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Celtics get even with Sprague

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

After loading the bases in each of the first three innings and getting nothing to show for it, McNary desperately needed a big hit and Ty Covalt came through.

With runners on first and second and one out in the bottom of the fourth, Covalt ripped a double down the left field line to score two runs. The Celtics scored five runs in the inning and held on to defeat Sprague 5-4 on Monday, April 23.

"That just broke the ice for us," McNary head coach Larry Keeker said.

Covalt hit the double on the 10th pitch of his at bat.

"I knew he wasn't spotting his curveball so I knew I was going to get a fastball," Covalt said.

"I was just battling until I found something I liked and put a barrel on it and did something cool."

The Celtics tied the game at 3-3 when Covalt scored on a deep fly ball to center field off the bat of Colin Wentworth that Sprague couldn't snag.

After Wentworth advanced to third on a wild pitch, Ryan Thompson brought him



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

ABOVE: Carl Rumbaugh pitched all seven innings to earn the win against Sprague on Monday, April 23. RIGHT: Ty Covalt celebrates after scoring the tying run in the bottom of the fourth. Covalt also drove in two runs with a double in the inning.

home with a sacrifice bunt. David Alfaro then added a RBI single to give McNary a 5-3 lead.

McNary senior Carl Rumbaugh went all seven innings to earn the win.

He pitched in and out of

jams for most of the game, the biggest coming in the top of the sixth when Sprague loaded the bases with no outs but scored just one run on a fielder's choice.

"That shows his competitive spirit in those situations,"



Keeker said of Rumbaugh. "He didn't look rattled, which is a good sign."

Rumbaugh said the key was pretending like no one was on base.

"I think it's a brand new ball game and keep deal-

ing, keep throwing strikes and pounding the zone," said Rumbaugh, who mixed up his fastball and curveball to strike out four Sprague hitters.

Rumbaugh's defense didn't do him any favors, recording

six errors.

"We didn't play good defense today," Keeker said. "For us to survive this game with six errors and all those guys left on base is quite frankly a little bit incredible."

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Foot by foot: Debban PRs in vault

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

SALEM—Haley Debban had a horrible track practice last Tuesday.

But Wednesday was a new day as the McNary senior PR'd by a foot in the pole vault, clearing 9 feet, 6 inches, to win the event in a league meet at South Salem.

"I have a bad habit of bailing off the pole too early and balling up and thinking that will be good enough, but instead I need to drive forward and actually get my feet up," Debban said. "That's what I was trying to do yesterday and I was just a mess, so then today I looked at the sky and that worked. I actually used the technique that my coach (Dustin Walker) has been drilling into me."

After matching her personal record of 8-06 and then clearing 9 feet, Debban made 9-06 on her second attempt. She was stunned.

"I hit the mat and thought

there's no way," Debban said. "I honestly didn't believe it. Then I got really excited. That was an awesome moment."

Debban's vault is tied for third in the Greater Valley Conference this season behind Forest Grove junior Mila Lumae and teammate Paige Downer, who have both cleared 10 feet.

Debban started vaulting last season after watching Downer compete the year before.

"It was hard because I was still running a lot," Debban said. "I did not do as well as I wanted to in the district meet, 8 feet. Senior year, I just want to vault. I have really bad back issues so running is really hard for me. It's worked out in my favor."

Debban and Downer have brought out the best in each other.

"We're actually best friends," Debban said. "We hype each other up. If we're competing for first place at

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KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

McNary senior Haley Debban set a personal record in the pole vault by a foot, clearing 9 feet, six inches at South Salem High School on Wednesday, April 18.

Lady Celts break out of slump

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

McNary hadn't scored a run in 12 innings when Taylor Ebbs went to the plate with the bases loaded and one out in the bottom of the first.

Her strategy?

"I've been putting myself in too much pressure lately," Ebbs said. "I think we've just been trying to do too much."

That approach paid off as Ebbs hit a high inside pitch to right field to score two runs and the Lady Celts broke out of a slump to defeat Sprague 6-2 on Friday, April 20.

"That (first) inning could have potentially been a little bigger," said McNary head coach Kevin Wise, after the

Lady Celts left the bases loaded. "I was just happy getting a couple on the board."

The Lady Celts could've had a big second inning as well. But after Abbie Covalt singled and Nadia Witt doubled to lead off the inning, Sprague pitcher Shae Barna retired three batters in a row, stranding the runners at second and third.

McNary was able to add four more runs in the bottom of the fifth.

After Haley Ebner and Emma Kinler led off the inning with singles, Kate Ronning hit a line drive to right field to load the bases. Faith Danner then knocked in two runs with a ground ball to left field.

Haley Bingenheimer added a RBI single and Covalt hit a sacrifice fly to center field to stretch McNary's lead to 6-0.

Sprague scored its only two runs in the top of the seventh.

Danner pitched all seven innings to earn the win from the circle.

The Lady Celts finished with 14 hits. Witt was 4-for-4 with a double.

"They had more fun today," Wise said. "When we're a little more loose, it just goes a lot better, especially with our younger girls."

The win came after McNary was shut out 3-0 at West Salem the day before. The Lady Celts had only three hits in the loss.

"We were just getting up

and trying to hit home runs," Wise said. "The girls at West (Salem) and our girls, most of them have played together for a long time. We all get a little too amped up and trying to do too much. I think we were a little tight."

McNary's hot hitting continued Tuesday, April 24 at Forest Grove, where the Lady Celts won 10-0 in five innings.

Ebbs again knocked in McNary's first two runs on a triple to left field to score Witt and Alexa Cepeda.

Ebbs was 3-for-3 with four RBIs in the game. Witt was 3-for-4.

Danner needed only 51 pitches to earn the win, allowing just one hit.



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

Freshman Taylor Ebbs helped McNary break out of its slump, driving in two runs against Sprague and four at Forest Grove.