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Childresses take district tennis title

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

For the past two years, McNary senior Sandy Childress has been first runner-up in the district tennis tournament. From the start of this season, she's been out to become something more.

She succeeded Saturday, May 16, taking the district title in doubles alongside her freshman sister, Hannah.

"I'm so thrilled, I've been working toward this my whole high school career," Sandy said. "It's a bonus to be able to do it with Hannah. Being able to share a victory at such a high level is really cool."

Sandy placed second in doubles as a sophomore and second in singles as a junior.

Hannah said the finals match ended up being a totally different experience than what the pair had envisioned.

"We really expected to be taking on the West Albany (High School) No. 1 team, but their No. 2 team beat them and I think we had an easier match because of it," Hannah said. "Our toughest match ended up being against McMinnville (High School). We won 6-2, 6-1, but the score didn't reflect how close the match was."

The two Lady Celts lost only six games the entire tournament. The girls were set to enter the state tournament as the sixth seed in all of Oregon, but they'll have a tough road ahead.

"It's going to be pretty difficult for us because we haven't played these teams before. We got a bye the first round, but that means we have to win our first match or we're done," Sandy said.

The elder Childress is headed to the Division 2 Sonoma State University in California next fall where she's already been accepted to the school and made the tennis team.

With three years of high school still ahead of her, Hannah has set a high bar for herself with a district title, but she's busy relishing the moment.

"I think it's awesome. Not a lot of freshman are able to do something like this, but Sandy and I helped each other," Hannah said.



Submitted
The Lady Celt varsity softball team gathers for a photo after winning the first-ever Greater Valley Conference title by beating Sprague High School 5-4.

Lady Celts top league

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary High School girls varsity softball team finished the Greater Valley Conference season with an eight-game win streak and the first GVC league title.

"We knew where this team was at the beginning of the season and where they could be. It took them a little longer than we expected, but (the upswing) is happening at a good time," said Kevin Wise, McNary head coach.

The league title hung in the balance until the Lady Celts' final game with Sprague High School Friday, May 15. Sprague had a 3-0 lead going into the top of the sixth frame.

"I think, in the early going, the girls were trying to swing for the fences and it kept us from putting up runs. But, in that sixth inning, Kiana Villarreal shortened up her swing and hit a three-run homer," Wise said.

Villarreal's home run tied the game, and she said that was the magic moment for her as far as the team went.

"I knew we had a great group of girls, and that last game it showed me how when one of us got down our team

would be there to back us up," Villarreal said. "After that inning, we had a talk about how much we wanted the title and I think it came down to us wanting it more. Our energy picked up."

After knotting it up 3-3, McNary held the Olys scoreless in the bottom of the sixth. The Celts added two runs in the seventh and Sprague put only one runner across the dish in the bottom of the frame to give the Celts a 5-4 win.

Kelsi Christensen had the best day at the plate going 3-for-5 with a double and a run scored. Haley Ebner went 2-for-4 with an RBI. Hannah Carr went 2-for-4 with a home run.

Sprague had beaten the Celts 4-2 in the teams' prior contest.

On paper, it's difficult to understand how the girls came to stand alone atop a league with three teams finishing with the same record, 12-4. It has to do with how McNary, Sprague and West Salem competed against each other. Within those three teams' contests, McNary had a 3-1 record, Sprague was 2-2 and West went 1-3.

A day prior to the Sprague game, McNary beat another team, South Salem

High School, that they'd taken a loss to earlier in the season. The Celts won 10-0 this time.

"We knew we had a streak going this time and I think we decided we weren't going to let up," said McNary pitcher Megan Ulrey.

Wise said the difference from earlier in the season came down to fewer errors and Ulrey being able to work the corners of her strike zone effectively. Kinsey McNaught and Christensen both went 3-for-4. Christensen's day included a double, a triple and a stolen base.

On Wednesday, May 13, the Celts pounded McMinnville High School 16-6. The game ended in the fifth frame after an eight-run fourth for McNary.

