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Lady Celt Kiana Villarreal just misses a tag in the McNary High School softball team's first round

Cavewomen blank Celts in third round

By ERIC A. HOWALD Of the Keizertimes

After dominating North Medford High School 12-2 in the second round of the softball playoffs, the Lady Celts fell to Grants Pass 5-0 in the quarterfinal round Friday, May 29.

Despite leading the state in offense with 311 runs for the season, McNary High School's batters could never quite get it started against the Cavewomen. When the team did manage to load bases, twice, the Grants Pass team stepped up on defense with two double plays.

McNary head coach Kevin Wise said a combination of hard luck – hitting balls right at infielders - and simple tiredness probably got the best of the team. While the Celts won the Greater Valley Conference, McNary only got to host its first playoff game and traveled to southern Oregon twice in three days for the second and third rounds.

While the team hoped to make it a bit further, there was plenty of good news last

week in Lady Celt softball. The team had eight players receive all-league honors including five first teamers. Pitcher Megan Ulrey, catcher Kiana Villarreal, infielder Haley Ebner, and outfielders Kimi Ito and Kinsey Mc-Naught were all first team selections.

"We had four freshmen who all played huge roles, especially Haley and Nadia Witt. In fact, Haley had never played second base before."

Madisen Oliver and Kelsi Christensen were named second team infielders. An honorable mention went to Witt in the outfield. Wise was named Coach of the Year.

McNary's play was a work in progress early in the season, but ended the season with a 10-game winning streak.

"It took us a while to work out some kinks, and limit our errors. We also started working on shortening up our swings and putting balls in play. When both of those things happened, the tide started turning,"Wise said.

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Torres second in state **400 race**

McNary High School senior Kyle Torres took second place in the 400 meter race at the state meet Friday and Saturday, May 22 and 23.

Torres and teammate Brendan Van Voorhis both made the finals. Torres turned in a time of 48.64 seconds and Van Voohis, a sophomore, took sixth with a time of 49.66 seconds.

"It was just exciting to compete at that level, and seeing our 4x100 team take third was great,"Torres said.

In the 4x100, Austin Brown, Van Voorhis, Riley Moore and Torres took third with a time of 42.42 seconds. The same team took fifth in 4x400 with a time 3:22.16.

McNary's two girls at the meet, Danielle Duran in the 400 meter, and Kailey Doutt in the 800 meter were eliminated in the preliminary

Host families sought for S-K players

Buster Posey, Tim Lincecum and Sergio Romo are a few of the former Salem-Keizer Volcanoes and now current San Francisco Giants players who spent time here in the Willamette Valley before their time in the MLB ranks.

And they all spent time in the homes of local families during their first professional baseball season.

The Volcanoes are seeking host family candidates for the fast-approaching season that begins June 17. Host families provide a home for the Volcanoes in their first years as pro baseball players.

Additionally, host families gain access to a variety of inseason benefits for opening their homes to to players.

Volcanoes players are in their first or second year of professional baseball, ranging in age from 18 to 24 years old while coming from very diverse backgrounds and from all over the globe.

Volcanoes players arrive in early June and depart in early September. If you are interested in the program or want additional information, contact Rick Nelson at 503-390-2225 or via email at rnelson@ volcanoesbaseball.com.

Irish pound boys on diamond

By ERIC A. HOWALD Of the Keizertimes

varsity baseball team's playoff run ended with a 14-2 loss in the second round. Wednesday, May 27.

The Celtics faced Sheldon High School in Eugene and the Fighting Irish had a 10-0 lead by the end of the second inning.

"Sheldon is really good, they can hit," said Larry Keeker, McNary head coach. "Josiah Gilbert came in the second inning to pitch and did a nice job. They only got four more runs the rest of the way. Despite the score, we continued to battle, we did not quit."

Sheldon batters seemed to have starting pitcher Nick LaFountaine's number from the get-go. After two singles by Sheldon's lead-off pairing, a home run put the Eugene team up 3-0.

The Celts' Trevor Gilbert managed a double play on a line drive catch that he con-

verted into a forced out at of the season. third base. The inning finally The McNary High School ended with a fly out to Cole Thomas, but Sheldon already had a 6-0 lead. The team added four more runs in the

> McNary made it to the board with two runs in the fifth inning. Collin Young got the team started with a double, then Cole Thomas drew a walk. Senior Jacob Vasas hit a single to load the bases. After two strikeouts, Connor Goff drove in Young and Thomas on a single. They were the last runs McNary would put up in the outing en route to the

> 14-2 loss. The game brought the Celtic baseball season to a close, but McNary exceeded the expectations of others and themselves throughout the

The Keizer team suffered some difficult defeats in its spring break trip to Arizona, but Keeker said the lessons stuck with the team the rest

"We were able to get to now each other a lot better We learned how to prepare for games and how to deal with things not going so well. It made us tougher," he said.

In the wake of the trip, the McNary players focused more on preparing for each game and ended up leading the Greater Valley Conference after the first round-robin.

"This team surpassed what many thought they could or would do," Keeker said. "Focusing on fundamentals on a daily basis was one of the reasons why they had success on the field. There is simply no substitute for making the 'little things' important. They for sure lived up to my high expectations."

It wasn't until two lateseason losses that the Celtics surrendered the league title to McMinnville High School, settling for second place.

The Celts will lose a bevy of seniors to graduation this



Celt Josiah Gilbert winds up on the bump in a game earlier this

month - including several pitchers and the entire outfield - but Keeker said he has

high hopes for the future of

the program. Please see BOYS, Page A13

Equestrian team takes first in district



McNary High School's equestrian team, Gracie Lorimor, Claire Zielinski, Alyssa Lorimor and Leah Burleson, with their first place trophy for winning the small team division in the Willamette District.

By ERIC A. HOWALD

Of the Keizertimes For the first time in several years, the McNary High School equestrian team won the Willamette District small

Lady Celts Claire Zielinski, Alyssa Lorimor, Leah Burleson and Gracie Lorimor won the title in April. Zielinski earned a berth in the state meet, slated later this month,

for her performance in the showmanship event. "This was a good way to end our high school career,"

"It was really a combination of having three more experienced members and Gracie who is really good," Zielinski added. "All of us were more unified than we have been in some of the past

said Alyssa.

The girls scored the bulk of their points in individual events and blew away the nearest competition by more than 100 points. McNary had 317 points to Crescent Valley's 212 points.

Zielinski's best event is a trail course leading her horses Curley and Cowgirl in-hand and mounted around the arena with and without obstacles.

Burleson's specialty, with horse Cruz, is dressage.

"Basically, there are letters placed around the arena and we have to perform certain things, like large and small circles at each one," Burleson

Gracie said her best event is showmanship with her horse

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