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McNary's Megan Ulrey winds up a pitch in the game with St. Helens Friday, April 3. The Lady Celts survived a late-game rally by the Lions to win 10-9.

Girls withstand Lions' roar

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary High School softball team is looking forward to a little more parity in their league competition this season.

"I feel like it's going to be more of an even battle not having one team that's way above the rest of us," said Kelsi Christenson, a McNary High School junior.

For the past several seasons, and in a smaller league, South Salem High School's Katie Donovan was able to keep most teams off kilter at the plate. Donovan graduated last June leaving the new Greater Valley Conference

field more open.

"I think we're ready to go. I feel like this is the best team I've had so far out of three good teams. They know what they want to do and they are a great group of kids," said Kevin Wise, McNary head coach.

The girls kicked off league competition Tuesday, April 7, with a game vs. North Salem High School, continued Wednesday, April 8, with a game against West Salem High School and they travel to West Albany High School Friday, April 10.

While the outlook is somewhat murky, that doesn't mean the hard-hitting Celt-

ics will have a league title handed to them.

"West Salem and Sprague are going to be good. Sprague is already showing it," said Christenson.

McNary's took on St. Helens High School Friday, April 3, at home. McNary won 10-9, but it was a game Wise thought shouldn't have been so close.

"Megan (Ulrey) has been pitching so well that the defense is getting lulled to sleep. But good hitting teams like St. Helens teams will learn and put the ball in play," Wise said. "We also have three freshmen in the infield and they were making uncharac-

teristic throws."

McNary was up 7-0 in the fourth inning, but the Lions rallied for six runs in the top of the fifth. The Lady Celts added three in the bottom of the frame and held off St. Helens for the win.

Madison Oliver went 3-for-4 with four RBIs and two runs scored. Kiana Villarreal went 3-for-4 with a run and an RBI. Nicole Duran hit a home run.

Prior to that game McNary ran away with a 17-3 win over Sunset High School April 1. The Celtics had a 15-run lead before the Apollos even made it to the board in the fourth inning.

Boys 4x100 turns in state's top time



Austin Verboort prepares for launch in the varsity pole vault during the Sprague meet Wednesday, April 1.

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**
Of the Keizertimes

McNary High School girls and boys varsity track and field teams split a meet with Sprague High School Wednesday, April 1.

The Oly boys won 80-65 while the Celt girls took a 77-67 win. The big news of the week, however, was the boys 4x100 relay team notching the fastest time in the state.

"I take it with a grain of salt. I don't want to let it get to our heads. Obviously, our hard work is paying off, but we can't let up now," said Kyle Torres, a veteran of the team.

Torres, AJ Johnk, Brendan Van Voorhis and Riley Moore won the race in 42.60 seconds at the Titan Track Classic Friday, April 3. They are two-tenths of a second ahead of West Salem High School in the statewide OSAA 6A rankings.

"It feels good, but we have to keep working. We've got a target on our backs now," said sophomore Brendan Van Voorhis. The Celt boys' 4x400 team of Angel Goemaere, Van Voorhis, Torres and Moore is currently ninth in the state.

On the girls side of the Oly meet, Dani Duran said the team has high hopes and is coming together well.

"Our team is really good and really close, it's just going to take a lot of hard work and showing up every day," she said.

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Lady Celts turn up heat even when wins elude

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary High School girls varsity tennis team had a see-saw week in matches with West Albany and North Salem high schools.

"We've had some struggles in singles aside from Cambria Ruston, but the thing is all the girls are playing competitively with long volleys, even in the matches they lose," said Derrick Handley, the team's assistant coach.

The Lady Celts mustered only one win in competition with West Albany Tuesday, March 31. The former 5A school was added to the 6A Greater Valley Conference this year. Since then, the Bulldogs have been making things tough for the Celts in nearly every sport.

Freshman Hannah Childress notched the win in three sets. She lost her first set 3-6, but battled back to take the match with sets of 6-2 and 6-1.

One other match with the Bulldogs went to three sets. Sandy Childress lost with set scores of 6-2, 5-7 and 6-1. Katelyn Kolb and Claudia Estrada Correa made it to a tiebreaker after two sets, but came up on the losing end, 6-3, 7-6(7-2).

The girls fared much better in a 7-1 win over North Salem High School Thursday, April 2.

"We've been a little flat-footed and it's partly having



Mirielle Martinez charges the net to return a volley during the North Salem match Thursday, April 2, at McNary.

no non-league games. We did a better job with North on that point," Handley said. "The problem is that you kind of have to figure it out in individual sports like tennis."

In singles, Rushton won in sets of 7-5 and 6-0; Ami Chikatso won after one 6-0

set (her opponent couldn't finish the match); and Kristy Kely won in consecutive 6-2 sets.

In doubles, the Childress sisters won in a pair of 6-1 sets; Ariana Neads and Sami Trowbridge won in sets of 6-3 and 6-0; Katherine Pat-

erson and Hannah Kannier won in sets of 6-4 and 6-0; and Tayler Rains and Blanca Tepeque won in sets of 6-2 and 6-1.

Mirielle Martinez had the team's only loss, but made a fight of it. Her set scores were 7-5 and 6-2.



Tim Hays lines a ball to outfield for an RBI during McNary's game with North Salem high school Tuesday, April 7.

Celts show flawless defense in 2-1 win

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary High School varsity baseball team needed a shot in the arm after disappointing appearances in a tournament during spring break. They got it with a 2-1 win over Oregon City High School Wednesday, April 1.

"I feel good and the kids feel good heading into league competition because, in the game against Oregon City, we pitched and played defense the way we're capable of doing," said Larry Keeker, McNary head coach.

The teams were tied 1-1 in McNary's last appearance at the plate. Senior Nick LaFountaine got a lead-off single. Fellow senior Cole Thomas moved LaFountaine to third

The McNary High School baseball program is hosting a one-day clinic Saturday, April 11, from noon to 3:30 p.m. The clinic will include fundamentals of warming up, fundamentals of playing catch and defensive and offensive stations for players to rotate through. Cost is \$25 and drop-in registration is welcome. The clinic will be held on Flesher Field, weather permitting, or in the gym in the event of rain.

on a single of his own. When the pitcher tried to pick off Thomas at first, the baseman mishandled the catch.

"I got the read and took a head start, that's when we Please see DEFENSE, Page A9