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Celts take three out of four at spring break tournament

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary softball team competed in the Jesuit/Mountainside Tournament in Beaverton over spring break, where they played four games in the span of just two days.

The Celtics finished the tournament with a 3-1 record and had double-digit run totals in all three of their victories.

"We went into that tournament refocused," McNary head coach Kevin Wise said. "We had some really good offensive games."

Game 1: McNary 16 Century 5 (Monday, March 25).

The Celtics racked up an

incredible 17 hits in this one as they run-ruled Century 16-5 in the opening game of the tournament.

Eight of the nine players in the McNary lineup had multiple hits for the game. Taylor Ebbs led the Celtics with a 3-for-3 game and knocked in four runs.

Alexa Cepeda also had a big game with two doubles and three RBIs.

In McNary's first six games of the season, senior pitcher Faith Danner had been the only one who saw time in the circle.

But in this game, freshman right-hander Hannah Ebner made her first appearance on the mound for the Celtics.

In five innings of work,

Ebner surrendered seven hits and five runs while striking out two, earning her first win of her high school career.

"Having a great other pitcher that we can throw out there is invaluable," Wise said. "If she was nervous, she sure didn't show it because she went out there and did her job."

At the plate, Ebner was 2-for-4 with a pair of RBIs.

Game 2: Mountainside 6 McNary 0 (Monday, March 25).

McNary couldn't recapture their offensive magic from game one as they fell to Mountainside.

It was the second time they had been shutout this season.

"It took us a few innings to adjust to their pitcher, and I think by that time we just had too big of a hole to climb out of," Wise said.

Danner threw a scoreless frame in the top of the first, but a pair of errors by the McNary defense allowed Mountainside to push two across in the second inning.

Mountainside broke the game open in the top of the third with three runs, extending their lead to 5-0.

McNary's best chance to get back into the game came in the bottom of the fifth. Danner started the inning with a single to right field. The next batter, Shaylee Custer, doubled down the right field line.

But Ellie Martin, who was pinch running for Danner, was thrown out trying to

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KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings
McNary's Kate Ronning gets a base hit in a game against Tigard earlier this season.



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings
McNary pitcher David Allen delivers to the plate.

McNary gets two wins in Arizona

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Over spring break, the McNary baseball team got the opportunity to play in a tournament down in Good-year, AZ. — coincidentally, the Celtics only ended up matching up with teams from Colorado.

Despite facing some talented squads, McNary was able to salvage a 2-2 record in the tournament.

"There was a lot to like, but there's also a lot to learn," McNary head coach Larry Keeker said. "We saw a lot of good things in terms of our hitting, pitching and defense, but there were also a lot of mistakes that showed up along the way that we need to learn from moving forward."

"The teams we played were pretty talented to be honest, and all four games were very competitive. We could have easily gone 0-4, but we also

could have gone 4-0."

This trip, however, was more than just about playing baseball. It ended up being a time of camaraderie for this McNary group as they went to spring training games, had a bowling night and worked together on team building activities.

"It was really good for us to get away and do some things outside of baseball itself," Keeker said.

Game 1: Chatfield 8 McNary 5 (Monday, March 25).

While the Celtics outthit their opponent in their first game, the couldn't overcome committing four errors in the field in their 8-5 loss to Chatfield.

"Most of the defensive mistakes we're making are physical mistakes," Keeker said. "It's about making sure we make the little details a

priority when we come to practice."

Robert Benson led the way for McNary with a pair of doubles and an RBI in this one.

The Celtics got out to a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the first inning on a two-run single by senior catcher Ty Covalt.

McNary continued to build on their lead in the bottom of the third. With one out in the frame and runners on third and first, the Celtics pulled off a double steal as David Allen was able to swipe second and force a throw from the catcher, which allowed Benson to score from third.

Moments later, Covalt added another RBI-hit to put McNary up 4-0.

The advantage increased to 5-0 in the fourth inning as Benson was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded and nobody out.

But with a golden opportunity to put the game out of reach, McNary couldn't push any more runs across, which proved to be costly.

