



Former KMHS and USC-Upstate pitching great Morgan Childers Caddell has been named assistant pitching coach at Wingate University.

Morgan Childers Caddell assisting Wingate pitchers

Kings Mountain native Morgan Childers Caddell has been named assistant pitching coach for the Wingate University softball team.

Caddell was two-time North Carolina MVP when she pitched Kings Mountain High to back to back state championships in 2005 and 2006. She holds all of the season and career pitching records at KMHS and most of the records at the University of South Carolina Upstate.

After her senior year at Upstate, Caddell was drafted professionally by the Akron Racers and played one season with them. She served as pitching coach at Campbell University from 2011-2012.

She taught and coached in high school the past two years.

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Caddell compiled a 91-8 record and struck out 1,284 batters during her four-year varsity career at Kings Mountain. Her last three seasons she compiled an overall record of 73-5 with ERAs of 0.39, 0.04 and 0.16.

Caddell was a four-year all-conference and conference player of the year selection, two-time State MVP, and pitched the Lady Mountaineers to four straight conference championships.

She holds 11 records at Upstate. She broke Upstate's career strikeout record midway through her sophomore season and also owns career records for victories, strikeouts, shutouts, appearances, complete games, starts and opponent batting average.

In 2010 she led the Atlantic Sun Conference with 34 victories, 428 strikeouts, 16 shutouts and 37 starts, despite playing with a toe and leg muscle injury that hampered her throughout the season.

She ranked in the top eight in the nation in six statistical categories, including second in the nation with a 1.01 ERA and fourth in strikeouts. The 428 strikeouts were the second most in A-Sun history, nine shy of the all-time record.

She was a three-time All A-Sun selection and was the A-Sun Pitcher of the Year and Freshman of the Year in 2008, the first time a player had earned both honors.

Brad McKee named KMHS wrestling coach

Brad McKee, who coached East Gaston to the state 3A finals last season, has been named head wrestling coach at Kings Mountain High School.

He replaces Kenny Bridges, who left the wrestling program after several years to become head coach of the JV football team.

McKee is no stranger to Kings Mountain. He lives here and was a volunteer assistant under Coach Bridges for two years prior to going to East Gaston.

He will teach seventh grade science at Kings Mountain Middle School.

Coach McKee met with his wrestlers Tuesday night. He said he is excited about building the program into a state contender.

"Kings Mountain is where I want to be," he said.

He expects to grow the program from the ground up.

"We will be very young this year with a big freshman class," he said. "When I met with the athletes I told them my expectations of them and what they can expect from me. They graduated 10 or 11 starters off last year's team so we will be young but with a lot of potential."

McKee said he will begin working with small groups of wrestlers on September 15 (as soon as he can under NCHSAA rules), and fully

expects the Mountaineers to be competing for state championships within four years.

"We will be very consistent in our training over the next four years," he said. "We're going to have a really good team eventually. We're going to have a new start this year with a lot of freshmen and will lack experience."

He plans to get a club team organized beginning in the summer of 2015.

"I think we can get a good size gym to use for practice and we can get in some AAU tournaments," he said. "We're going to get wrestlers out and get them on board with the program and have guys that will stick with it and wrestle year-round."

That type of dedication from wrestlers could turn them into state champions. McKee's state runner-up team this year produced eight state qualifiers, including one state champion. He sees that type of success here as well.

McKee wrestled at Highland Tech High School in Gastonia and wrestled collegiately at St. Andrews College, where he was a 133-pounder. After college, he served as an assistant wrestling coach at Ashbrook High in Gastonia.

McKee said Matt Hord, a former Mountaineer wrestler, will be his assistant coach.



DJ Bagwell, John Harmon Melton, Joe Ruffalo and Blake Broome, left to right, all hit home runs in 11-12 year old state tournament in Ritchfield.

Kings Mountain all-stars go 4-2 in state tournament

Kings Mountain's 11-12 year-old all-stars recently went 4-2 in the state tournament in Ritchfield.

Kings Mountain started the tournament on Friday by winning the team competition and home run derby at opening ceremonies. John Harmon Melton hit two home runs on five pitches to take the crown.

The locals started dou-

ble-elimination tourney play on Saturday with a 7-6 victory over Reidsville. Joe Ruffalo hit a walk off 3-run home run in the bottom of the sixth.

Trailing 6-4 going into the bottom of the sixth, Blake Broome singled to right and Bryce Fisher walked. With two outs and on a 2-2 count, Ruffalo hit a bomb over the left center field fence.

Ruffalo also had a two-run home run in the first inning.

John Harmon hit a solo home run in the third inning. Ruffalo, Melton and Broome had two hits each and Fisher added one. Melton, Fisher and Ruffalo pitched two innings each.

The long ball helped Kings Mountain prevail again in a 9-6 second round win over West Chatham.

Trailing 3-1, the young Mountaineer squad drew within one run on a solo home run from Joe Ruffalo. The long ball assault was not finished and neither was Ruffalo.

Still trailing 3-2 in the

top of the fifth, Kings Mountain loaded the bases and Ruffalo followed with his second home run of the game, a grand slam to clear the bases. Melton followed Ruffalo with a solo home run to push the KM advantage to 7-3. One out later, DJ Bagwell and Blake Broome went back-to-back with home runs to extend the KM advantage to 9-3.

West Craven rallied in the bottom of the fifth with three runs to pull within three. After not scoring in the top of the sixth, Fisher came on to pitch a scoreless bottom of the inning to secure the win.

Melton started on the mound for KM and pitched two innings. Ruffalo pitched three innings to pick up the win. Fisher recorded the last three outs for the save.

Ruffalo led the plate attack with three hits, including two home runs and five RBI. Reese Ayscue had two hits and Melton, Zach Crawford, Bagwell, Broome and Trey Crawford collected one each.

Two errors, a base hit and

a three-run home run was the recipe for defeat for the KM all-stars in an 8-7 loss to Moore County in round three.

Kings Mountain jumped ahead early with four runs in the first inning. Three KM hits, a hit batter and an error helped KM to the early lead.

Moore County rallied to score single runs in the second, third and fourth innings and KM added a run in the fourth and two more in the fifth.

With a 7-3 lead going into the bottom of the fifth, the KM team committed its first error of the game. After recording an out, another Moore County runner reached on an error and that was followed by a base hit and then a three-run home run to tie the score.

Tied at 7-all, KM could not push a run across in the top of the sixth but Moore County scored on a wild pitch to win.

KM was led offensively with two hits each from Melton and Crawford. Broome, Jaxson Bolin and Ayscue each collected a hit.

Kings Mountain bounced back as a second game with West Chatham provided the Mountaineers with a 5-4 win.

Fisher and Ruffalo led off the bottom of the first with hits, and Melton followed with a home run to

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