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Montano turns up heat on Grizzlies

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

McNary High School sophomore Jaylene Montano ignited second-half scoring vs. McMinnville High School in a varsity basketball game Friday, Jan. 23.

Montano replaced senior Jasmine Ernest who got into foul trouble in the first half, then drained a trio of three-pointers and 3 of 4 from the field to lead Celtic scoring with 16 points in a 47-29 win.

"Once that first shot (a three pointer) went in, my confidence went up. From there it was a matter of trying to get out in the open and making sure we ran through our plays aggressively," Montano said.

It was the fourth consecutive win for McNary, and came as the team was about to begin the second round robin of the Greater Valley Conference.

The Lady Celts had to wrest back the lead in the game against the Grizzlies in the latter half of the first period on a basket by Kailey Doult. The bucket put McNary up 6-4.

"We started the games getting good looks, but shots we'd been making just weren't falling. We were trying some new things in our defense that weren't quite working, but our man-to-man and half-court defense was just outstanding," said Derick Handley, McNary head coach. "Luckily, it was one of those games where the defense kept us in it while the offense warmed up."

By the half, the Lady Celts were maintaining a slim, 15-11, lead.

"For the first half, it was mostly trying to figure out how they play and they were aggressive. We were a little thrown off by that. When we came back out we knew a bit more about what they were going to do and adapted to it," said Kaelie Flores, a McNary junior.

McNary, powered by Montano, stretched the McNary



KEIZERTIMES/ERIC A. HOWALD
 McNary's Vanessa Hayes puts up a block in the game with the McMinnville High School Grizzlies Friday, Jan. 23.

lead in the third period. A six-point run by Ernest helped seal the win in the final minutes.

Madi Hingston had 10 points in the outing; Doult and Sydney Hunter had six apiece; Lauren Hudgins had two.

"We've been playing a lot better lately. They're getting comfortable with new coaches and they are getting more comfortable with each other," Handley said. "What I'm hoping is to see that confidence continue as we come to the second half of the season."

Flores said better communication and cohesive team-

work were at the top of her wish list for the coming weeks.

Consistent effort and not letting other teams slow McNary's momentum would be key, said Montano.

"We always need to try our best in every game - even if we're behind - because we don't know what will happen if we do that," she said.



Submitted
 The McNary girls bowling team: Sierra Mo, KayLynn Hatfield, Brittney Kiser, Hannah Russell and Aneeka Stephen.

Lady Celts bowlers win district

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

After leading for most of the day at the district bowling tournament, the McNary High School girls bowling team hit its first snafu in the first game of the finals match.

"The whole day had been going really well. We were 300 points ahead of the second place team most of the day, and 500 points ahead of the last-place team," said Lady Celt Hannah Russell.

It wasn't until the Lady Celts had to sit out for a game while the second and third place teams competed that the girls began to lose a bit of steam.

"All we could do was sit and wait, and I think that's what got into our heads," said McNary's Sierra Mo.

The Celts finished two pins behind McKay High School, 168-166, in their first finals game, but stormed back to take the district championship with a score of 183-135 in the second game.

"We didn't have as many strikes as we wanted, but spares make the game," said senior KayLynn Hatfield.

Junior Brittney Kiser said the team spirit is what carried them through to the big finale.

"In past years, we've always had moments where we got down on each other. This time, we were just believing in each other all day long. I don't know when we'll have the chance to do something like that again," Kiser said. "In the three district tournaments I've been to, this one felt the best."

The boys finished third in a field of tough competition, but overall the Celts posted five All-Star bowlers who will get to compete in another tournament in March. For the boys, Scott Bridger and Nick Blythe earned All-Star status. Hatfield, Russell and Mo all qualified out of the girls team.

Kiser and freshman Aneeka Stephen are hoping to qualify when the girls head

to the state competition February 21 and 22. That competition will be held at Salem's Firebird Lanes.

Head Coach Kathy Kaplan said the team "went above and beyond" at the district tournament.

"In practice, we had some low scores of around 100, but

I told them they need to be aggressive and practice like they would need to play at the district tournament. In the district competition, their low game was a 134 and their high was a 214," Kaplan said.

She added that having Stephen practice with the team while she was still in middle school was a huge boon.

"I would love to have more middle schoolers come out and bowl with us during practices. It gets them used to the style of bowling we do and it was a huge advantage this year when Aneeka could join the team," Kaplan said.

"We were just believing in each other all day long."

— Brittney Kiser

KYBA Celts on a roll



Submitted
 Back row: Kalea Salang, Brianna Anaya, Trinity Phipps, Bailey Hittner, Hailey Ostby, Anaya Coronado and Loren Elmore. Front row: Julie Dieker, Abby Hawley, Anita Lao, Chloe Campbell and Grace Brown.

The eighth grade Keizer Celts girls, representing Keizer Youth Basketball Association, started their tournament season 12-0. Those wins include three first place

tournament trophies, most recently one from the Sisters Shootout, January 17 and 18. Coached by Ron Hittner and Jeff Hailley since the girls fifth grade season, the

Lady Celts are showing their growth this season. The team's full court press in the final game on Sunday, Jan. 18, at the Sisters Shootout, proved extremely effective.

Mat men settle for little victories at Reser tourney

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary High School wrestlers traveled to Corvallis for the annual Reser Tournament of Champions last weekend. They expected tough competition, but maybe not quite as tough as they encountered.

"It's the toughest tournament we wrestle all season long. Any match you want to win is going to be close," said Jason Ebbs, McNary head coach.

Overall, McNary had one wrestler win his weight class in junior varsity brackets, one take third in varsity and one take sixth in varsity.

Jonathon Phelps took first in the 132 junior varsity bracket, but his toughest match wasn't the final.

Jonathon faced Sandy High School's Jonathan Morrell in the semifinals, a wrestler he'd lost to earlier this season. This time, he was determined to reach a different outcome.

"I was more of the aggressor and took him down. When I got on top, I rode him and just kept putting bars and half-nelsons on him to show him who was in control of the match," Jonathon said.

He was so tired at the end of the third round, 9-4 victory that he took a nap before heading back to the first place corner against Eagle Point's Connor Goines. Jonathon won 4-1.

"He was tough and I could have done better, but I was wiped out," he said.

Senior Alvarro Venegas, who wrestles at 195 pounds, took his first loss of the season at Reser against Crook County High School's Gunnar Robirts.

"I went out there and I was scared and he was really good and really big. I brushed off the first shot he took on me easily, but I could feel his strength and it kind of got into my head," Venegas said. "He Please see WRESTLE, Page 14