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File
Kate Ronning, who played a big role of McNary's 2019 Mountain Valley Conference Championship team, committed to play at Western Oregon University earlier this month.

Ronning commits to WOU

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Even though she missed her junior season due to the COVID-19 pandemic, McNary senior Kate Ronning has proved throughout her career that she could play at the next level.

After gaining interest from Corban, Southern Oregon and Linfield, Ronning ultimately decided on committing to play softball at Western Oregon University (WOU) next season.

Ronning plans on pursuing a degree in elementary education.

"I'm so excited. It's so rewarding to be able to get to this point," Ronning said.

Ronning made the McNary varsity team as a freshman in 2018 and excelled as the starting third baseman, earning an honorable mention all-conference nod after batting .368 with an on-base percentage of .455 in her first season with the Celtics.

Ronning had a bigger impact on the team the following season, batting .466 with 26 runs scored and 22 RBIs. She also tied for the team lead in doubles (11) and helped McNary win the 2019 Mountain Valley Conference title.

"I can't even tell you how proud I am of Kate. She has been the jell kid of our team the last two years. I'm so glad that she gets the opportunity to realize her dream," McNary head coach Kevin Wise said.

"She is one of our most consistent players in all areas and I believe she has been the best third baseman in our conference."

Ronning grew up going to WOU softball camps when she was younger, so she has been familiar with the program for a number of years.

"I have always wanted to attend somewhere close to home. I really enjoyed my childhood growing up in Keizer and wanted to go to a place that

had a small-school community feel to it," Ronning said. "WOU is a great spot to play softball, but it will also prepare me for the future."

Ronning feels that playing at McNary has helped prepare her for competing at the college level in a number of different ways.

"McNary is a great program and my confidence has grown a lot from my freshman year," Ronning said. "My love for the game has also grown so much since becoming part of the team."

With four straight winning seasons, WOU has become one of the better Division II softball programs in the Northwest. Even though she will be playing with a multitude of talented players, Wise believes that his star third baseman will be able to compete for a key role right when she steps on campus.

"I know that she can go in and compete right away. If

"I'm so excited. It's so rewarding to be able to get to this point."

— Kate Ronning

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Please see WOU, Page A8

OSAA moves start of competition to March

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

The COVID-19 pandemic has once again forced the Oregon Schools Activities Association (OSAA) to rearrange their athletics schedule for the 2020-21 season.

The OSAA executive board elected to push back the beginning of the sports season until March. However, OSAA will still offer three separate, six-week seasons, along with an extra "culminating week" which will allow teams an option for postseason competition.

"Our original plan wasn't going to happen. We knew that we had to change it up," said OSAA Executive Director Peter Weber.

Under the current plan, traditional fall sports competition will begin on March 1. Spring sports competition starts on April 12 and winter sports will launch on May 17.

Current restrictions from Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Gov. Kate Brown's office prohibit in-



According to Weber, even if school districts are still in comprehensive distant learning, current state guidelines would allow student-athletes to compete in cross country and soccer this March.

All traditional spring sports (baseball, softball, golf, tennis, track & field) are also permitted outdoor activities according to state guidance — spring practice will start on April 5.

While football is scheduled to begin practice on Feb. 8, the sport is still on Gov. Brown's list of prohibited activities. Volleyball practice, on the other hand, can only start in counties that are deemed as less than "extreme risk" — only 11 of the 36 counties in Oregon fall under that category.

The board did talk about moving football to later in the spring, but the discussion was negated when the OSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee told the board that a later football

door sports in the majority of counties in the state, which is why the board decided to move the winter sports season into the late spring — practice for traditional winter sports will begin on May 10.

"We wanted to push some of the prohibited sports further back to buy more time," Weber said.

Fall sports, however, were moved up to the first season because outdoor sports such as cross country and soccer are permitted by OHA and the Governor's office — fall sports practices, minus football, are allowed to start on Feb. 22.

Please see OSAA, Page A8



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