

Celts struggle at plate

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

After starting out the season with a fair amount of offense, the McNary High School varsity baseball team appears to have gone into hibernation, said Larry Keeker, McNary head coach.

"We've had some good stretches, but the bad stretches came in league games when Josiah (Gilbert) doesn't pitch. We haven't scored a run without him on the mound," he said.

McNary is sitting in sixth place in the Greater Valley Conference with a record of 2-3 and games with three of the five teams ahead of them in the league on tap this week.

The Celts hosted the South Salem High School Saxons Tuesday, April 19, and missed a win after a promising start. In the first inning, Celt Collin Young ripped a bases-loaded triple to right field to give McNary a 3-0 lead. By the time the inning was over, McNary was up 4-0. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough. The Saxons rallied to take the victory 7-5.

Last week, the Celtics picked up an 8-4 win over McKay High School Tuesday, April 12, and lost to Forest Grove High School 4-0 Friday, April 15. McNary's eight runs against the Royal Scots had been the only scoring in the four games prior to playing the Saxons.

"I think it's our mentality at the plate," said Celt Tanner Gordon. "When we go up swinging, playing aggressive and trying to jump on the pitcher we do a lot better than when we're hanging around the plate trying to see pitches."

Teammate Trevor Gilbert said the team has struggled to pinpoint the exact causes of its



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald
Celt Collin Young heads to first en route to a three-RBI triple in the game with South Salem High School Tuesday, April 19.

strife.

"I don't think we've seen any pitcher that we can't hit, but we struck out in a couple of big situations when we faced Forest Grove," Gilbert said.

The Celtics have been in the unfortunate position of drawing nearly every team's No. 1 pitcher, but Keeker didn't see that as an excuse.

"We've gotten into a slump either as an individual or team, and we have a tendency to try to do things that we don't have to do. We end up swinging early or the timing is off," Keeker said.

While offense has lagged, the team made recent strides

in cleaning up its defensive efforts. The Celts were averaging a handful of errors each time out prior to the McKay game, but have cut the tally considerably since.

"Coach (Dave) Bartlett has been getting on us a good bit and having us focus on the good throw and not rushing it," Gilbert said.

"We've been working hard on defense and confidence comes with preparation," Gordon added.

The Celts were slated to face McMinnville Wednesday past press time. The team returns to Keizer to host Sprague High School Friday, April 22. The first pitch is 5 p.m.

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Royal Scot tennis beats Lady Celts 4-2

Celts Hannah Childress and Krissy Kelty picked up wins in their respective tennis matches with McKay High School Tuesday, April 12.

Kelty, a senior with a 3-4 record so far this season, picked up a win at No. 2 doubles with set scores of 6-1 and

6-0. Childress, who has lost only one of her seven matches this season, won in straight 6-0 sets.

McKay won the overall contest with a score of 4-2. Two matches went unfinished due to rain.

McNary senior Ashley Ma-

ceira split the two sets she finished against Royal Scot Max Sheck with scores of 6-4 and 4-6.

The No. 3 Celt doubles team of Katherine Perez and Tayler Walker stretched their match-up to three sets with scores of 6-4, 4-6 and 6-2.



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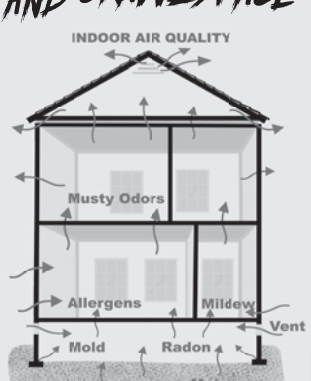
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