Ulrey said part of the team's strategy this season was never to go out and win state, and that's what made it such a success.

"We had to do the smaller things to get there first: hitting every game, scoring every inning. Those small goals lead up to the winning every game and going to the post season," she said. "We always have the same expectations and try to be realistic."



KEIZERTIMES/ERIC A. HOWALD
McNary High School senior Kyle Torres took two individual district titles alongside a pair of team titles in relay events.

Torres takes pair of individual, relay titles

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

McNary High School senior Kyle Torres claimed two individual district titles at the Greater Valley Conference district meet last week, but he's more excited about the two additional ones he claimed as part of the 4x100 and 4x400 relay teams.

"The relays went well and I was really impressed with how Antoine (Wilder) and Austin (Stone) really stepped up in those races," Torres said.

Torres claimed individual titles in the 200 meter and 400 meter races with times of 22.10 and 49.04 seconds, respectively. In the 4x100, Torres, Brown, Brendan Van Voorhis and Riley Moore took first in 42.38. In the 4x400, Wilder, Moore, Stone and Torres took first in 3:25.45. Van Voorhis took second in the 200 and 400. Moore took third in the 200, making for a sweep of the event.

"This week we need to work on the handoffs in both races," Stone, a junior said. This will be Stone's third ap-

pearance in state races as a Celt.

Wilder was thrown into the mix of the 4x400 after Van Voorhis suffered a cramp and was essential to the win, said Frank Gauntz, McNary head coach.

"The kids we are taking to state are in a good position to do well."

— Frank Gauntz,
Head coach

"It was nice to know we had the depth to come through because we had high expectations for those two teams," he said. The girls will send two runners on to the state tournament in Eugene. Junior Danielle Duran took second in the 400 meter in 1:00.67. Kailey Doult, a freshman, took second in the 800 meter in 2:19.65.

Doult was in third going into the last 200 meters of the 800, but hit the afterburners to pass the second-place runner and earn the state berth. "I feel really happy, and I want to go and do this every year. I also dropped my time by five seconds. My goal was to break 2:20 this season," Doult said.

For the first year in a newly Please see TRACK, Page A9

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

After a loss to McMinnville High School, the McNary High School varsity baseball team had to settle for second place in the Greater Valley Conference.

"We're proud of where we ended up, but it came down to needing a win over one of the better teams in the league on their home field and we didn't get the job done," said Larry Keefer, McNary head coach.

Despite some disappointment with taking second, senior Jacob Vasas said the team exceeded his early expectations.

"To be honest, after the stomping we took in Arizona (during spring break), I thought we were going to have to scrap a little bit, but coming out in first place after the first half of the season felt good and like we earned it," Vasas said. "We did pretty well from where we started."

While they were denied a league title, McNary gets to host its first game of the playoffs Monday, May 25. The Keizer team drew Lake Oswego in the first round, and the two teams have plenty of recent history.

Two years ago, McNary beat the Lakers in the post-

Boys finish in second



KEIZERTIMES/ERIC A. HOWALD
Celt Cole Thomas turned a reaching hit into two-RBI triple in a game with Madison High School Tuesday, May 19.

season. Last year, Lake Oswego ousted McNary from the playoff scene.

"Coming back with Lake Oswego is going to be fun since we have the history with them," said Connor Goff, a Celt senior.

The big loss to McMinnville Wednesday, May 13, was partly the result of missed op-

portunity.

"In the second inning, we had two guys on with nobody out and we didn't execute the sac bunt, then had three strikeouts. In the bottom of that inning, we had an error on the sac bunt. Another bunt was popped up in the air and Mickey (Walker) had to dive for it and missed. If

he had made that catch, we might have had a double play, but they ended up with bases loaded," Keefer said.

The Grizzlies ended up scoring three runs in the frame. McMinnville pitcher David McMinus barreled ahead on the mound holding McNary to three hits.

Please see BOYS, Page A10