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Celts win thriller to open conference play

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

It nearly took 48 hours to complete, but at the end of the day, the McNary baseball team got the win over Sprague in their Mountain Valley Conference opener.

The contest started on Tuesday, April 9. However, with the game tied 6-6 and heading to extra innings, the umpiring crew decided to call the game due to darkness — there was also a 45-minute rain delay.

The two teams resumed play on Thursday, April 11. Sprague got an unearned run in the top of the eighth to take a 7-6 lead, but McNary responded with two runs in the bottom half of the frame on a single from Alex Tavera to walk-off with an 8-7 victory.

“I was kind of nervous at first,” Tavera said about his at-bat. “But I just had to take some deep breaths and help my team out as much as I could.”

Sprague went on top 1-0 in the top of the second after taking advantage of an error by McNary third baseman Ren-nick Jeffries. But the Celtics were able to respond when they came to bat.

Ty Covalt started out the inning by legging out an infield single. The senior catcher advanced to third after a pair of groundouts, then came in to score on an RBI-single to left field by Jamison Martin.

The Olympians, however, regained the lead in the top of the third on another defensive miscue, which was a theme for both teams throughout the entire game — both teams combined for nine errors.

After retiring the first two batters of the inning, McNary pitcher David Allen surrendered a bloop single to Michael



McNary's Ty Covalt scores the first run of the game in the Celtics 7-6 come-from-behind win over Sprague.

KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

Soper. The senior right-hander tried to pick Soper off first moments later, but threw the ball away as Soper got into scoring position by advancing to second.

The error proved to be costly as Brock McMullen singled into left field, scoring Soper.

Allen redeemed himself at the plate in the bottom of the fourth with a bloop single to right field that scored Covalt from second, tying the game 2-2.

But in the top of the fifth, Sprague appeared to have bro-

ken the game open.

The Olympians scored three runs on four hits in the inning as Allen was replaced by Robert Benson on the hill.

But Benson retired both batters he faced to stop the bleeding, which ended up being very key for the Celtics later in the game.

“I thought Robert was huge,” McNary head coach Larry Keeker said. “He came into a tough spot and got us out of the inning. He did a good job of damage control because it could have been a lot worse.”

Soper hit an RBI-double to the wall in right field off McNary pitcher Devon Bedoya — who entered in for Benson on the mound in the top of the sixth — extending Sprague's lead to 6-2.

A sacrifice fly from Martin in the bottom of the sixth cut Sprague's lead to 6-3. McNary faced that same deficit going into seventh, but the Celtics refused to say die — they also got some help thanks to a trio of defensive mistakes by Sprague.

Sprague pitcher Cole Herschbach threw six solid innings

for the Olympians. He started the top of the seventh, but was taken off the hill after Ian Martin reached on an error by Sprague third baseman Will Deloretto.

Getting Herschbach off the hill was crucial to the McNary comeback

Another error from Deloretto, along with walks issued to Benson and Jacob Jackson, allowed Ian Martin to score and gave McNary a bases loaded situation with nobody out.

The McNary threat nearly died there as Covalt flew out

to shallow right field and Allen went down looking for the first two outs of the inning, leaving it up to Jamison Martin to try and extend the game.

“I was thinking that they were going to pitch me middle-away in that situation, so I just wanted to make some contact and get the ball in-play because I knew it would be a tough play,” Jamison Martin said.

With the game on the line, Martin hit a slow roller between third base and shortstop. Deloretto hustled quickly to his left to cut the ball off and hurried his throw to first.

But the throw was in the dirt and the Sprague first baseman couldn't handle it as Deloretto committed his third error of the frame.

Benson scored easily from third and Tavera, who was on second and running on the crack of the bat, never broke stride as he scored on a ball that never left the infield. Despite not having a hit in the inning, McNary had pushed three runs across and tied the game at 6-6.

“We felt really good about being competitive at the plate down the stretch,” Keeker said. “We knew their bullpen guys were having some command issues and we wanted to force them to throw strikes. I knew that if we had a chance to create some traffic, then we were going to have a chance.”

“I was proud of the fact that we executed our offensive plan in the seventh.”