McNary pitcher Rennick Jeffries was solid on the hill in his first four innings of work, giving up just one hit and no runs. But in the top of the fifth, it all fell apart for the Celtics, as Chatfield scored five runs on two hits to tie the game in the fifth — Jeffries was taken out with one out in the frame.

Chatfield scored one run in the sixth and two runs in the seventh to seal the win.

Game 2: McNary 4 Wheat Ridge 3 (Wednesday, March 27).

A fantastic pitching performance from Devon Bedoya helped put the Celtics

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Motocross legend honored in Seattle

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Mark Gregson doesn't consider himself a legend when it comes to the sport of motocross.

However, some of his peers beg to differ.

On March 22, during the Monster Energy Supercross Series, Gregson was honored at CenturyLink Field in Seattle, Wash. by the Legends and Heroes Tour for his time spent as a privateer racer in the late 70's — during the infancy stages of motocross.

"Mark was a very accomplished motocross racer," said Alex Moroz, who is the general manager of The Legends and Heroes Tour. "The Northwest has a rich history of riders and Mark was a guy that came up through the ranks to have a successful career. Everyone remembers him and speaks highly of him."

The goal of the Heroes and Legends Tour is to share with fans the rich history of the sport of motocross. From the riders, to the history of the bikes, this tour can be seen all across the country at multiple different motocross series events — 2019 marks the tour's 10-year anniversary.

It's been nearly 40 years since Gregson last raced competitively, but that didn't change how grateful he was to be honored in front of a roaring crowd of die-hard fans of the sport he loves.

"It was a huge honor," Gregson said. "Racing is like

a huge family."

Influenced by his father, Gregson first got into motocross when he was a student at McNary High School in the early 70's, and it became a passion that he got to share with his friends.

"There was a fairly large group of us at McNary that were into motocross and racing at local events on the weekends," Gregson said.

After graduating from McNary in 1975, Gregson continued to compete in local events and was the top rider in the Northwest for three straight years.

"I just had the desire to compete and win," Gregson said.

After his success at the local level, Gregson had the desire to see if he could compete on the top stage. So, in 1978, he set off on his own dime to compete on the national tour in the 125MX division.

As a 21-year old privateer, Gregson was at a significant disadvantage compared to his competitors. While Gregson was sponsored by the Chicago-based company Lorenz Offner Products, he was not directly supported by an automobile manufacturer and had to race with equipment that was inferior to his competition.

"It's hard to go out there on your own against stiff competition against well-funded people. You have to get that to realistically compete for a championship," Gregson said. "I had to

make a lot of modifications to the bike."

However, that didn't stop Gregson from having success at the highest level.

In his first season as a professional, Gregson finished in the top-10 in four different races — including a pair of fourth-place finishes at Sunshine Speedway in St. Petersburg Fla. and Metro-lina Speed Park in Charlotte, N.C. respectively, and a third-place finish at Agency Motocross in St. Joseph, Mo.

Even though he moved up to the 250SX class the following season, 1979 was Gregson's best year of Gregson's career.

Gregson earned seven top-10 finishes over the course of the year and finished the season in fifth place at the 1979 Lucas Oil Pro Motocross Championships — which was the highest finish for a privateer.

"I wasn't the most talented guy out there, I just think I had a lot more desire than others," Gregson said. "You have to have the desire to compete and win."

"It was hard, but I loved it."

However, competing as a privateer can only last for so long. Gregson was on the road for all but two weeks in '79 and wound up putting 65,000 miles on his truck that year in traveling to competitions.

So, after competing in three races in 1980, Gregson decided to retire from the sport he loves.



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings
Salem resident and former McNary grad Mark Gregson shows off the award he was presented at the Legends and Heroes motocross tour in Seattle, WA.

"I just got to point where I didn't see it going any further than where I was at," Gregson said. "The amount of work was too crazy."

Gregson now resides in Salem and is the superintendent at Riverbend Sand and

Gravel, where he has worked for the last 25 years.

But even though his days as a professional racer are long behind him, his dedication to motocross is admired by those who love and respect the sport.

"It is very hard to compete as a privateer," Moroz said. "You have to find your own transportation and try and live off your winnings."

"It's for the love of the sport that guys like Mark did what they did."