

SOFTBALL: KM girls eliminated by Hickory

KMHS opens SMAC play against Burns

From Page 9

takes a little longer for the offense to come around but we did well offensively, too. We executed well and were able to score some runs, and that was impressive to see because we know our conference has really strong pitching."

Seniors Emily Hester and Mikeala Bell handled much of the pitching duties. "I was really pleased with them," Short said. "They were a little rusty but I thought the defense played well behind them. We played game scenarios against Bessemer City Friday and they scored only one run on us. Butler didn't score any and North Gaston scored one. Against South Point, we didn't play game scenarios."

"The defense helped them, but they also pitched their way out of some situations," Short said. "They're seniors and they understand what they're going to be asked to do."

The Lady Mountaineers welcomed the return of junior infielder Miranda Ellis, who also plays basketball and had not even practiced

before Saturday's games. She didn't play in the Friday scrimmage because the basketball team was wrapping up its season in the NCHSAA playoffs.

"What was good about Saturday was that we were able to get in three scrimmages with Miranda out there with us," Short said. "I hate the basketball team lost but it's nice to have her back."

Ellis played third base last year and was one of the league's top defensive players. She will probably spend most of her time this year at first to replace the graduated Molly Short.

"Miranda did really well at first," Short said. "She made all of her plays without making an error. She's a good athlete and she's able to adjust very well. She's only a junior so we hope first can be her primary position."

With a new girls field house, and the Gardner-Webb Lady Bulldogs playing some of their home games at KMHS this spring, Short said it's going to be an exciting year for softball in KM.

The long layoff due to inclement weather did nothing to slow down the powerful Hickory Lady Red Tornadoes in Friday's opening round game of the NCHSAA 3A basketball playoffs.

Playing on their home court, the top-seeded and undefeated Red Tornadoes opened the game with an 18-2 run and rolled to a

73-19 victory over the 32nd seed Kings Mountain Lady Mountaineers.

By the end of the first quarter, the Hickory five already had more points than the Mountaineers would score in the entire game and led by 34-7.

The score ballooned to 55-12 at halftime and 68-16 going into the fourth quarter.

The Lady Mountaineers, who ended their season with an 8-16 overall record, simply did not have the talent nor the speed to keep up with the Catawba County powerhouse.

Hickory guard Yazmen Hannah personally matched KM's game total of 19 points, and 12 of them came in the first quarter. At one point she scored 10 points

in a row, with eight of them coming on uncontested lay-ups.

Kings Mountain spent most of the night on Hickory's side of the court. The Lady Mountaineers committed 27 turnovers in the first half alone.

For the night, KM hit just eight of 25 field goal attempts.

BASEBALL: KMHS looking to open season this week

From Page 9

pitchers and he's anxious to see them in game action.

"The last couple of days we've got in some good practices," he said. "Because of the weather, everybody backed out on the scrimmages."

"We did a lot of pitching to ourselves," he noted.

Returning starters Will Wilson and Brandon Bell are expecting to see a lot of mound duty in addition to their regular duties at shortstop and right field, respectively. They, along with catcher Colby Crisp

and second baseman Logan Stevens, are the only returning starters from last year's team that made the state 3A playoffs.

"I've been impressed with sophomore Bryson Bailey on the mound," Bridges said. "Wilson, Matt Absher, and Bell have been decent on the mound as well. We have 12 pitchers and eight of them are about equal."

"John Bell, Bailey and Madisyn Bolin are some of our better hitters along with Brandon Bell and Wilson," Bridges noted. "We hit the ball better the first day than

we did Saturday, but it was so cold out there I don't really feel bad about that. Some of the sophomores will give us a little power in the middle of the lineup. We need one of them to hit behind Wilson and (Brandon) Bell. Brandon's going to be the three hitter and Wilson will either leadoff or hit second."

Defensively, Bridges said the team "is looking pretty good. There's a lot of competition. The infield's pretty solid and the outfielders have good arms."

G-Webb softball to play at KMHS

Gardner-Webb University's women's softball team has scheduled five playing dates this season at Kings Mountain High School's Lancaster Field #3.

The Gardner-Webb softball complex is undergoing a complete renovation, including playing field, field house, concession stand, seating and other areas, so the Lady Bulldogs will play their home games at KMHS and Crest High.

