

Naturals: Salmhofer, Lyda win first match

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

McNary's boys tennis team won't be the most experienced bunch in the Greater Valley Conference.

But the Celtics are already proving to be quick learners.

Brayden Lyda, a basketball player, and Emil Salmhofer, a soccer player from Austria, didn't pick up a tennis racket for the first time until two weeks before the season.

But Lyda and Salmhofer won their first match, 6-2, 6-1 at No. 2 doubles on Thursday, March 15 against Aloha.

"We practiced pretty hard these last two weeks and it paid off," Lyda said with a giant grin.

"I feel like we just have good chemistry out on the court. We're friends obviously and I think that's a big part of it."

"We thought it would be fun to play, and we're actually pretty good," Salmhofer added. "We had fun playing. We made no mistakes. Usually we make a couple of mistakes."

Lyda had watched Alfredo

Villarreal, a basketball teammate, play tennis last season and thought it looked like fun.

"They're pretty good athletes," McNary head coach Marc McAvoy said. "It's amazing how fast they picked it up. It really is."

McAvoy, a long-time tennis coach in the district at McKay and North Salem, is back for his second stint at McNary.

"I just missed coaching," said McAvoy, behavioral specialist at Claggett Creek Middle School and freshman basketball coach at McNary. "It's kind of my thing. I love doing it. McNary always puts out really good quality character kids and it's a lot of fun to work with a kid like that. It's a really good group. There's a lot to learn, a long ways to go but really, really good kids."

The Celtics have 15 boys on the team this season from four different countries. McNary has three exchange students—Salmhofer (Austria), Pong Sae-ku (Thailand) and Zamour Sieben (Germany).

"People are going to accuse me of traveling the world



Emil Salmhofer and Brayden Lyda won their first tennis match 6-2, 6-1 at No. 2 doubles against Aloha on Thursday, March 15.

to recruit but it just landed in my lap," McAvoy joked.

Two returning players, Adam Graneto and Villarreal, both juniors, opened the season at No. 1 and 2 singles for the Celtics. Sieben is playing 3 singles and Luke Skipper, a freshman, is at 4 singles.

Matt Dice and Noah Kuhl make up McNary's No. 1 doubles team.

McAvoy convinced three of his freshmen basketball players to try tennis—Tristan Proctor, Ben Roth and Kyle Martin. Roth and Martin opened the season at 3 dou-

bles. McNary lost its first match 5-1 to Aloha but Skipper led 6-4, 1-0 when his match was called due to rain. Sieben was also unable to finish after losing the first set 4-6 but winning the second 6-2.

The Celtics are back home

KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

Tuesday, April 3 for a league match against McKay at 4 p.m.

McNary softball starts 3-0

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McNary wasn't at full strength for its first three softball games.

It didn't matter.

Playing a doubleheader at Churchill on Friday, March 16, the Lady Celts opened the season with a 16-6 victory in game one. McNary then took game two 16-4.

After the series, Churchill's pitcher, Sarah Shepler, a senior, told McNary head coach Kevin Wise that she was trying everything, didn't know what else to do and had never seen a team hit like that.

Without shortstop Haley Bingenheimer, who was recovering from the flu and second baseman Taylor Ebbs, who was away on a family ob-

ligation, the Lady Celts combined for 40 hits in the two games, including 10 doubles and a home run.

Catcher Courtney Roberts was 6-for-9 with five runs, three RBIs, two doubles and a home run at Churchill. Outfielder Emma Kinler went 6-for-10 with five RBIs, two runs and two doubles.

In Bingenheimer's absence, freshman Kate Ronning moved from third to shortstop and Nadia Witt went from center field to third. Shaylee Custer, typically an outfielder, played second in place of Ebbs.

"That's just this group this year," Wise said. "It's really good because they don't care and you can put them anywhere and they're athletic enough that they're going to

play wherever you put them."

McNary had 83 at-bats in the two games at Churchill and no one struck out.

Faith Danner pitched all 13 innings to earn both wins.

The Lady Celts remained hot at Cleveland on Monday, March 19, winning 11-0 in five innings.

McNary recorded 13 hits, including two doubles and two triples.

Sophomore outfielder, Alexa Cepeda, was 3-for-4 with two runs, three RBIs and two stolen bases. Nadia Witt was 2-for-4 with three runs and two stolen bases. Kinler was 2-for-3 with a double, triple and two RBIs.

"The girl (Cleveland pitcher Anna Hawking) had a decent rise and an OK curve and

they hit her, too," Wise said. "I don't think it really matters. The ball is just looking big to them right now."

Danner pitched all five innings, allowing four hits and striking out seven batters.

The Lady Celts are scheduled to host Oregon City, the team that knocked them out of the state playoffs last season, on Friday, March 23 at 4:30.

McNary is playing in a spring break tournament March 26-27 in West Linn.

The Lady Celts open with West Linn on March 26 at 1 p.m. McNary then begins league play at home on Tuesday, April 3 against Forest Grove.

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