timothy Ausburn, Alexander Austin, Samuel Baker, Eric Barnes, Tyler Batchler, Edward Black-

burn, Will Boyles, Andrew Buchanan, Cameron Bullock, Dustin Burgess, Taylor Cash, Austin Champion, Chandler Champion, Jacob Cole, Michael Cole, Noah Coleman, Douglas Edgerton, Jeffrey Falls, Mason Fleisher, Brandon Floyd, Collin Foster, Brandon Gilbert, Gregory Grabert, Mitchell Hardee, Walter Harmon, Devin Heath, Caleb Hines, Edward Hopper, Devin Hullender, Nicholas Lease, Matthew Lovelace, Robert Lysek, Donnie

Malaythong, Jonathan Martin, William McGill, Gregory McGinnis, Zachary Melton, Jacob Miller, Nicholas Postell, Collins Pressley, Collen Queen, Phillip Quinn;

Kiersten Johnson, Kaitlyn Krieger, Madison Lutz, Kendall Mansfield, Sarah McComas, Haley McDougal, Cassie Morton, Hannah Mosley, Taylor Pearson, Emily Peeler, Kayla Penner, Elizabeth Petty, Chelsea Pratt, Morgan Robinson, Hailey Rotenberry, Betzaira Saenz,

Sarah Scism, Megan Sepaugh, Molly Short, Destinee Smith, Kayla Smith, Mackenzie Smith, Taquisha Smith, Baylee Stroup, Morgan Weeks, Alyssa White, Kylee' Wideman, Bailey Williams, Ariana Wingo, Stephenie Wright;

Wilson Rikard, Arrick Rithiphong, John Robbs, Adam Satterfield, William Sellers, Jordan Stowe, Quincey Toms, Austin Toney, Joshua Tucker, Matthew Turner, Jack Zyble

Ford: to play Down Under

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Although Ford is used to playing against good competition, she feels this unique experience will be the ultimate opportunity to play against the best.

"During club seasons I have played in different states," she said, "but I have never played in a foreign country. This is a very high level of competition that

will definitely help me in college."

Fund-raisers are being held to help finance Ford's trip. One is a \$10 raffle for a chance to win a trip to Australia or a cruise. In addition, persons who donate through a letter-writing campaign will be automatically entered in the raffle.

To donate, or for more information, call Nicole's mother, Linda Ford, at 704-472-7674.

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Harold's Weekly Health Tip...

February is Heart Health Month

Eating for a Healthy Heart

A heart healthy diet is one of the most important steps for a person with heart disease. Proper nutrition is essential to managing symptoms of heart disease and preventing further complications.

- Serve more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes.
- Limit total fat grams.
- Serve a variety -- and just the right amount -- of protein foods. Commonly eaten protein foods (meat, dairy products) are among the main causes of heart disease. Reduce this nutritional risk factor by balancing lean animal, fish, and vegetable sources of protein.
- Limit cholesterol consumption. Dietary cholesterol can raise blood cholesterol levels, especially in high-risk people.
- Eat regularly. Skipping meals often leads to overeating.
- De-emphasize salt.
- Encourage exercise.
- Encourage hydration.

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