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Martinez earns All-American status

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Alizea Martinez has always had a passion for softball. But it wasn't until recently where she discovered how good she really is.

Martinez got the opportunity to play in the 12-U USA Softball All-American Games at the National Softball Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City, Okla., which took place June 8-10. She was one of only six players from Oregon selected to compete in the 12-U age bracket.

Martinez attended a tryout for the event back in February, which took place in Washington and featured more than 90 players. Just over a month later, she found out she was one of 15 players that was selected for the tournament to represent region nine (Oregon, Washington, Alaska and Montana).

"I honestly cried when I first found out," Martinez said. "To say that you're an All-American player is just a crazy feeling."

There were 10 regions featured in this tournament, which featured players from all across the country — some regions had multiple 15-player teams.

Martinez was required to raise her own funds from the trip, but thanks to selling

beef jerky as well as valuables on various auction apps, collecting pop cans and receiving generous donations from family friends and members of the Keizer community, she was able to gain the funds required for travel and hotel accommodations for her and her family.

When Martinez got to the field for practice the day before the tournament began, she was in awe.

"When you first walk into the stadium, it's the most beautiful thing ever," Martinez said of the field that plays host to the Women's College World Series. "When you realize that this is the place where all the amazing softball players have played, it just hits you."

During the five-game tournament, Martinez played third base and shortstop and helped region nine win three out of their five tournament games. Her biggest contribution came in the fourth game as her two-run single in the first inning gave region nine a 3-0 win over region seven (red).

"It was cool to go against some of the really good girls from places like California and Texas," Martinez said. "It's crazy to know that you're playing against girls from everywhere in the United States."

While she was thrilled to show her skills against some of the best talent in the country, Martinez also greatly enjoyed the friendships and bonds that she formed with many of the other players at the tournament.

"I got to know a lot of the girls. They were all really welcoming," Martinez said. "We had some really good connections. I had actually played against some of my Oregon teammates in the past, but I never thought I was going to be buddy-buddy with them."

Even though she is only going into eighth grade at Claggett Creek Middle School, Martinez already has her sights set on playing major college softball.

Martinez takes hitting lessons from former Oregon Duck star Alexa Peterson, but after visiting Oklahoma City and seeing that UCLA has won 13 National Championships, she now has shifted her focus to hopefully one day become a Bruin.

"I have always wanted to play for the Ducks, but after seeing how many World Series that UCLA has gone to, I kind of started to change my mind while I was over there," Martinez said. "Knowing that UCLA is a big college, I know that I'm going to have to work even harder to get into it."



Alizea Martinez was one of six players from the state of Oregon to compete in the 12-U USA Softball All-American Games in Oklahoma City, Okla. in June.

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McNary pitcher Alex Simpson went four innings in the Celtics 10-loss to West Albany.

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Bulldogs blank Celts

BY MATT RAWLINGS
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McNary could only muster one hit on the evening as the Celtics D1 summer ball team fell to West Albany 10-0 in six innings on Wednesday, July 3.

Despite the offensive woes throughout the contest, McNary still had great opportunities in almost every inning.

After one-out walks from Alex Simpson and Eric Olsen, the Celtics couldn't cash in as Griffen Hubbard fanned and Erik Sorenson grounded to the pitcher to end the top of the first.

Simpson, who got the start on the mound for McNary, gave up an early run but retired the next three hitters to get out of trouble.

Even with a pair of errors in the frame, Simpson was on the verge of getting out of trouble again. But with two outs and the bases loaded, Simpson beamed a West Albany hitter with an 0-2 change-up to bring in a run. He would also issue free passes to the next two hitters, putting the Bulldogs on top 4-0.

The Celtics string of missed opportunities continued in the top of the third as, for the third consecutive frame, McNary had a run-

ner in scoring position but couldn't cash in.

West Albany took advantage in the bottom half of the frame with a two-out, RBI-single, extending their lead to 5-0. Simpson, however, was able to throw a scoreless fourth frame, which ended up being his final inning of work.

Simpson was replaced on the mound by Logan Ready, who threw a scoreless inning in the bottom of the fifth.

McNary's best chance to push one across came in the top of the sixth when Olsen legged out an infield single for the Celtics only hit of the game. Olsen advanced to third when the throw to try and get him at first sailed into right field.

But with a runner 90 feet away, both Hubbard and Sorenson struck out. Mayer then flew out to right field as the Celtics were turned away once again.

The Bulldogs struck for five runs in the bottom of the sixth to end the game early via run-rule.

McNary's D1 team plays in the McMinville Tournament this weekend. Their next summer league game will be at North Salem at 5 p.m.

Volcanoes continue hot streak against Canadians

BY HERB SWETT
Of the Keizertimes

A 6-1 victory for the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes opened a three-game home series with Vancouver on Thursday, July 4.

The crowd of 5,443, the best in five years, saw the usual Independence Day pregame ceremonies and post-game fireworks. Starter Kervin Castro was the winning pitcher with a 2-1 record, and Sean Roby and Ricardo Genoves led the attack for the Salem-Keizer offense.

The game was scoreless until the bottom of the fifth inning. After Yorlis Rodriguez flew out to left field with a drive that just missed being a home run, Kwan Adkins tripled to right field. Vancouver starter Grant

Townsend was replaced by Parker Caracci, who walked Simon Whiteman. Whiteman stole second base, and Roby walked as well to load the bases. Ricardo Genoves then doubled to right, driving in all three runners.

Townsend became the losing pitcher at 1-2.

Castro went six innings, striking out four, allowing two hits, and walking four. Chris Roberts pitched the seventh and eighth innings.

In the seventh, the Volcanoes scored the rest of their runs. Alex Canario hit a one-out single to center. Roby drove him in with a triple to center. Genoves drew a base on balls. A wild pitch by Joshua Almonte scored Roby. Franklin Labour doubled to left, driving in Genoves.

The Canadians got their lone run of the game in the ninth off of Bryce Tucker. Luis de los Santos reached first base on a force out and went to second on an error by second baseman, Rodriguez. Trevor Schwecke drove de los Santos in with a single to center.

Asked how the Volcanoes had been improving their overall play lately, manager Mark Hallberg said it was a combination of things.

"Sometimes a team turns itself right around," he said.

"We just have fun," was Labour's reply to the same question. "We have good chemistry."

Most of the improvement has been in the pitching. Castro, primarily a fastball pitcher,



Kwan Atkins (10) greets Beicker Mendoza at home plate after Mendoza scored on a RBI-single by Yorlis Rodriguez in the Volcanoes 13-3 win over Vancouver on Friday, July 5.

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