

The Real Deal



McNary's Harry Cavell puts up a shot in the Celtics' game with South Salem High School Tuesday, Jan. 6. A 67-60 win for McNary puts it alone in first place in the Greater Valley Conference and at No. 5 in statewide OSAA rankings.

Barn-burner with Saxons puts Celts at top of GVC

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Ryan Kirch, head coach of the McNary High School boys varsity basketball team, expected the winner of a game with the South Salem High School Saxons to be the last team with the ball.

He was right, and for the Celtics, it meant claiming the top spot in the Greater Valley Conference with a 67-60 win Tuesday, Jan. 6.

To be completely fair, McNary had some help. The Saxons handed over the ball five times on offensive fouls in the final 1:20 of the game and Celts Tregg Peterson, Harry Cavell and Trent Van Cleave combined to hit 9 of 10 from the foul line.

"We want to show them that we can play and compete and that they're not running away with the title," said McNary's Cole Thomas prior to the game.

While the Celts get to bask in the glory of the win, if any Celt players have nightmares this week, they will surely come in the form of 5-foot-7 Saxon point guard Jacob Ramos. Ramos hit four consecutive three-pointers at the top of the night to keep McNary from running away on an early 12-6 lead. He also lifted South over McNary with three points (a bucket and a free throw) in the last seconds of the first frame. The teams started the second quarter with South up 23-20.

The Celts leapt back into the driver's seat on buckets by Dunagan and Peterson

and didn't relinquish it again the rest of the night. However, South didn't throw in the towel until the final minute.

McNary managed to extend its lead to seven points midway through the second period and doubled it, 50-36, by the end of the third period.

With about three minutes left in the game, South had managed to stop the bleeding and cinch up the gap to 54-50. Peterson put in consecutive two-pointers, but South answered both times — first with a two and then with a trey. The teams were at 58-55 when the Saxon frustrations began getting the better of them.

The Celts were ranked fifth in the state at press time, but the team was still working out some kinks over the winter break when a tough loss made for a good lesson.

The Celts were on a five-game win streak after the first game in a Summit High School tournament the weekend after Christmas. McNary had already taken down Bend High School 66-49 the first night of the tournament and players had their thoughts on playing for the championship, said Kirch.

Lebanon High School's squad had other plans. The Warriors doled out a 59-54 loss to McNary. Things started out rough,

said Celt Mathew Ismay.

"We weren't ready and we weren't knocking down shots early," he said. "We also need to get more consistent with our free throws."

Lebanon outscored the Celtics 12-1 in the first frame. The Keizer team took the game back in the second quarter and went into halftime up 22-19, but the Warriors' 22-point fourth period sealed McNary's fate.

"Our attitude and effort wasn't where it needed to be, but the boys responded and got up the next morning and gutted out a tough game with Seattle Academy," Kirch said.

McNary beat Seattle Academy 58-50 with junior Harry Cavell leading

the offensive effort, pouring in 23 points.

Devon Dunagan had 16 points in the win; Tregg Peterson had 14 points; Ismay had three and Trent Van Cleave put in two.

The Celtics returned home for a game with Oregon City Friday, Jan. 2, and battled to a 64-50 win in a game where the outcome wasn't certain until the final minutes.

McNary had a 20-11 lead after the first period, but the Pioneers started the sec-

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Swift timeline planned for football coach replacement

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

McNary High School officials are wasting little time in their search for a replacement for Isaac Parker, the current head coach of the Celtic football program.

Parker is leaving his coaching and teaching positions on Jan. 26 to take a job as an offensive coach and recruiter for Lewis & Clark College.

Principal Erik Jespersen and Athletic Director Ron Richards said they would be opening the position this week with the expectation of assessing the pool of applicants within the next two to three weeks.

"It's a bit tricky because Isaac was also a math teacher and it's a priority for me to have a coach who will be in the building," said Jespersen. "The best applicant for the job may not be a math teacher."

