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Boys golf will have to work harder for repeat



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

McNary golfers Casey Potmesil, Teegan Papke, Adam Raschko, Sean McAllay and Brady Sparks endured a pouring rain to practice Tuesday, March 31.

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

In 2014, the McNary High School boys varsity golf team won a league title. With an expanded league this season, the Celts will have to work that much harder.

"We knew, with West Albany added in the league, it would be a challenge. We'll be grinding every week this year to keep up with them," said Brady Sparks, a McNary junior.

The Bulldogs beat out the Celts in the first league tournament of the season Monday, March 30. But not by much. West Albany turned in a team score of 320 and the Celts were 329. West Salem High School was nipping at McNary's heels with a 331.

"We wanted to be in the 320s, this is a team that needs to be there, and we can build from there as the season goes on," said Rick Ward, McNary head coach. "We have some work to do, but we had some kids who played above their averages in the league tournament. Sean (McAllay) did really well under pressure."

McAllay shot the best game for McNary, a 77, in the league tournament. He was fol-

lowed by Sparks with an 80, Riley Hancock and Teegan Papke with 86s, and Adam Raschko with a 90. The squad is still trying to fill out its junior varsity ranks, but Celt Casey Potmesil was the medalist in the league's JV tournament with a 44.

"It feels good to start out close to where we left off. If we get a couple guys down into the high 80's we will compete well all season," McAllay said.

Two weeks ago, McNary placed fifth out of 12 teams in a Tualatin tournament that hosted some of the state's top teams.

"We're not a state elite team yet, but we're a good team," Ward said.

One of the ways McAllay, the only senior on the squad, wants to see the team get even better is by doing some team bonding.

"I'm trying to organize team breakfasts each day we have a tournament," he said. "All I can do is encourage them is to get out and play even in terrible weather. Brady and Adam have been here since before me and I've got good guys to back me up,"

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KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

Celt Nick LaFountaine fires off a pitch in a preseason game two weeks ago. LaFountaine's work on the mound proved pivotal in a game during the McNary varsity baseball team's trip to Arizona.

Arizona opponents prove tougher than expected for Celts

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Well, the team bonding was good.

The McNary High School varsity baseball team's time on the field in Arizona during spring break left a bit more to be desired.

"We had a disappointing first day and that led to other problems," said Larry Keeker, McNary head coach.

McNary's first team out-of-the-gate on a trip to spring training in Arizona was Colorado's Highlands Ranch High School, one of the better high school teams of the nation.

"Just watching them warm up we could tell they were good, but we didn't play very well. We were in vacation mode and didn't do the things we needed to do to prepare that day," Keeker said.

The Falcons put seven runs on the board in the first inning, one in third and three in the fifth, taking an 11-0 win. "All of the teams we played had good fundamentals and it

kind of showed us where we want and need to be," said McNary senior Matt Aguilar.

The team fared quite a bit better in its second game. The Celts had a 6-0 lead over Liberty High School, of Colorado, at the top of the third inning when the wheels came off. Liberty knotted up the game in the bottom of the frame and went on to win the whole thing 10-7.

"The competition level was solid, but we didn't play to the standard we know we can."

— Matt Aguilar

run each. "We gave that game away on errors and it made it more disappointing than the first one," Keeker said.

Despite the loss, it was a turnaround for the Keizer team at the dish.

"The middle of the lineup started producing and that

allowed the guys at the front and back to score," Vasas said.

Following a third loss, 4-3 to Pueblo West High School, Celt Nick LaFountaine put on the performance of the Celts' tournament in a game with Colorado's Valley Vista High School.

"Nick got pulled in the first inning of the game with Highlands Ranch and then came back to start for us against Valley Vista. He gave up a home run in the third, but he kept us in that game and gave us a chance to be competitive," Keeker said.

Valley Vista never scored more than two runs in an inning, but McNary was too far behind (5-0) to catch up.

While the boys didn't find success on the field, Aguilar said it was the off-the-field moments that made the biggest difference.

"The whole trip was a success because we bonded as a team better even though we didn't win our games," he said. "I got to know some of the guys better than I had, and we grew more as team than we would have if we'd hung around Keizer."

Between games, the Celts visited a water park, played mini-golf, toured the San Francisco Giants' practice facility and had many meals together as a team.

Lady Celts go toe-to-toe with Oregon's top team

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Despite walking away from a spring break tournament at Jesuit High School without a win, the Lady Celt varsity softball team took one moral victory.

The McNary High School team went toe-to-toe with the Westview High School Wildcats, the No. 1 ranked team in the state. The girls lost 13-11.

"We outhit them 16-10 and against a pitcher who moves the ball around well. Westview's coach came up afterward and said she'd never seen any team hit like that," said Kevin Wise, McNary head coach.

Throughout the tournament, the team never lacked offense. The girls notched 32 runs in three games. A fourth game was called in the second inning due to rain.

"We attacked the ball in the first inning, and we scored in the first inning in every game," said Lady Celt Madison Oliver.

Wise said he knew the offense was coming, but he didn't expect the team to unload this early on.

"This tournament, we



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

McNary's Kinsey McNaught, who is batting better than .600 for the season, makes a throw from the outfield in a game two weeks ago.

started finding those holes from the plate," he said.

Every player in the lineup had at least one hit in the Westview game. Nadia Witt had two doubles, Oliver, Kelsi

Christenson, Haley Ebner, Hanna Carr and Megan Ulrey each had one. Sophomore Nicole Duran hit a home run. Carr had four RBIs.

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