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Left fielder Ben Cummings narrowly misses a pop fly in the McMinnville game after chasing it down. The Celtics won 4-3 after a rocky start defensively.

7-1 Celts lead GVC

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary High School varsity baseball team may have suffered its first loss, but picking up big wins over McMinnville and Sprague high schools kept the team at the top of league standings.

The Celtics lost 11-3 to South Salem High School Tuesday, April 21, after clearing the bullpen to stop the hemorrhaging.

"We battled and never gave up," said Celt Josiah Gilbert, who started the game on the mound. "For me, personally, I just couldn't make the adjustments I needed to."

Despite the lopsided defeat, Larry Keeker, head coach of the Celts, felt it came down to defensive lapses in the fifth inning.

"After loading the bases, Gabe Matthews came in and hit a grand slam. We did well offensively, but the defense faltered," Keeker said. "That

game snowballed on us and it just happens sometimes."

Up to that point, it had been a 3-2 game with the advantage going to South. Ben Cummings had two RBIs on one hit in the game.

McNary bounced back 24 hours later to take a 4-3 win over McMinnville High School in nine innings. The game started out rocky for pitcher Mickey Walker. He allowed three runs in the first three innings before reining it in and pitching the entire game. Walker got the win with 14 strikeouts and more than 120 pitches thrown.

McNary tied the game at 3-3 in the fifth, putting the pressure back on the Grizzlies against the Celt's best pitcher.

The game ended in the ninth when Nick LaFontaine scored from second on a bunt and an error. Mathew Ismay had a triple in the game. On Friday, April 24, Mc-

Nary traveled to Sprague and walked away with a 9-8 win.

This time around it was Gilbert who got the win, coming into the game in the sixth inning.

"We had a good run going, then things fell apart. I came in a jam and just tried to do what I could," Gilbert said. "We're one of those 'heart attack' teams who seems to turn things around just when we need to."

The Celts had an 8-0 lead when the Olys unleashed in the final three innings to knot the game 8-8.

"Once again, we executed the on the bunts to win the game," Keeker said.

Ismay went 3-for-3 at the plate with three runs scored. Trevor Gilbert had three RBIs on one hit, a triple. Cummings had two RBIs.

The Celtics stand alone atop the Greater Valley Conference with McMinnville a game behind them.

McNary LAX tied for 2nd

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary High School varsity lacrosse team was leading the North Valley Conference until a narrow 7-5 loss to Corvallis High School Friday, April 24.

The Celtics will have an opportunity to even the score Monday, May 4.

"Corvallis put the go ahead goal in with around four minutes left in the game and followed that goal up 15 seconds later after a faceoff win," said Ryan Bowlby, McNary head coach.

Freshman goalkeeper Marcus McCoy had a whopping 17 saves in the match. He stopped 71 percent of the attempts and anything above 60 percent is considered excellent.

Prior to that match McNary, eked out a 11-10 victory over South Salem High School. Bowlby said the loss of senior Taran Purkey to injury during the outing let the Saxons back

in the game, and gave the team a scare.

Overall, the team is continuing to live up to the promise of a growing reputation within the sport.

"We lost a couple tough games against some Eugene teams, but beat three Portland area schools. We had a big nail-biter in Newberg and won 9-8 in a two-overtime game. The next Portland school we played was La Salle Prep and won 12-11 in overtime. Two weeks ago, we took on Oregon City and won 11-7," Bowlby said.

Of the mix, Bowlby said the La Salle win was a big boost to spirits. La Salle is ranked above McNary in the state and boasts the 11th-best offense in the land.

"In that game, we had five different players score and had half of the goals assisted," Bowlby said.

The team's only big loss of the season was

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KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

Lady Celt Kiana Villarreal reaches for an out at first in a game with McKay High School last week.

Girls lose 2, win 1

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The Lady Celts of the McNary High School varsity softball team may have come up on

the losing end of a game with Sprague High School Friday, April 24, but they proved they could hang with one of the top teams in the state.

"I knew they were going to be big competition, but it was probably the best we've played this season. Our hitting could have been a bit better, but I have no regrets about the game," said Megan Ulrey, McNary pitcher.

McNary put two runs on the board in the early going, but was unable to do much with it after that. Sprague, with a 7-1 record, is ranked third in the state.

"That game showed we're getting closer to our potential," said Kevin Wise, McNary head coach.

"For us, it's not about right now. We're not peaking yet. We're making that climb."

Despite its 4-4 record, McNary is still ranked near the top 20 6A teams in the OSAA.

"Our bunt team and communication have come a long way in the past week and it really helped in our close games last week," said Celt senior Kimi Ito.

McNary was dealt another loss by the South Salem High School Saxons three days earlier on Tuesday, April 21.

"It was a back-and-forth game the whole way," Ulrey said of the 10-9 loss. "We would get a lead and couldn't hold on to it, then they would get the lead and we'd come back."

After several games with numerous stranded runners in the past few weeks, Ito said the team finally got it together in the South game. Ulrey and Kiana Villarreal both had home runs against South.

"We put our hits together better and didn't leave as many runners on base," Ito said.

Wise said it came down to South getting the last hit when it was needed most.

Between the two losses, the Lady Celts routed McMinnville High School 14-1. Kelsi Christenson hit a home run in the outing.

"Our hitting was on, our defense was on and there wasn't a hole anywhere," Ulrey said.

While the team has seen more struggles than expected, there's still a fair amount of movement among the top-ranked teams in the state. And McNary made a huge run into the playoffs two years ago after a difficult season.

The challenge ahead will be maintaining their current standing, or better yet, improving it. Without a play-in opportunity, the teams will have to find seeding through state rankings unless it makes a big move up the Greater Valley Conference ranks.

"Quite honestly, for teams 1 through 20 (in the rankings), there's not a huge difference," Wise said.

Intramural champs



Submitted

A team of McNary High School underclassmen took down a team of McNary faculty to win the Intramural Basketball Championship at the school Thursday, April 23. Team Make Shift, Adam Harvey (sophomore), Mory Takyu (freshman), Franny Balos (freshman), Jordan Harvey (sophomore) and Edward Gidenko (sophomore), took down staff members Tim Ehlers, Eric Schmit, Marc McAvoy, KJ McCrae, Andy Strejc, Miguel Camerana, Michael Miller, Maj. Robert Garcia and Shalese Stroup for the win.