GWU's first opponent at KMHS is North Carolina Central in a double-header Wednesday, March 4 at 2 and 4 p.m.

The remaining KM schedule includes:

-Wednesday, April 1, vs. Winthrop University at 4 and 6 p.m.

-Wednesday, April 15 against UNC Greensboro at 2 and 4 p.m.

-Wednesday, April 22, against Winthrop University. That is a single game beginning at 4 p.m.

-Wednesday, April 29 against the Furman Lady Paladins at 4 and 6 p.m.

Mountaineers eliminated 77-53

Leading by just 18-17, Cuthbertson went on a 17-6 run in the second quarter to take command and eliminate Kings Mountain from the state playoffs, 77-53, Monday night in Waxhaw.

KM ended its season with a 16-10 overall record.

Trailing 44-30 at the half, the Mountaineers were able to rally and cut the difference to seven points in late in the third quarter, but

Cuthbertson went on another big run to close it out.

Nelson McClain of the Mountaineers ended his prep career with 26 points. Jacob Skidmore added 11.



THE SAVVY SENIOR

By JIM MILLER
Editor



Simplified Smartphone Options for Tech-Shy Seniors

Dear Savvy Senior,
I'm interested in getting my 72-year-old mother a smartphone, but want to get one that's very easy for her to use. What can you recommend?
Shopping Around

Dear Shopping,
There are several different ways you can go about getting your mom a simplified smartphone that's easy for her to use. Depending on how much you're willing to spend, here are some different options to consider.

Simplify a Used Phone
The cheapest way to set your mom up with an easy-to-use, uncomplicated smartphone is to get her a second-hand android phone, and install a senior-friendly "launcher app" on it, which is a user interface software application.

This type of launcher will turn the appearance and performance of most android smartphone into a simplified phone with big understandable icons for commonly used features (phone, text messaging, camera, contacts, etc.) and no excess clutter. Most launchers can also be customized to

fit your mom's needs and preferences.

There are a variety of launcher apps available today that provide this type of technology and are completely free to use. Some popular options include, Necta Launcher (launcher.necta.us), Wiser (wiser-me.com), Seniors Phone (seniorsphone.mobi), Fontrillo (fontrillo.com) and Big Launcher (biglauncher.com), which also offers an upgraded version for \$9.

Or, if you have an old Apple iPhone that you'd like to convert, check out Silverline Mobile (silverline.mobi) that converts both Apple and androids for free.

Purchase a New Phone
If you're interested in purchasing your mom a new smartphone, you have options here too. For starters, you could purchase her a smartphone that's specifically designed for seniors, like GreatCall's Touch3 that costs \$150 (with no contract) at greatcall.com or 800-918-8543. This is an android phone, made by Samsung, that has a 4-inch touchscreen and provides a simple menu list to often-used features like the phone, text messages,

camera, pictures, email and Internet, along with your contacts and apps.

It also offers a variety of health and safety features like the "5Star app" that would let your mom speak to a certified agent 24/7 that could identify her location and get her the help she needs. "Urgent Care," which provides access to registered nurses and doctors for advice and diagnoses. And "MedCoach," which sends medication reminders.

Another way you could go is to purchase her a standard/mainstream smartphone that provides a built-in "Easy Mode" or "Simple" feature in the phone's settings. This will let you convert the phone into a much simpler mode of operation, that provides larger, well labeled icons, to only commonly-used functions like the phone, camera, messaging, Internet, pictures, contacts and her favorite apps.

Smartphones that offer the "Easy Mode" or "Simple" feature include the Samsung Galaxy phones, which are available through most cell phone carriers at prices typically ranging be-

tween \$400 and \$850 without a contract. Or, for a more budget-friendly option, the Huawei Vision 2 and Huawei Ascend Mate 2, which you can buy as an unlocked phone or through Consumer Cellular (consumercellular.com, 888-345-5509) for \$80 or \$225 without a contract. Consumer Cellular is a top-rated no-contract service provider that also offers discounts to AARP members.

A nice advantage of getting your mom a mainstream phone is that if she masters the Easy/Simple mode (or gets bored with it), and is ready to expand her skills, you can always switch the phone back to the standard operation mode exposing her to more options. You can also add any number of health and safety features to her phone, like what the Touch3 offers, by downloading their apps at greatcall.com/medical-apps.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

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