

McNary hosts signing day ceremony for three Celtics softball players

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

McNary softball players Taylor Ebbs, Kate Ronning and Abbi Covalt each signed their letter of intent to compete in college in a ceremony at McNary on Thursday, May 20. Ebbs signed with the University of Kentucky, Ronning committed to play at Western Oregon University and Covalt signed with Southern Oregon University.

“They have meant a lot to the program, they have meant a lot to the school and they have meant a lot to me,” McNary head coach Kevin Wise said. “Coaching these young ladies has been a dream. I can’t say enough about them.”

After the 2020 season was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ebbs, Ronning and Covalt led the Celtics to a 16-2 record during the shortened spring season — seven of their 16 victories came by double-digits.

“It has been fun to have a season and prove a point. Since we had (last year) taken away from us, it feels really good going out with beating a lot of teams and playing really well,” Covalt said.

After being named the 2019 Mountain Valley Conference Player of the Year, Ebbs established herself as one of the top players in school history



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Abbi Covalt, Taylor Ebbs and Kate Ronning each signed a letter of intent to play softball in college next year.
Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

in her final year with the Celtics, batting .500 with seven home runs, 24 RBIs and 31 runs scored. She also had an OPS of 1.541 and a .984 slugging percentage.

In the field, Ebbs was moved from shortstop to center field this season and had a perfect fielding percentage with 20 putouts and three outfield assists.

“I am so excited for the next chapter of my life and being able to play at Kentucky,” Ebbs said.

Ronning was a second-team all-league performer as a sophomore in 2019 and hit .362 with a homer and 14 RBIs to go along with her 19 runs scored in her senior campaign.

Ronning made the move from third to shortstop this season and proved to be one of the top middle infielders in the area with 28 assists and 18 putouts to go along with her .852 fielding percentage.

“It all feels real now. I am so ready to play at the next level,” Ronning said.

Covalt was also a second-team all-league player as a sophomore in 2019. She batted .375 this season with 21 hits, 10 RBIs and had a pair of homers. She also had an on-base percentage of .453.

As the starting first baseman, Covalt led the team with 81 put-outs to go along with her .976 fielding percentage.

“It has hit me like a brick wall, but I am really looking forward to playing in college,” Covalt said.

Although they were unable to make a postseason run over the last two years due to the pandemic, the three student-athletes are grateful that they got one last high school season with each other.

“I have always had a big love for the game, but this year it has amped up 10 times more. We had fun and we all love each other. It was short but it felt like a full season because I got to play with all my best friends,” Ronning said.

“This year none of us took anything on the field for granted. Every practice, every game, every warmup, we took it like it was our last together and I think that made it even more fun. We were playing for each other,” Ebbs added.

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