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Volcanoes season delayed indefinitely

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Under normal circumstances, the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes would have been starting their season this week.

But as the coronavirus continues its prevalence across the country, baseball remains on hold.

On Friday, June 12, the Northwest League (NWL) made the official announcement that their season would be delayed indefinitely.

“Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the start of the 2020 Northwest League season is being delayed indefinitely. The league and its clubs will continue to monitor the situation and work with our Major League Baseball affiliates, while following the recommendations of public health officials and adhering to local reopening guidelines,” the NWL press release

said. “As always, the health and safety of the Northwest League fans, players and staff members is our top priority.”

The NWL also decided to cancel the league’s annual All-Star Game.

While the main cause of the season delay has been due to the spread of the coronavirus over the last three months, the labor dispute between Major League Baseball (MLB) owners and the league’s player’s association is currently halting any chance for professional baseball this summer.

Although it was announced in April that the MLB season could begin as early as July — at neutral sites with no fans in attendance — there is now a possibility that the season could be cancelled if the two sides can’t agree to a deal to return to the field.

With no MLB baseball, organizations don’t have the abil-

ity to send their prospects to their Minor League affiliates, meaning the Volcanoes, as well as the rest of Minor League Baseball (MiLB), wouldn’t have the ability to play, regardless of where individual states are at with COVID-19 cases.

“A lot of this comes down to the MLB. They supply the players, so the longer that this stalemate goes on, the less likely our chances are to have a season,” said Volcanoes CEO Mickey Walker.

However, even if MLB resolves their labor issues and returns to the field, it would still be tough for many MiLB leagues to hold an abbreviated season in certain regions of the country with the different regulations that states have for dealing with COVID-19.

If the NWL does have a season, it would likely take

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Kwan Atkins (10) greets Beicker Mendoza at home plate in a Volcanoes victory from last summer. File

Jennings signs to play LAX at Willamette



Kendyl Jennings scored six goals in a 13-9 victory over West Albany last season. Jennings will be continuing her lacrosse career at Willamette University. File

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Kendyl Jennings didn’t grow up loving lacrosse.

In fact, when she first started at McNary as a freshman, she was a basketball and softball player.

But in the spring of 2018, Jennings decided to go out for lacrosse instead of softball.

“I just knew softball wasn’t for me. There were a couple girls on the lacrosse team that encouraged me to try it out and I just fell in love with the sport immediately,” Jennings said.

It only took two years for Jennings to transform herself into an elite-level lacrosse player, and Willamette University took notice, which is why Jennings will be joining the Bearcats girls lacrosse program next season.

“I love that the campus is close to home and it has been my absolute goal to go to Willamette and play lacrosse,” Jennings said. “The

team was super fun to be around on my campus visit. I knew that this was the place where I needed to be.”

In her two seasons as a Celtic, Jennings proved to be a key scoring threat. One of her best games came in April of last year as Jennings scored six goals to give McNary the 13-9 victory over West Albany.

“She’s has kind of been our secret weapon. Kendyl isn’t the loudest player, but she is a go-getter that will do whatever it takes to help our team,” said McNary head coach Becca LaFramboise. “She takes really good care of the ball and helps us run an effective offense.”

In the spring, Jennings was looking forward to being one of the leaders on a senior-stacked McNary girls’ lacrosse squad. But after a few weeks of practice, the COVID-19 pandemic ended up cancelling their season.

“I just wanted to play the sport I love one last

time with all my teammates. That’s why this has been so difficult,” Jennings said.

Even though her senior year was cut short, Jennings still has plenty of great memories of her two seasons in the McNary program, with her favorite one coming in her sophomore season when the Celtics beat South Salem.

“It was just a really special win for our program,” Jennings said.

Jennings plans to study biology at Willamette and is hoping to make an impact on the lacrosse team in her freshman season.

“I want to compete for a starting position, but I just want to contribute in any way that I can,” Jennings said.

“I’m really excited to see her play in college. I think she may be in the background as a humble freshman, but I expect her to step up as a leader as a junior and senior and be explosive on offense,” LaFramboise added.

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