

Lady Celts focusing on inspiration

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary High School girls varsity soccer team had something of a rough go of it in 2014.

Starting off the season with a new coach and uncertain prospects, the Lady Celts were getting outright bludgeoned by other teams by the time the end of the season rolled around. However, from the outset of that season, head coach AJ Nash only wanted the team to remain positive despite the struggles.

This year, he's happy to report the team survived mostly unscathed.

"We got wins when we were supposed to and we kept games close when we were supposed to," Nash said. "This year we're focusing on leadership and fitness."

That might seem like a relatively simple thing to accomplish, but Nash has high expectations for everyone on the team, including the nine freshmen added to the varsity roster.

"All the girls have the directive that even if they are the last person coming off the bench on our depth chart, their job is to inspire at least one other player on the field already," Nash said.

The girls will be fielding a healthy mix of players from grades nine through 12. The competition within the program has skyrocketed as a result and pushed veterans of the team to new levels.

"I think it will mean we win more games, and it's fun to see so many girls coming out



McNary's Cassidy Brunkal challenges a teammate for control of the ball during a scrimmage at the Celts' annual Blue Day celebration.

for the team," said Kelli Miller, a senior.

While changes within the Celtic ranks are one thing, sophomore Jessy Shore said changes in other teams are likely to make a difference, too.

"Some of the other teams lost a lot of seniors which means the competition is go-

ing to be a lot more even throughout the league," Shore said.

While changes on other teams are beyond the Celts' sphere of influence, the McNary team has done a good job of cleaning up the things that needed work after last season, said senior Michaela Sanchez, who

SCHEDULE

Sept. 4 vs. Crescent Valley, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 8 at Benson Polytechnic, TBD
 Sept. 10 vs. Dallas, 3:30 p.m.
 Sept. 15 at Central, TBD
 Sept. 17 vs. Newberg, 3:30 p.m.
 Sept. 22 vs. Roosevelt, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 25 vs. North Salem, 4 p.m.
 Oct. 2 at West Albany, 4 p.m.
 Oct. 6 vs. McKay, 7 p.m.
 Oct. 8 at McMinnville, 4 p.m.
 Oct. 13 at Forest Grove, 7 p.m.
 Oct. 16 at West Salem, 4 p.m.
 Oct. 20 vs. South Salem, 7 p.m.
 Oct. 23 at Sprague, 4 p.m.

marks her fourth season as a varsity player.

"We have a lot better ball control this year and we are making better passes. I think it's the result of a more united team on and off the field," she said. "I'm looking forward to going all out and going out with a bang."

Senior Brianna Koch said the team is also doing a better job of communicating, but she sees some of the low points last season as lessons to use moving forward.

"The big thing we have to do is talk and not get discouraged," Koch said. "When we had bad games last season, you could see everybody breaking down more and more. This time around, if we're losing, I want to see us pick it up and get back on the ball."

GIRLS SOCCER ROSTER

9 - Kelli Miller
 7 - Michaela Sanchez
 10 - Jessy Shore
 6 - Brianna Koch
 13 - Kayla Evans

3 - Abigail Smith
 19 - Katy Wyatt
 16 - Kolbie Kopp
 18 - Abigail Hawley
 4 - Brooke Burrows

11 - Cassidy Brunkal
 5 - Abi Rodriguez
 2 - Jenna Candland
 17 - Natalia Gonzalez
 22 - Katelyn Tallon

14 - Janie Jarmin
 0 - Sydney Snapp
 15 - Isabella Heath
 8 - Gina Munguia
 99 - Jazzlyn Lark

20 - Emalee Denhem
 23 - Emma Garland
 0 - Scarlett Working
 21 - Cailin Johansen
 8 - Serina Garci



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