Bedoya had a chance to end the game on the next at-bat, but struck out.

It was 7:45 p.m. by the time the seventh inning had finished. The home plate umpire met

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McNary's Noah Unwin gets by a Beaverton defender and advances the ball upfield in the Celtics 9-7 loss on Friday, April 12.

McNary falls to Beaverton

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The McNary boys lacrosse team got goals from five different players, but it wasn't enough as the Celtics fell to Beaverton 9-7 on Friday, April 12.

McNary lost a pair of face-offs in the first minute of the game, which led to two Beaverton goals before the Celtics even got an offensive possession.

After the Celtics missed three decent looks midway through the period, the Beavers came back with another score to on top 3-0.

But McNary was finally able

to respond late in the quarter.

Tim Gross found teammate Jamison Proulx from behind the net and Proulx fired a rocket that one-hopped into the back of the twine to put the Celtics on the board.

Beaverton, however, increased their lead early in the second quarter with two straight goals, putting McNary's deficit at 5-1.

Fortunately, for McNary, the Celtics were able to clean some things up on the defensive side to give themselves a chance at a comeback.

“We starting putting our

long pole on face-off draws to try and slow down their opportunities,” McNary head coach Michael Hochspeier said. “That's what helped us come back.”

Midway through the second quarter, Cameron Parks got on the board by going coast-to-coast and reversing around the post for an impressive jump-goal. Then, with under 30 seconds remaining in the half, Jesse Proulx got loose up the left side and put a beautiful touch shot into the back of the net to cut

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Tracksters take away 18 event wins at dual meet

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McNary's boys and girls track teams had great showings in their dual meet with Sprague on Wednesday, April 10 as both teams won nine events each.

McLean Schmit was the one that stood out the most for the McNary boys as the senior won both the 110 and 300-meter hurdles and set personal-best times in each race. McLean finished the 110-hurdles in 16.66 seconds and the 300-hurdles in 44.36 seconds, helping the Celtic boys dominate the majority of the running events.

“(Schmit) has just put in a lot of really hard work and he's such a good technical hurdler,” McNary head coach Frank Gauntz said. “He's running really well right now.”

Schmit, however, wasn't the only Celtic setting personal re-

ords in this meet.

Elio Carella hit a new personal-high in the 400m (53.70) as did freshman Benjamin Standley in the 1500m (4:42.59).

McNary sprinter Ethan Martin continued his hot start to the season with his win in the 100-meter dash (11.75).

Bryan Hernandez, who is in his first season with the Celtics as a junior, filled in for Sebastian Shoemaker in the 200m and wound up winning the race with a time of 23.87.

The Celtic boys also were victorious in both the 4x100 and 4x400 relay races.

Sunny Hoang was the other individual winner for the McNary boys with his victory in the pole vault, jumping 9-feet-8 inches.

For the McNary girls, sophomore Audrey Williams set her

new personal-record in the 800m (2:44.64) and freshman Emily Lettenmaier was just able to pull away down the stretch in the 1500m (6:02.84).

Through four meets, Isabella Walker is looking to be the Celtics most versatile athlete. The sophomore ran away with the 300-hurdles (53.71) and also pulled out a win in the high jump (5-00).

“Isabella is a really good athlete. If she could do every event, she probably would,” Gauntz said. “It's nice to have that kind of flexibility in an athlete. We're still trying to figure out what's even is going to give her the best chance to go to state.”

Caitlyn Kiefiuk Yates won the other hurdles event for the Celtics, winning the 100 in 17.67 — her top mark of the season.

The McNary girls swept all throwing events with victories by Kennedy Buss in the discus (89-0), Kylie Dean in the shot put (29-7.75) and Sabella Alfaro in the javelin (114-5).

With this being her second season competing in track & field, Alfaro's steady improvement could land her in the state meet in late-May.

“I feel like I have really been able to focus more on throwing this year than anything else,” Alfaro said. “I just need to stay motivated and keep learning and working hard.”

McNary will compete again on Saturday up north in the Wilsonville Invitational along with 26 other teams.



Emily Lettenmaier breaks away from the pack to win the 1500 meters in McNary's dual meet with Sprague.

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