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McNary's bats come alive in victory

BY MATT RAWLINGS

Of the Keizertimes

Coming into their contest with West Salem, the McNary softball team had scored 60 runs in their last four games.

And the offensive production didn't slow down in this one.

The Celtics pushed across 12 runs on 19 hits as they cruised to the 12-5 victory over West Salem on Monday night.

"We have been working on hitting a lot. That has been our main focus lately," McNary head coach Kevin Wise said. "Every inning, we kept the pedal to the metal and didn't let up."

"Once they got hot, the girls just fed off each other. It was really fun to watch."

Faith Danner, Kamryn Miller and Abbi Covalt had three hits apiece for McNary. Kate Ronning went 4-for-5 at the dish with two RBIs and a run scored.

While she only went 1-for-2 at the plate, it was clear that McNary shortstop Taylor Ebbs is making a name for herself among Mountain Valley Conference coaches.

After she scalded a line-

drive double off the wall in the top of the second inning, West Salem head coach Ty Nicholson elected to intentionally walk Ebbs in her final three plate appearances.

But the strategy wound up backfiring on the Titans as Ebbs scored each time she was dealt an intentional pass.

"What I really liked was, after they walked (Ebbs), the girls behind her picked her up by hitting singles and doubles," Wise said. "Everyone is chipping in right now and it makes life a lot easier as a coach."

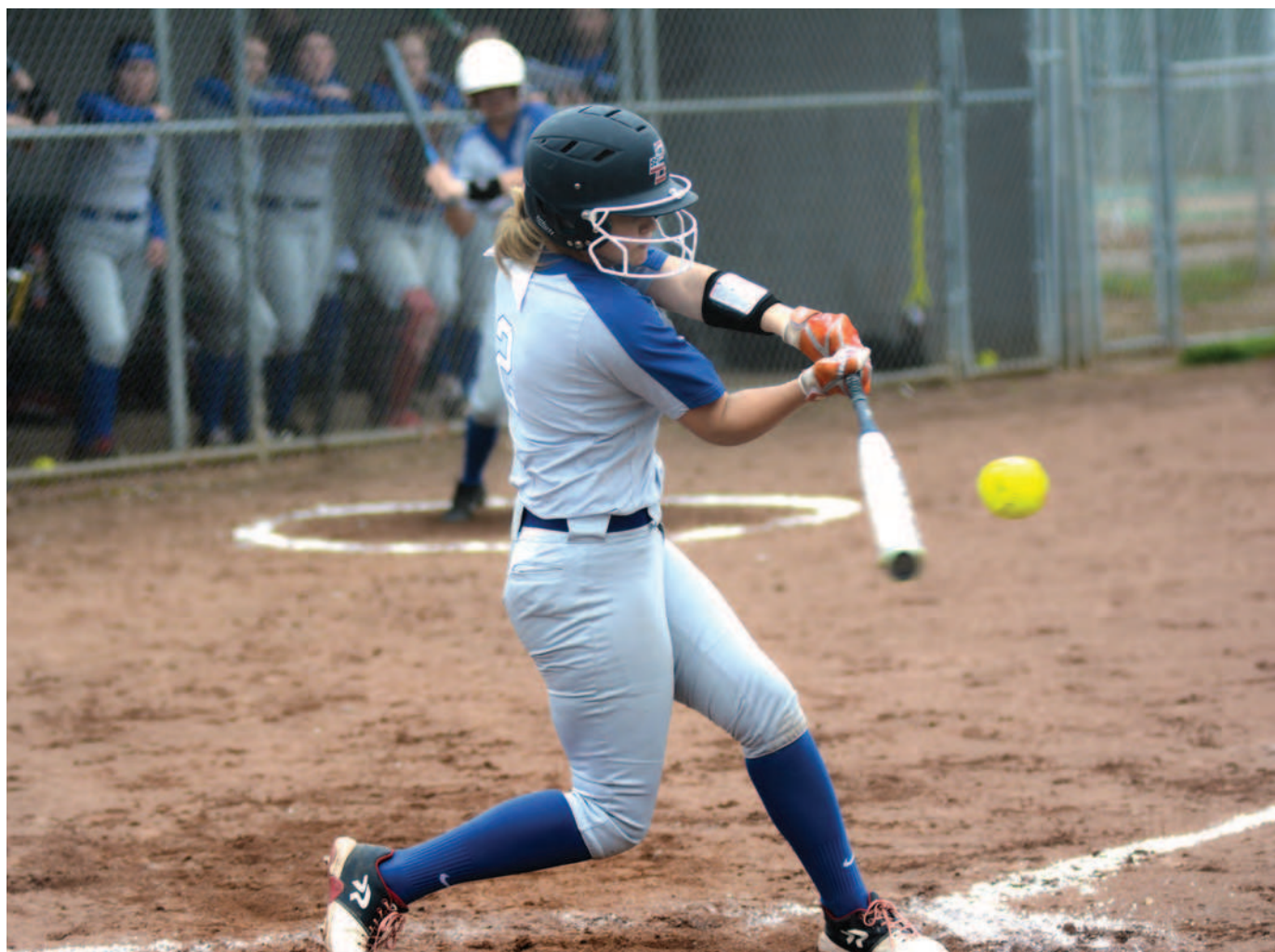
The McNary offense exploded out the gate with five runs in the top of the first to take a comfortable lead.

Alexa Cepeda and Covalt started the contest with back-to-back singles and gave the Celtics runners on second and third with nobody out after a stolen base by Covalt.

