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McNary looking for bounce-back season on the pitch



K SPORTS

McNary forward Sydnee Alfano battles for position in a game from last season. Alfano was the leading scorer for McNary last year and one of the top returners in the MVC. FILE PHOTO, Keizertimes

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

As she prepares for her second year at the helm of the McNary girls soccer program, head coach Lauren Brouse couldn't contain her excitement when talking about the potential of the 2021 season.

"It feels really good to be out here. It actually feels like my first season because things are more normal and it's the time of year that we usually play," Brouse said. "I feel way more excited about this year than last year."

With an influx of youth, the Celtics went through some growing pains

during the shortened spring season, finishing with a 2-9-1 record and going winless in league play. But Brouse believes that the struggles from last season have made her squad more battle-tested.

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— LAUREN BROUSE

McNary girls soccer head coach

"Our returners went through some of those frustrating losses and experienced that heartbreak, but they know what they need to do to fix some of the things that happened last year," Brouse said. "Some of the JV girls we called up got a ton of playing time on the field last year, we swung a lot of them up, so I just feel like we have a lot more under our belt and we are a little more prepared."

The Celtics return a multitude of players from last season's team, none more important than juniors Tessa Fisher and Sydnee Alfano — both are entering their third season on the varsity roster.

Fisher was a first-team all-league midfielder last season with four goals and an assist and Alfano earned second-team honors as a forward after leading the Celtics in scoring with seven goals and one assist.

Brouse expects Fisher and Alfano to be team leaders for the Celtics this season, but has also encouraged them to be more aggressive in goal-scoring



opportunities.

"I expect them to take leadership roles. I want them to work together and have Tessa looking for Sydney on through balls. But I also want them to be a little more selfish up there. They do look to pass a lot, but I want them to take more opportunities to be aggressive," Brouse said. "I think they are both a little more confident to go do that now with both being juniors. They know that eyes are on them and that teams know them, but I think they are ready for that challenge."

Sophomore Maya Alston is another returning midfielder that is expected to

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