If all goes according to plan, Richards hoped interviewing could begin late this month or in early February.

"We're looking for the best football coach we can find. I would like a coach with demonstrated success in leading a program as head coach or as a coordinator," Richards said. "Our vision for all of our coaches is that they have four ideals as their cornerstones:

support academics, develop character, provide leadership opportunities, and to compete at the highest level. Our new coach must support this mission."

Parker said he's offered to assist in the search but he's leaving it to the discretion of Jespersen and Richards.

After arriving to the program with a long-term vision three years ago, Parker is leaving with it only partially completed. However, Jespersen said Parker's vision was "spot-on."

"Isaac is a glue guy when it comes to bringing people together. From organizing events like Blue Day to developing relationships with the feeder schools, Isaac has a way of bringing people into the tent. Continuing that will be a priority for any new coach, but we will also be looking for what the candidates can bring to our program," Jespersen said.

Both Jespersen and Richards agreed that filling Parker's shoes goes beyond the gridiron.

"Isaac is a great leader. He has created relationships across all boundaries and, specifically, with his players as witnessed by the feelings he has for his players and that the players have for him," Richards said.

Mat men shine in winter break tournaments

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary High School wrestling teams spent their winter break getting better.

"Typically we come out of the winter break as a stronger team, and I think that's going to mean more wins all-around," said Taran Purkey, a senior.

For evidence, look no further than the records from a trio of winter break tournaments.

The Celtic streak started with a tournament at Liberty High School in which senior Alvarro Venegas won the 195-pound division with a second-round pin over Tualatin's Phelan Alvarado.

Purkey took second in the same tournament with a final round loss to Sandy High School's Spencer Barnett.

"Barnett was just a tank and I couldn't get past him," Purkey said.

Senior Riley Repp made it all the way to the third place match before falling to Sandy's Hector Ramirez in a 7-4 decision; Carlos Vincent also made it to the third place match where he lost in a major decision; Brayden Ebbs took fifth place with 13-2 major decision; Michael Phelps lost a 5-2 decision in a fifth place match-up; and Gage Mance lost a fifth place match to Braden Watson of Sandy High School.

The McNary junior varsity wrestlers also made waves at

the Ruppel 2nd Man Tournament in Cupertino, Calif. The Celts had six wrestlers in championship matches and five crowned.

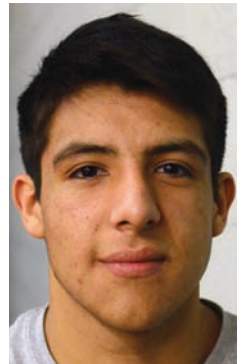
"I can't tell you the last time that happened," said Jason Ebbs, McNary head coach. "We had three major goals going to the California tournaments this year: getting rid of the baggage of rankings, seeing new faces and finding out what other programs are teaching. On top of that, we got some medals and placings."

Tournament champs at Ruppel were: Jordan Cagle by pin in 44 seconds at 145 pounds; Hunter Lucas in an 8-4 decision at 152 pounds; Jesse Gomez in second-round pin at 160 pounds; Ryan Edsall in a 10-2 decision at 170 pounds; and Gage Mance with a second-round pin at 182 pounds.

Eli Mance made it all the way to the championship fight before getting pinned in the second round by Anniruoh Ankola of Terra Nova High School.

Other top placers for the Celts were Jonathon Collins and William Smith who each took third place.

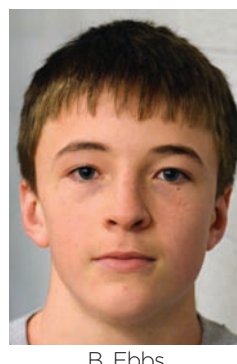
Also in Cupertino, the varsity team wrestlers took part in the Blanchini Varsity Tournament. Brayden Ebbs, Taran Purkey and Alvarro Venegas won their respective divisions. "I felt like we had more Please see WRESTLE, Page 14



A. Venegas



T. Purkey



B. Ebbs