Cepeda and Covalt both scored on RBI-groundouts to put McNary on top 2-0.

Ronning and Shaylee Cluster kept the inning going with back-to-back doubles to give the Celtics the 3-0 advantage. Hannah Ebner

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McNary third baseman Kate Ronning doubles to center field in the second inning. Ronning was 4-for-5 on the night with a pair of doubles in the Celtics 12-5 victory over West Salem on Monday. KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

Celtics outlast West Albany

BY MATT RAWLINGS

Of the Keizertimes

Kendyl Jennings led the Celtics with six goals as McNary's girls lacrosse team was able to pull away late to earn the 13-9 victory over West Albany on Tuesday night.

Haley Hughes chipped in with three scores while Mikayla Fleming and Regann Donahue added two goals apiece in the win.

"We have great chemistry on this team and I think that really helped us tonight," Jennings said. "We can all read each other really well."

After missing a couple of point-blank opportunities in the first three minutes, Fleming was the one that got McNary on the board first as she got herself free with a great spin move and put one in the net.

Moments later, Donahue, who was waiting patiently behind the posts waiting for a teammate to get open, found Jennings cutting towards the net, and the junior put one between the pipes to give the Celtics the 2-0.

Even though they missed

some shots right at the net throughout the game, McNary always seemed to be able to get high-percentage looks on the majority of their offensive possessions.

"We have been really focusing on being smart with our shots," McNary head coach Becca LaFramboise said. "They really understand the importance of being patient and waiting for the right opportunity."

West Albany got their first goal of the contest six minutes into the first half, but the Celtics responded almost immediately as Donahue won the face-off and took it all the way herself for the score to put McNary back up by two.

The Celtics extended the lead to 5-2 after a pair of quick scores by Hughes and Donahue. But McNary could only put one across in the final 15 minutes of the half, allowing the Bulldogs to cut the deficit to one at the break.

But every time West Albany threatened to tie or take the lead in the second half,

the Celtics always had an answer.

"We just had that special click inside of us and whenever the other team scored a goal, we're always ready to fight back," Donahue said.

The two teams traded four goals each in the first 10 minutes of the second half as McNary clung to a 10-9 lead. But a trio of key scores allowed the Celtics to separate themselves down the stretch.

Hughes scored her third goal of the contest at the 9:21 mark by sneaking in a shot past the West Albany goalkeeper into the left side of the net. Four minutes later, a shot from Jennings initially looked like it was stopped by the keeper, but the ball just trickled across the line for the score to put McNary on top 12-9.

Jennings scored her final goal of the game with under a minute remaining as she forced a turnover deep in Bulldog territory, scooped up the ball and fired a laser into the twine, putting her

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Gabriel Martinez clears the bar in his first jump of the day in McNary's dual meet with Sprague on Wednesday, April 24. Martinez won the high jump with a leap of 5-feet-6 inches. KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

McNary shows improvement in dual meet with West Salem

BY MATT RAWLINGS

Of the Keizertimes

While it may not have shown on the scoreboard, the McNary boys and girls track teams continue to show steady improvement as the season goes along.

"We're doing a really good job competing," McNary head coach Frank Gauntz said. "The kids have been showing that when you come out and work hard, you're going to get better."

"All-around, it was a fun meet to watch."

West Salem defeated McNary 92-53 on the boys side and 112-29 on the girls side on Wednesday, April 17. But that didn't stop the Celtics from coming away with a number of season and personal records.

The McNary boys had three individuals (Nikita Martushev, Elio Carnella and Axel Zapien) all set personal records in the 400 meters by all finishing under the 54-second mark — Martushev won the race with a time of 53.06.

"Getting three guys to go under 54 (seconds) was really

exciting," Gauntz said.

In his first run of the season, Gavin Gasperini won the 3000m (10:23.24) and beat his old personal-best by more than a minute.

Where the Celtic boys really excelled was the jumping events. Gabriel Martinez won the high jump with a new season-best of 5-feet-6 inches while Cole Garland took home the win in the long jump by setting a new personal record (19-6).

Remy Olson also hit a new personal-high in the triple jump (40-2) and Sunny Hoang ended tied for first in the pole vault 10-6.

Sabella Alfaro continued her hot start to the season for the McNary girls as she once again set another personal-best in the javelin (123-5).

It was the third time this season she won the event at a Mountain Valley Conference dual meet.

"Her ceiling is so high," Gauntz said. "It's just a matter of getting that technique down because (javelin) is a really technical event."

As a freshman, Ashlin Samples was one of the best freshman on the McNary track team. But Samples transferred to West Salem over the off-season.

In her first meet against her old school, Samples was victorious in the 100-hurdles (17.16) and tied for first with McNary's Brandi Grunberg pole vault (9-6).

Caitlyn Kiefiuk Yates was neck-and-neck with her former teammate in the 100-hurdles, but Samples just edged her out down the stretch.

"Any time a different color jersey winning, you don't like it ... But she's a great kid and a good athlete and I wish her the best," Gauntz said of his former athlete. "Caitlyn ran a great race against her and if she doesn't hit the last two hurdles, she might have beat her."

Isabella Walker had the only other win for the Celtics in the high jump (4-8).

McNary's next dual meet comes on Thursday, May 2 against Cascade starting at 3:45 p.m.



Kendyl Jennings tries to get past a West Albany defender in McNary's 13-9 victory on Tuesday night. KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings