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Celts get six all-conference nods

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary baseball squad had six players receive all-Mountain Valley Conference recognition for their outstanding play over the course of the season.

Ty Covalt- (senior) catcher: First-team all-league.

Covalt was McNary's only first-team performer — it's the second straight season he has earned those honors. He led the Celtics in hitting, batting .400 with a .516 on-base percentage, 27 RBIs and 21 runs scored. Covalt also proved to be an outstanding defender behind the dish and caught 15 runners stealing.

What his coach (Larry Keeker) said:

"He was consistent all season long. He did a really good job in a leadership role as our catcher and he was excellent in his management of our pitching staff... From an offensive standpoint, he was a big RBI guy for us and was very consistent in producing runs from the middle of our order."

David Allen- (senior) pitcher: Second-team all-league.

Allen was the unquestioned ace on the mound for McNary this season. He led the Celtics in innings pitched (50.2) and had two

wins and one save. He struck out 28 and was McNary's go-to-guy in tough games and situations. At the plate, he batted .214, was second on the team in runs scored (20) and led the Celtics in stolen bases (7).

What his coach says:

"David was our number one pitcher and we used him that way. He had some really gutsy outings that he really had to battle through. The team knew that he was the guy that we were going to throw in an important game. He had some struggles with his command, but he still had a great year for us."

Robert Benson- (senior) outfielder: Second-team all-league.

One of the best athletes on this McNary team. He was second on the team in hitting with a .378 batting average and was tied for the team lead in base hits (28). He had five stolen bases, 13 RBIs and scored 18 runs.

What his coach says:

"Robert's competitiveness has made a huge difference for him, from both an offensive and defensive standpoint. He had a lot of productive at-bats this season and provided a lot of aggressiveness on the base paths. His work

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McNary catcher Ty Covalt was the lone first-team all-conference selection for the Celtics this season. The catcher batted .400 this season with 27 RBIs and 21 runs scored.

Former McNary track star excels at DePaul

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It was a big deal when Brendan Van Voorhis signed to run track at DePaul University in the spring of 2017, making him the first McNary athlete to sign with a Division I program in over 10 years.

But it doesn't compare to the success he had this spring during his sophomore year of college.

Van Voorhis was named the Most Outstanding Track Performer at the Big East Conference Outdoor Championships on May 11 after taking second in the 400 meters and winning the 200 meters. He was also a part of the 4x100 and 4x400 relay teams that took first place at the event.

"The coolest feeling is being successful at a meet and having your teammates being successful as well. Being all-Big East in all four of my events was really exciting, but it was more exciting to see that the guys I trained with throughout the year were having the same successes as myself," Van Voorhis said.

Van Voorhis started showing his potential when he was a freshman at McNary in 2014, running the first leg on the 4x400 relay team that took second in state. The following season, Van Voorhis helped the 4x100 team to a third place finish.

Van Voorhis made nine additional appearances in the state meet over the course of his prep career in the 100m, 200m and 400m.

"Brendan is a really talented kid that always was a hard worker," McNary head track and field coach Frank Gauntz said. "He's a guy that always wants to be the best in everything that he does and he is very competitive in nature, which was awesome to have in our track program."



Brendan Van Voorhis pictured signing his letter of intent to attend DePaul University back in 2017. Van Voorhis was named the Most Outstanding Track Performer at the Big East Conference Outdoor Championships on May 11.

Colleges across the country began to take notice of Van Voorhis's potential. But after receiving offers from the University of San Francisco, Boston University and the United States Military Academy, he finally settled on continuing his education and athletic career at DePaul.

"I chose DePaul mainly because of the team here, and the guys I met on my visit. They really seemed like a family and I liked the team chemistry," Van Voorhis said.

Van Voorhis also acknowledged how important Gauntz

was in helping him get recognized by national schools.

"Coach Gauntz and I have a great relationship. Throughout all of high school, he was extremely supportive, and when it came to recruiting for track he was more than helpful with letters of recommendation and was really excited when I signed to DePaul University," Van Voorhis said.

After graduating from McNary, Van Voorhis headed to DePaul to get ready for his freshman season. During the early stages of his preparation

for the season, he learned first-hand how different it is to compete at the college level.

"The biggest difference is the training. Here at college the training is much harder than it was in high school," Van Voorhis said.

But it didn't take very long for Van Voorhis to get accustomed to what it took to be an elite college athlete.

Van Voorhis made an immediate impact during the 2017-18 indoor season, where he took sixth in the 200m (22.08) and fourth in

the 400m (48.69). He would follow it up with a stellar performance during the outdoor season where he made the finals in the 400m.

But in the following outdoor season, Van Voorhis wound up being the MVP for the DePaul men's track team.

His win in the 200m came in 21.98 seconds and his final 400m run at the conference meet was a personal best that got him into second place (47.88).

With relay victories in the 4x100 and 4x400, Van Voorhis was one of only two DePaul

male athletes to reach the podium in four different events.

"It's awesome to see him have so much success," Gauntz said. "It really speaks to the type of kid he is. I wouldn't expect anything less."

As Van Voorhis wraps up his sophomore year in school, he hopes to increase his success as he prepares for next season.

"My goals for next year are obviously to repeat in the events that I won, and to qualify for the regional meet, and the national meet after that," Van Voorhis said.