



Kings Mountain's Jair McCluney (28) follows the blocking of Jake Merchant (15) for a big gain in Friday's game with Burns at Gamble Stadium. McCluney scored the first KM TD in a 28-0 victory.

Just like the good ole days: KM, Lions battle for first Friday night in Shelby

For the first time in many years, Kings Mountain's Mountaineers will take an undefeated record to Shelby Friday night with first place in the conference at stake.

Many times in the past — going back even to the beginning of their state's longest rivalry in 1926 — those two settled the Southwestern Conference championship. Now, this game may determine which one will face off with Crest down the road for the SMAC championship.

A lot of questions are on the minds of Kings Mountain fans as they look forward to Friday. Number one? Will starting quarterback Brandon Bell, who dislocated his non-throwing shoulder in last week's game with Burns, get to play?

We won't know until Friday, because Mountaineer coach Greg Lloyd says "it will be a game time decision."

Bell's absence was certainly felt last week, but over the course of the game Tico Crocker, who is a slot receiver, proved he can handle the quarterback duties. After Bell left the game late in the first quarter, the Mountaineers were up 7-0 on the strength of Jair McCluney's one-yard touchdown run. Crocker threw two touchdown passes to Xavier Johnson and ran a touchdown himself, and the KM defense played its best overall game as the Mountaineers went on to win 28-0.

"Considering we lost our quarterback early, I was very proud of the way we responded," said Coach Lloyd. "We ran the ball well, Xavier Johnson made two great plays

and Tico did a good job filling in for Bell. He didn't panic. He's a good athlete.

"We tackled better and swarmed to the ball," he added. "Our special teams did a great job. It was a good win and something we can build on."

Regardless of who's at quarterback this week, Lloyd said the Mountaineers will have to play better in every phase of the game. The Lions are also 2-0 in the SMAC and are 4-1 overall with their only loss to perennial 3A power South Point.

Coach Lloyd said the Lions are impressive in every phase of the game.

"They are playing excellent defense," he said. "They basically shut Chase down last week. They are very fast, they swarm to the ball on defense and they have good defensive backs and solid linebackers."

"Their offense is going to spread you out. They throw the ball a lot and have a good quarterback and good receivers. They have good speed and can score quickly. They have a good kicking game. They present a lot of problems."

Lloyd looks for his team to continue to ride the momentum from past games and get another great effort from the defense.

"We can't give up big plays," he said. "We have to play physical, we have to play good defense and the offensive line has to block better."

"We have to take care of the ball. If we can do that this can be a good ball game."

Mountaineers blank Bulldogs 28-0 for first shutout since 2010 season

Kings Mountain's defense pitched its first shutout since 2010 in a 28-0 SMAC victory over Burns Friday night at John Gamble Stadium.

The win puts the Mountaineers at 2-0 in the SMAC and 5-0 overall heading into the state's longest-running rivalry game Friday at Shelby.

The Mountaineers hadn't shut out an opponent since 2010 when they defeated North Gaston 48-0 in a Big South 3A game in Dallas.

The victory broke a four-year dry spell against the Bulldogs, who fell to 1-1 in the SMAC and 1-3 overall. KM's last victory over the Bulldogs was 21-14 in '09.

Burns' defense did the best job anyone's done on the Mountaineers this year, holding them to about half of their season per game average of over 400 yards.

KM quarterback Brandon Bell went down with a shoulder injury late in the first period as the Mountaineers were driving for their second touchdown.

The Mountaineers had taken a 7-0 lead when Jair McCluney scored from a yard out three plays after Colin Watkins recovered a fumble at the Burns four.

KM took over at its own 36 after Chance Frederick and Dwayne Capps batted down a fourth down pass attempt by the Bulldogs.

After runs of two yards by Darian McClain and nine yards by Bell for a first down at the 47, Bell kept the ball off the right side of the line and dislocated his shoulder when he was tackled. Tico Crocker moved from the slot receiver position to take over at quarterback and mishandled the first snap for a 10-yard loss to end the first quarter.

McClain fumbled the ball on the next play, but picked it up in stride and rambled 22 yards for a first down at the Burns 42. A 12-yard run by McClain, a nine-yard keeper by Crocker and a four-yard run by McCluney gave the Mountaineers a first and ten at the Burns 18.

Burns' defense showed its strength, throwing Crocker for another 10-yard loss on third down and the Mountaineers faced a fourth and goal from the 28 yard line. The Mountaineers flooded the right side of the field with three receivers and Crocker threw a hail



Tico Crocker (2) took a turn running the ball from the quarterback position after starter Brandon Bell went down to injury in the first period in Friday's game with Burns. Crocker directed the Mountaineers to a 28-0 win.



Kings Mountain's defense swarms to Burns ball carrier in Friday's SMAC game at Gamble Stadium. Some of the Mountaineers in the picture are Jake Merchant (15), Dwayne Capps (31), Trevon Wilson (7), Chance Frederick (5), Julian Coulter 40, and Shawn Adams (3).

Mary to the end zone. Jake Merchant jumped high to try to catch the ball but a Burns defender tipped it away. But Xavier Johnson was there for the catch which put KM on top 14-0 at the half.

McClain broke loose on a 61-yard gain to the East three to set up a three-yard touchdown run by Crocker for a 21-0 lead in the third period.

Johnson made another unbelievable catch to put the game on ice early in the fourth period. Facing fourth and goal from the 12, Crocker hung up a fade pass to the back corner of the end zone, and with two Burns defenders all over him Johnson was able to keep a foot inbounds and make the catch before he was knocked out of bounds.

Except for just a few plays in the first half, the Mountaineers' defense kept the Bulldogs in the kennel all night. Their second half performance was incredible

as Burns managed only three possessions, and all were three and out.

Burns got the ball to start the second half and gained just six yards in three rushes before punting.

On their final two possessions, they ran the ball three times for minus eight yards, threw two incomplete passes, completed one pass for no gain and punted twice.

Their lack of offensive production could have been hampered by the absence of their starting quarterback, Cameron Barbee, who was home in the bed sick, but can also be attributed to the aggressive Mountaineer defenders who wore them down.

Led by the likes of Colin Watkins, Josh and Dre Bell, Chance Frederick, Julian Coulter, Trevon Wilson and Dwayne Capps, the first two lines of the Mountaineer defense were outstanding.

Did you Know?

Kings Mountain and Shelby is the longest football rivalry in North Carolina. The teams began playing in 1926 when they tied 0-0. They have played each other every year since except for 1943 when the Kings Mountain Board of Education cancelled the season because of World War II.

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See KM/BURNS, 7B

JVs beat Burns for fourth win

Kings Mountain High's JV football team defeated Burns 28-12 Thursday to go 2-0 in the SMAC and 4-0 overall.

The Mountaineers got great blocking from their offensive line and outstanding play on defense from Jerdon Pressley, Brandon Manning, Collin Franks, Kaven Mosely and JT Cash. Cash returned a fumble 20 yards for a touchdown.

Madisyn Bolin scored on a 15-yard run and Malik

Banner ran an 11-yard touchdown.

Quenten Nguyen scored from five yards out.

Bolin threw to Khal Welch for a two-point conversion and Micah Randall kicked an extra point.

Burns scored on a five-yard pass from Jarren Hamrick to Desean Hillman and a 12-yard run by Chris McClure.

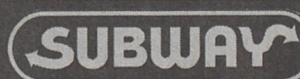
Kings Mountain hosts Shelby Thursday at 7 p.m.

Kings Mountain Mountaineers

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