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Celts sweep Summit in doubleheader

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

All season long, the McNary baseball team has shown that they have a flair for the dramatic, and that theme didn't change in their doubleheader against Summit last week.

A walk-off single by Robert Benson gave the Celtics a 3-2 win in the opening game. In game two, after falling behind 5-2, McNary rallied for four runs in the bottom of the fifth and defeated Summit 6-5 to pull off the series sweep on Friday, April 26.

"All-in-all, we're feeling pretty good about getting a couple gutsy wins," McNary head coach Larry Keeker said. "We came up big in big moments."

After game one went scoreless through three innings, Summit struck for a pair of runs in the top of the fourth to take a 2-0 lead. But that was the only damage the Celtics gave up for the contest as starting pitcher Rennick Jeffries gave up just two runs (one earned) on two hits while fanning nine in his six innings of work.

The Celtics were getting no-hit for the first four innings by Summit pitcher Hank Tobias. But Ty Covalt finally got McNary off the schneid with a leadoff single to center field to start the top of the fifth.

Covalt showed off his wheels by stealing second moments later, and then eventually came into score after a pair of wild pitches.

The offensive jolt for McNary continued in the bottom of the sixth as Ben-



Alex Tavera squares to bunt in game two of McNary's doubleheader against Summit. The Celtics defeated the Storm 3-2 in the first game and 6-5 in the second game.

son began the frame with a double to left field. Benson moved up 90 feet after a bunt by Jamison Martin and then tied the game at 2-2 after a sacrifice fly from Covalt.

Nigel Harris came in relief of Jeffries on the hill in the top of the seventh. While Harris has struggled with his

command at times this season, the senior right-hander pitched a 1-2-3 frame to give his team a chance to win it in the bottom half of the inning.

"I have more confidence in what I'm throwing," Harris said. "It's huge for me when I take my time and

gain my balance."

Harris also started the offensive threat for the Celtics in the bottom of the seventh with a one-out walk, which was followed by another free pass to Devon Bedoya. After a strikeout by Ian Martin, Benson came to the plate with two on and two out and

a chance to win the game.

Benson worked the count to 2-1, then went the opposite way with an outside fastball and hit a sharp single to right field. Harris, who has great speed, was able to score easily to send the Celtics off to the 3-2 win.

"I knew when I came up

in my last at-bat that I wanted to go the other way and it just worked out and my mechanics came through," Benson said. "It's a great feeling when you get to first base and then your whole team mobs you."

Summit grabbed the early advantage in game two with five runs in five innings off Bedoya — who got the start on the mound for the Celtics. But despite facing a three-run deficit, the Celtics offense picked things up in the bottom of the sixth.

Jacob Jackson doubled to center field to begin the frame and then advanced to third on a wild pitch. A one-out sacrifice fly from Covalt then cut the deficit to 5-3.

Alex Simpson kept things going with a two-out double to the right center field gap and was knocked in thanks to a RBI-single by David Allen.

Harris followed with a seeing-eye single to the right side to put the go-ahead run on base.

"We just kept grinding, it's a mentality for us," Harris said. "We don't want to give up. That's the character of this team."

On Harris' single to right field, Allen tried to push the envelope and go from first to third. The aggressive play worked as the throw from Summit's Drew Steelhammer got past the third baseman and Allen was able to score on the error to tie the game up while Harris advanced to second.

Soon after tying the game, Harris swiped third base to

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McNary takes over top spot in conference standings

BY MATT RAWLINGS
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With a chance to solidify themselves at the top of the league, the McNary softball squad proved that they are indeed the team to beat in the Mountain Valley Conference.

The Celtics had a double-digit run total in their sixth consecutive game as they pulled off the season sweep against West Salem, defeating the Titans 11-1 in six innings via run rule, and taking sole possession of first place in the MVC.

"They just keep raising their level of play. Now, the challenge is to keep it going," McNary head coach Kevin Wise said.

While it was business as usual for the McNary offense, the Celtics also got a great performance in the circle from Faith Danner — who pitched one of her best games of the season against the Titans.

The senior right-hander gave up just one run on six hits in six innings of work as she looked to be in complete command for the majority of the contest.

"She came out and she was dealing," Wise said. "I don't think she missed on any pitches I called all game. It was a dominant performance."

A single by Abbi Covalt — who went 3-for-4 with a pair of RBIs — and a one-out double off the right field

wall from Taylor Ebbs started the Celtics threat in the bottom of the first.

Covalt would come in to score after Danner grounded to shortstop as McNary went on top 1-0.

After the two teams traded runs in the second frame, McNary broke the game wide open in the bottom of the third.

Covalt led off the inning with a double to left

field. With first base empty, West Salem head coach Ty Nicholson elected to issue an intentional walk to Ebbs — who is hitting over .600 this season — to face Danner and to keep the double play in-tact.

When she walked up to the dish, Danner was intent on making the Titans pay for the free pass to Ebbs.

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Faith Danner went six innings and gave up just one run on six hits, leading McNary to the 11-1 victory over West Salem.



McNary's Kylie Dean gets set to throw the shot.

Celtics prepare for districts

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The McNary track team came up just short in their final two dual meets of the season on Wednesday, April 24, as the girls fell to McKay 75.33-50.66, while the boys lost to the Royal Scots 75-50.

But with the Mountain Valley Conference district meet just weeks away, McNary head coach Frank Gauntz likes where his team is at as a whole.

"I feel really excited about where we're at right now," Gauntz said. "I don't think we'll compete for a title or anything, but the kids have put themselves in the best position to place or make the finals."

While there were several impressive performances on both sides, McNary sprinter Bryan Hernandez stole the show in this one.

The junior easily won the 100 meters in 11.37 seconds, then turned around and

smoked the competition in the 200m with a time of 23.17.

Both times were personal records for Hernandez.

"My coaches have been helping me a lot with my craft," Hernandez said. "I knew that I had good races."

Hernandez flew a little under the radar before the season started, but through a lot of training, he has now established himself as one of the top sprinters in the conference.

"We've always known he's had talent, but this year, Bryan has come out and he has wanted to work," Gauntz said. "I'm looking for him to put himself in a position to make it up to state."

Even though he is running better than ever, Hernandez still has some lofty expectations for himself before the end of the season as he prepares for the district and state meet.

"On the 100, I'm trying to break 11 (seconds). And in the

200 I'm trying to get below 23 (seconds)," Hernandez said.

The McNary boys also got an impressive performance from McLean Schmitt.

Schmitt took second in the 100-hurdles and set a new personal-best (16.38). Schmitt was also victorious in the 300-hurdles (43.93).

"McLean is a technician. He's been steady for us the whole season. It's really exciting to see how he is running," Gauntz said.

Elio Carella took home a win in the 800m (2:14.39) and Gavin Gasperini finished first in the 3000m (10:23.68). The Celtics also picked up wins in both relay races.

Caitlyn Kiefiuk Yates and Isabella Walker have been the two most consistent and versatile athletes for the Celtic girls this season, and they proved it once again in this meet.

Yates earned her top mark of the season by winning the 100-hurdles in 17.13. She also earned a victory in the long jump with a seasonal-best leap of 15-feet-3.75 inches.

Walker, on the other hand, claimed her second win of the conference season in the 300-hurdles (50.74).

"We're hoping to get both of them to peak at the right time," Gauntz said. "They both really like to compete and they're here every single day working hard."

Audrey Williams pulled out a win in the 800m (2:44.32) while Brandi Grunberg pulled out a victory in the pole vault with her nine-foot jump.

McNary will travel to Bend to compete in the MVC District meet starting on May 16 at Summit High School.