

McNary remains unbeaten with win over Corvallis

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

The usually potent McNary offense was stymied for most of the game, but one big inning was enough to push the Celtics over the edge to remain unbeaten.

The Celtics softball team went off for five runs on four hits in the bottom of the fourth, propelling themselves to a 7-3 victory over Corvallis on Monday, May 10.

"We started off slow. People know that we are good, so teams are going to bring their A-plus game against us," McNary head coach Kevin Wise said. "We started getting things going when we began focusing on hitting line drives."

It was only the fourth time all season where McNary was held under 10 runs in a game.

McNary took a 1-0 lead on an unearned run when a sharp single from Shaylee Custer brought in Ali Martinez from third — Martinez reached on an error earlier in the inning.

The Celtics had their struggles against Corvallis lefty Holland Jensen, but they held onto their 1-0 lead due to the early dominance of sophomore pitcher Lacey Vasas. With a lethal fast-ball-changeup combo, Vasas held the Spartans to no runs on just two hits in her first four innings of work.

"I felt good today and I went into the game with a positive mindset," Vasas said. "I have been practicing my changeup a lot and it has been working better in games."

After retiring the side in the top of the fourth, Vasas got the Celtics rally started by leading off the inning with a bunt single — it was her second bunt for a hit on the night.

"Their bunt coverage was a little bit shaky and Lacey can get down the

line. That sparked us and got us going," Wise said.

After Custer drew a walk, her sister, KJ, drove an RBI-double to the wall in right center field to put the Celtics up 2-0. Taylor Ebbs then lined a two-run single to center to extend the McNary lead to 4-0.

Abbi Covalt kept things going with a one-out walk, which was followed by a double steal to give McNary two runners in scoring position. Kate Ronning knocked in Ebbs with a sacrifice fly and Heather Ebner brought in Covalt with a hard-hit single to right field, making the score 6-0 in favor of the Celts.

Despite rolling through the first four frames with ease, Vasas faced some trouble in the fifth and sixth innings, but was able to limit the damage in each instance.

Thanks to a bunt-hit and an error, Corvallis had runners on first and third with only one out. One run came in on an infield single, but Vasas forced the next hitter into a 4-6-3 double play to end the inning.

In the top of the sixth, Hannah Jensen torched a two-run homer to left field to cut the lead to 6-3. But Vasas proved to be unfazed and retired three of the next four hitters.

"I felt like she was forcing it a little bit. But after the home run, she took a deep breath and went back to just pitching and trusting her defense," Wise said.

The Celtics got an insurance run in the bottom of the sixth thanks to a seeing-eye single from Ebner, which scored Covalt from second. Then, in the top of the seventh, after giving up a leadoff double, Vasas got three straight outs to put away the win for McNary.

McNary will play host to Lebanon on Wednesday, May 12. Game time is 5 p.m.



McNary center fielder Taylor Ebbs avoids the tag at third base.
Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes



Shaylee Custer drives a ball down the right field line.

Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

Maximum Spring Flowers!

Come to Egan Gardens
for all the garden plants
you could want!

Flowering plants,
veggies, perennials,
baskets and more.

Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 10-5

Egan Gardens
GREENHOUSE GROWERS

(503)393-2131

9805 River Rd NE Salem
EganGardens.com