



Carmen Scism named KMHS softball coach

Kings Mountain High School didn't have to look far to find a new head softball coach after veteran coach Craig Short resigned to take an assistant principal's position at West Lincoln High.

One of Short's assistant coaches and a social studies teacher at KMHS, Carmen Scism, has been promoted to the head job.

"Carmen has been an assistant for the past four years and we feel confident in promoting her to be the head coach," said athletic director Dustin Morehead. "She has been a big part of the program for a long time. We are excited about her continuing on and improving the program."

As a student at KMHS, Scism was active in the softball program in the Lady Mountaineers' glory years under head coach Suzanne Grayson in the early 2000s, and was a major contributor to the team's success the past four years. The 2015 team won the South Mountain Athletic Conference title and advanced three rounds in the state 3A playoffs. It was KM's first championship season since Grayson's last year, 2007.

Scism said she is excited to be the new head coach and hopes to be in the position for many years to come.

"Kings Mountain is a great place to be a teacher and a coach," she said. "Hopefully, the last four years will be enough to keep a good, established program going strong."

As she begins her new duties, she will be without the services of several stars from last year's championship team, including pitcher Emily Hester, catcher Leah Herndon, and centerfielder Mikeala Bell.

"They will be hard to replace," she said, "but we have a good solid group coming back. We will have two returning seniors and a big junior class. Our whole infield except for Emily and Leah will be back but it will be a little bit of a problem to



Carmen Scism has been named head softball coach at Kings Mountain High School. (Photo submitted)

replace those three."

Scism will also have to find a couple assistant coaches. Long-time assistant Joey Barrett is also leaving the program to help his daughter and former KMHS assistant Haley Barrett coach at Shelby Middle School.

In some ways, Scism said it would be nice to skip over fall and winter and go right to spring.

"I'm so excited now that it is all settled, it's almost like 'okay, let's get the season going,'" she said. "But there's a lot of work to do to get everything organized. Softball is going to take up most of my time."

"This is a neat experience, but going from assistant to head coach and keeping the competitive level up and getting the players ready to play well and keep winning is going to be a challenge."

Scism said her girls will be busy during the off-season, either going through fall workouts or playing other sports such as volleyball.

"The off-season is very important, especially for

pitchers and catchers," she noted.

She expects a big turnout in the spring, not just from the returning players but also from freshmen that played at KM Middle last season.

"They had a good team," she noted. "Coach Trey Robinson does a good job with that program. Judging from what I've seen, some of them that are coming out will help us build a good program."

Scism is appreciative of the school system and the fans, and the level of support all of them give the softball program.

"Kings Mountain supports all of its athletes very well," she said. "We have a wonderful new softball field house with a lot of storage room, coach's office and locker room. It's such a nice facility that we take a lot of pride in. Visiting teams are very impressed with it. We have a good group of girls coming back that will be able to keep a good program going. We're excited for Coach Short for getting his new position and look forward to continuing the success we've had."



Back row: Head coach Mark Champion, Bryson Bailey, Daniel Bagwell, Josh Weber, Hunter Helms, Hunter Cash, Darin Guffey and assistant coach Bruce Capps. Front row: Alec Bell, Palmer Davis, Hunter Champion, C.J. Crawford, Tanner Queen, John Harris, Landry Crawford.

AL Juniors: From cellar dwellers to title contenders

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Celebration is definitely in order for a local group of young ball players and their coaches.

Following last year's one-win season, the Kings Mountain's American Legion Post 155 Juniors (ages 14, 15 and 16) turned it up at least a couple of notches this year to reach the Area IV playoffs championship game.

Post 155, led by coach Mark Champion, faltered in the first game of the playoffs, losing 14-5 to a Mint Hill squad. They then topped Henderson County 6-2 and edged Cherryville 6-5.

For the championship game, they again had to face the dominant Mint Hill team, which ended their run in an 11-4 battering. (Mint Hill for its part lost its first two games in state finals action, bouncing the team out

of the tournament.)

Post 155 players and Champion are nevertheless looking at the obvious positives that came out of the turn-around year for the young team. Kings Mountain juniors had never won a playoff series or more than 10 games in history before this season.

"It was a joy to coach them because there's so much talent and strength there," said Champion, who was assisted by Bruce Capps, looking back on the 16-10 season. "I really had plans on missing my vacation and playing in the state playoffs. I'm looking forward to coaching the juniors next year. I think at this point we're past just winning games."

Backing up that theory is the feeling that he'll have a lot of returning talent to get those needed W's.

That includes Alec Bell, Hunter Champion, Landry Crawford, Daniel Bagwell, Hunter Helms, Hunter Cash

and John Harris.

Champion said his ace pitcher - Bryson Bailey - will be forced to move up to the senior league.

He named the returning Bagwell as his best junior pitcher and Crawford and Palmer Davis as among the strongest batters on the team.

"We should have a strong group coming back," he said. "And I think we'll get the support and (possible recruiting) we need -- you beat Cherryville, you beat Shelby, that's a big draw."

Champion, who also serves as an umpire in area youth baseball, is modest about the role he plays.

"It's really a team effort; a lot of people make it come together and be successful. So really I have to thank all the parents, Tim and Tanner Ross (American Legion athletic directors), (assistant coach) Bruce (Capps) and my wife Tina."

KMHS fall sports teams begin practice this week

Kings Mountain High's fall sports teams can officially begin pre-season practice Saturday, August 1.

Football

The Mountaineer JV and varsity football teams will open practice Saturday at 8 a.m. and will continue a morning schedule until teachers report for school.

The football teams are required to have five days of conditioning and can begin hitting on Friday, August 7.

The Mountaineers will hold a scrimmage on August 11 (time and place to be announced) and will face Asheville in the annual Cleveland County Jamboree on Friday, August 14 at Burns. The jamboree begins at 6 p.m. and KM's game will begin at 7 p.m. Other games at Burns (they are all one half) are Crest vs. AC Reynolds, Shelby vs. Forestview and Burns vs. East Lincoln.

The varsity Mountaineers will open their regular season at home on Friday, Aug. 21 at 7:30 against the North Gaston Wildcats.

North Gaston does not have a JV team, so the JV Mountaineers will open their season on Thursday, August 27 at 6:30 at home against Charlotte Christian.

Volleyball

The volleyball team will hold tryouts August 3-4 from 4-6 p.m. in the high school gymnasium. All prospective players must have a valid physical to try out.

The Lady Mountaineers will host a multi-team varsity only scrimmage on Saturday, August 8 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and will travel to North Henderson on August 15 for a multi-team scrimmage from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Their regular season begins at home on August 17 against East Rutherford with the JVs playing at 4:30 and the varsity following. All SMAC games will be JV/varsity doubleheaders except for the KM-Shelby games which are varsity only.

Cross Country

Kings Mountain's boys and girls cross country

teams will begin practice Monday with sessions scheduled at 7 a.m. at the high school and 7 p.m. at the Gateway Trail.

Head coach Rayvis Key said runners can choose either, or both times.

The Mountaineers lost some of their top runners to graduation and injury but have some new runners that show promise, Coach Key said.

The runners open their season on Saturday, Aug. 29 in a multi-team meet at Jackson Park in Hendersonville. Their first regular season meet is September 1 at home against Ashbrook, East Gaston, Bessemer City, Crest and RS Central.

Tennis

The KMHS women's tennis team will hold tryouts on Monday through Thursday, Aug. 3-6 from 7-8:30 p.m. at the tennis courts.

All participants are required to have a current physical on file at the high

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