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Volcanoes start 20th season Friday at home

By **TIM HAYS**
Of the Keizertimes

The Salem-Keizer Volcanoes baseball players arrived into town on Sunday, June 12, and are opening up their first series this weekend against the Hillsboro Hops.

With seven returning players, highlighted by pitcher Mac Marshall, the No. 25 prospect in the San Francisco Giants organization and first

baseman Chase Compton, the Volcanoes have a slew of youngsters coming in from all over the country, and other parts of the world.

"We're trying to get better mentally and physically as a player and just having fun," Compton said.

"We are just trying to get a ring up there."

The Volcanoes are entering their 20th season and have made renova-

tions to the stadium in hopes for an exciting year.

They added a digital scoreboard in right field, a family zone down the right field line, and cameras around the ballpark, which will allow them to broadcast their games around the Salem-Keizer area.

Even a special ceremony has been prepared for opening night on Friday.

"We will be reenacting the Open-

ing Day Ceremonies from 20 years ago which will include an eloquent speech and a ceremonial first pitch from those who were influential in bringing baseball to Salem-Keizer," said owner Jerry Walker.

"So much has changed and fans will be amazed at the changes but will see the one constant over the years - baseball."

Opening night will be the first of

nine Friday firework shows this season.

All three games against Hillsboro start at 6:35 p.m.

Salem-Keizer will then travel to Boise Monday but return home Thursday, June 23 for five games against Tri-City.

The Volcanoes are a short-season A affiliate of the San Francisco Giants.

Gym's open for the summer



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

Abbey Hawley leads a fast break during a McNary girls basketball practice last week. The rising sophomore made a game-tying 3-pointer Monday against Cascade.

Lady Celts look for identity

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

The result of Monday's scrimmage, a 44-41 overtime win over Cascade, wasn't nearly as important as who was on the court for McNary.

For just the third time in eight summer games, the Lady Celts had their whole team together.

"Even as coaches, we don't know exactly what to expect at this point," McNary head coach Derick Handley said. "We know we have athletes. We know we have talent but we don't know what it looks like together. For these last few games, that's what we're hoping for is we can form that identity of what we are going to be next year."

Standardized testing and sibling graduations have kept girls away.

McNary played at a tournament in Eugene Saturday

without three potential starters—Sydney Hunter, Gabby Schmidt and Abbey Hawley, who returned Monday to tie the game against Cascade on a 3-pointer with 4 seconds remaining in regulation.

Saturday, the Lady Celts defeated North Eugene 39-28 before falling to Sheldon and Lake Oswego.

"We played with six. We stayed out of foul trouble," Handley said. "We were competitive, even missing some of our top players. I think we ran out of gas. We had a hard time adjusting. With a lot of youth and a lot on inexperience. We couldn't adjust mid-game like we typically can."

The absence of some of McNary's top players has given other girls the opportunity to shine and two young Lady Celts, rising junior Alayna Grier and upcoming sophomore Caiya Ewert, have im-

pressed coaches.

"That's actually been one of the nice surprises this summer is that we've had two kids really stand out who we didn't know if they'd be a varsity player or not, that are proving that they can," Handley said. "Both this weekend were thrown into starting positions and they'd never played a second of varsity in their life and not only held their own but were really intelligent and did a lot, great rebounding, good defense, just those little role pieces that we'll definitely need if we're going to be successful next year."

With the graduation of Madi Hingston, Reina Strand and Kaelia Flores, who have all signed to play Division II college basketball, Handley is looking for leadership.

"We're still sloppy and you can tell we lost our leadership, at least some of our leadership," he said.

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KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

Cade Goff, an incoming senior, works on a post drill with McNary boys basketball coach Ryan Kirch at practice Monday.

Celtics evaluating talent

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

With only two weeks of practice in November before the season tips off, McNary boys basketball coach Ryan Kirch makes sure to get the most out of the summer.

And this year is no different.

"There's not a lot of time to waste and we want to make sure we've got a pretty good idea of where we're at and what we need to focus on," Kirch said. "It's really an evaluation period for us."

The Celtics, who are playing around 20 games during the month of June, traveled to McMinnville for a tournament Saturday and Sunday. After defeating the host school, Silverton and then Sprague, McNary lost to Wilsonville in the tournament's championship game.

"It's pretty convenient and

relatively close," Kirch said of the tournament. "It's good competition. We get some Portland schools to come down. It's a good tournament."

The Celtics opened summer league on June 4-5 with a tournament at Willamette University.

McNary is 8-2 in its first 10 games as they look to replace Greater Valley Conference Player of the Year Harry Cavell and Trent Van Cleave, a three-year starter at point guard.

"We're going to be a little bit different than last year," Kirch said. "Right now we pass the ball pretty well but we've got to get better defensively. But that's always sort of the case in the summertime. The biggest thing for us is we can see the areas we need to focus on in the fall. Our kids are competing and we have

some talented kids. It's just a matter of putting them in the right position to be successful. Again, expose our weaknesses a little bit in the summertime and recognize where we've got to improve."

Along with practice on Monday, the varsity team plays on Tuesday nights, the junior varsity on Wednesday and the freshmen squad on Thursdays.

This weekend, all three teams are playing in a tournament in Wilsonville.

"We have young kids coming up from the lower levels," Kirch said.

"Guys are going to be asked to do different things and see how the pieces fall. At all levels, it's an evaluation of talent both individually and then we'll see the strength and weaknesses as a team. We tried to install some stuff that we want with our personnel coming back that we know we'll have next year."

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Duran hurdles way to Oregon State

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

Running track in college was so far off Dani Duran's radar that she hadn't even taken the SAT or ACT.

The McNary senior had planned to go to Chemeketa Community College, which doesn't require either tests.

However, Duran's future changed on April 13 after she convinced her coaches to let her try the 300-meter hurdles midway through her final high school season.

"I just wanted to try it," Duran said.

"I never thought I would be good at it. I just wanted to try it to do something different."

Without really any practice or training, Duran clocked the fourth best time in the state—46.75.

Three days later, she moved up to third (45.80) and then set a new school record (44.91) while also winning the Greater Valley Conference title.

Her goal became to win a state championship and while she came up just short, placing second in 44.37 behind Leah Russell of Gresham, her strong finish gave her a new opportunity.

Kelly Sullivan, the head track and field coach at Oregon State University, was watching.

"After I got second, I was

really bummed and upset but he came up to me and introduced himself and gave me a card and told me to email him," Duran said.

She did, which resulted in Duran visiting the campus and receiving an offer to join the team.

If Duran, a 3.5 student, can't take the ACT in time, she said she'll enroll at Chemeketa for a term and then transfer to OSU.

When Duran first pictured herself as a college athlete herself ago, she saw herself not on the track but as a gymnast—the sport that she has done since she was 4 years old. "I've always wanted to go to college for sports," Duran

said. "That was my goal. OSU has always been my top college."

Duran didn't do track until high school when her freshman health teacher Dustin Walker, who is also the pole vault coach, talked her into giving it a try.

She ran the 200, 400, 4x100 and 4x400, also winning the GVC in the 400 this season.

"Dani Duran has been a leader by example," McNary head track and field coach Frank Gauntz said. "Her work ethic and competitive nature has only helped our track team the last four years. Dani is a really special person and athlete."

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File

Dani Duran finished second in the state in the 300-meter hurdles, which caught the attention of the OSU track team.